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United Way Bay Area Receives \$750,000 Grant From Wells Fargo To Launch Rental Relief Fund
Funding will support housing insecurities of those affected by the COVID-19 health crisis

SAN FRANCISCO (July 14, 2020) — The United Way Bay Area Rental Relief Fund, created by Wells Fargo, will provide rental assistance to 300 families through UWBA’s existing network of SparkPoint Centers and community partners. Rental assistance will begin in July and will be offered to residents in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Solano counties. UWBA will aim to leverage Wells Fargo’s \$750,000 donation and raise an additional \$2.5 million over the next six months, which will allow UWBA to serve more families with rental assistance across the region.

The economic impact of COVID-19 has added to an already challenging statewide housing market. According to the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey administered in May 2020, 54 percent of California renters responded that they are not highly confident in being able to pay next month’s rent.

“It is heartbreaking that many families have been particularly hard hit and are facing significant financial distress due to the COVID-19 economic slowdown, leading to housing instability. Wells Fargo is committed to be part of the solution and help people from slipping into homelessness. Our initial donation of \$750,000 will help hundreds of families to get caught up or stay current on paying their rent, so they can continue to have a home as the economy recovers,” said Erica Trejo, community relations senior manager for Wells Fargo.

The funds are part of the \$175 million that Wells Fargo announced to support nonprofits and communities playing a key role in COVID-19 relief efforts in food security, housing/shelter, small business, and financial health.

Since March, UWBA has raised and distributed more than \$5.3 million for COVID-19 related support across eight counties in our region. Rental assistance is part of UWBA’s post-COVID recovery strategy focused on increased need areas such as in education, childcare, mental health and financial stability. Launched in 2009, SparkPoint Centers are central to UWBA’s poverty-fighting efforts and were developed to work with low-income individuals and families long-term, looking at all aspects of their financial health, with the goal of achieving financial prosperity. SparkPoint serves more than 25,000 people with a network of 90 third-party partners. More than 80 percent of SparkPoint clients make progress on their financial goals each year.

“The COVID-19 health crisis has further revealed the housing challenges and disparities across our region,” said Kevin Zwick, Chief Executive Officer, UWBA. “We are excited that Wells Fargo is providing much-needed assistance to families impacted by our housing crisis, which has become a key part of our work to provide access to basic needs. The rental relief fund is a great example of how the nonprofit and private sectors can strengthen our communities by partnering together.”

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Ten SparkPoint locations will distribute rental assistance funds to current and new SparkPoint clients who have experienced economic hardship due to COVID-19. We are also partnering with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Francisco to distribute funding in two of the counties. The funding will allow SparkPoint centers to address gaps that exist with other rental assistance funds and will be distributed based on each SparkPoint center's specific needs.

To learn more visit www.uwba.org/rentalrelief

About Wells Fargo

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About United Way Bay Area

United Way Bay Area (UWBA) fights for financial stability and equal opportunity for residents in eight Bay Area counties. UWBA takes an innovative, holistic approach to ending the cycle of poverty through advocacy and programs that support all ages—providing free access to family support, financial and career coaching, job opportunities and basic needs. www.uwba.org #LiveUnited | Twitter: [@UWBayArea](https://twitter.com/UWBayArea)

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