



Press Release

Media contact:

Maria Stokes, United Way
415-808-4264, mstokes@uwba.org

Help for Hard Times: United Way Offers Free Recession-Survival Guide

SAN FRANCISCO, April 21, 2008 – United Way of the Bay Area today announced it has created “Help for Hard Times,” a free, downloadable survival guide for Bay Area residents who have been impacted by the recession. The guide – created as part of United Way’s Road to Recovery campaign – offers practical tips and information about claiming unemployment benefits, finding a new job, dealing with creditors, accessing community services, coping with stress, and more.

“We believe ‘Help for Hard Times’ will be a very useful resource for our community – both the individuals who need help and the agencies who serve them,” said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way of the Bay Area, which created the guide with assistance from the region’s Central Labor Councils and its 2-1-1 partners, Eden I&R and the Contra Costa Crisis Center. “Many in our area are experiencing hard times, and we want to do everything we can to get them in touch with the help they need.”

The Help for Hard Times guide can be downloaded at www.uwba.org. In addition to listing important phone numbers and web links for accessing benefits and services, the guide contains several useful tools and worksheets, such as a sample letter to a creditor and a financial-planning worksheet.

Wilson encouraged residents to not only use the guide, but also to call 2-1-1, the Bay Area’s community information line, when they are unsure of where to turn for help.

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“2-1-1’s caring specialists can provide free, confidential assistance to Bay Area individuals and families who suddenly find themselves in financial peril,” Wilson said. “2-1-1 specialists are trained to not only refer callers to assistance for their immediate needs – such as food, lowering utility bills and accessing unemployment benefits – but also help callers address longer-term needs, such as connecting them with employment programs that can assist with job-hunting and skills improvement. 2-1-1 enables callers to keep moving ahead without feeling overwhelmed.”

About United Way’s Road to Recovery

United Way’s Road to Recovery campaign is a special appeal to ensure Bay Area nonprofits can continue to serve low-wage, working families hardest hit by the recession. The campaign asks for increased help in the form of donations, volunteer hours and getting information to people in need. United Way is using Road to Recovery donations to support nonprofit programs that are anchoring economic relief and recovery efforts, as well as to enhance 2-1-1 Bay Area, which serves as the first line of response for families in crisis.

About 2-1-1 Bay Area

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, toll-free phone number that connects callers with local community services, such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and more. During a disaster, 2-1-1 provides critical information about evacuation routes, food and shelter, as well as support with finding new jobs and permanent housing during long-term recovery. 2-1-1 is confidential and available 24 hours a day in more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 Bay Area is operated by United Way, Eden I&R, and Contra Costa Crisis Center. For more information, visit www.211BayArea.org.

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