



Family Recovery Fund

May 5, 2020

Western Wake Crisis Ministry is creating a Family Recovery Fund in response to the needs we are seeing from Covid-19. Will you join us, the towns in our area, and a broader group of donors to raise \$150,000+ to help the neighbors in our community who have been the most affected by this pandemic?

Western Wake Crisis Ministry (WWCM) envisions a brighter future for all by cultivating a healthy, hunger-free and housing-stable community. We actively work toward this vision by partnering with those in crisis, helping them gain stability through basic supports for food, financial/housing assistance, education, and opportunity.

With the Family Recovery Fund, we will help families in the Western and Southwestern region of Wake County (Apex, Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina, Willow Springs and surrounding rural areas) stabilize after the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, including income and job losses, illness, and mounting debt following the eviction and utility cut off moratoriums. We will be working with the county and other partner agencies to ensure that we are coordinating our support and to strategically use these funds to help families recover and maintain stability going forward. This fund will allow us to broaden our scope of assistance beyond just rental and utility assistance.

We are asking our neighbors to join us in this effort. To kick-start the fund, the Town of Apex committed \$20,000 and we have private contributions of an additional \$10,000 to date.

WHO WILL THESE FUNDS SUPPORT?

We are trying to reach those in our service area, documented or undocumented, who fall within 60% or less of the area median income or who are experiencing economic distress due to a crisis or hardship, including specifically the Coronavirus pandemic. Western Wake Crisis Ministry has expanded our services over the past three years to include a deeper relational engagement, focusing on longer term stability rather than just getting over the crisis. We employ a strong, highly skilled, well-educated leadership staff and utilize a crew of dedicated, trained volunteers to directly provide basic needs and supports that help families move from crisis to stability and on to sustainability. We have also expanded our services to strengthen our presence and opportunity in the Southwestern region where we see greatest needs and lesser other resources.



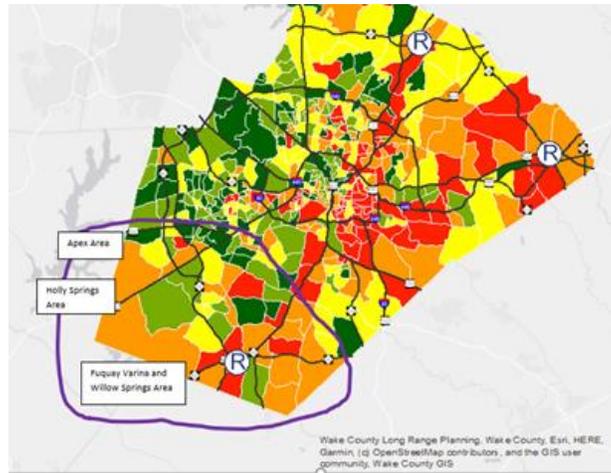
WHAT NEEDS ARE WE SEEING IN OUR AREA?

Throughout Wake County Public Schools, 51,731 students receive free or reduced lunch, approximately 32% of all students. In our Western/Southwestern region of Wake County, towns range from 16% (average of 18 public schools in Apex) to 26% (average of 6 public schools in Fuquay-Varina). However, some schools and neighborhoods have as many as 42% (Lincoln Heights). Poverty rates in our area range from 4% to over 8%.

The public school (McKenney Vento) definition of homelessness includes children and families who are moving from place to place, living in hotels, and doubled up or couch surfing as well as those living in a car, outdoors, or shelter (literally homeless). Wake County Public Schools reports 4,365 school children experienced homelessness in 2018-19, a 50% increase in 5 years. Today, with the Covid-19 stay at home orders in place, shelters are full and families experiencing homelessness have no place to go. Wake County is aiding with hotel costs to meet the growing need.

The Western and Southwestern communities in WWCM's service area have experienced rapid growth. In the Apex and Holly Springs areas specifically, there has been significant growth of higher income residential and commercial development. This growth can have negative effects on cost of living, particularly housing, for households that have relatively low incomes or are cost-burdened in combination with other family circumstances related to health or family caregiving for dependents. Even households with enough monthly income but limited social and financial assets, regardless of neighborhood, can suddenly become households in crisis after a job loss, family disruption, serious health diagnosis, sudden change in housing availability or a natural disaster or pandemic.

As depicted in **Wake County's interactive Community Vulnerability Index 2017 Map**, the region's less vulnerable neighborhoods are adjacent to many areas with moderately high numbers of households more likely to experience difficulties. This often skews our census tract data for the area, reducing the nodes that qualify for state and federal programs and funding such as open site summer meal programs for school children. In addition, as you move from the Cary/Morrisville/Apex area south towards Holly Springs, Fuquay and further south to Willow Springs, more pockets of vulnerability are identified.



While the percentage of citizens in the Western and Southwestern regions that are experiencing poverty is not as extreme as seen in some other areas of Wake County, WWCM has seen a 15% increase in the numbers of households served per month in the past year. Rental rates in this area are above the Fair Market Rent from HUD for the Raleigh metropolitan area (about 3%) and significantly higher than the national average (about 12%). While Apex has low poverty rates and low unemployment (pre-Covid-19 pandemic), we still have over 32% of households paying 30% or more of their income for rent each month ("Housing Cost Burdened" by HUD's definition); 79% of low-income renters are housing cost burdened; and 77% of low-income homeowners are housing cost burdened. WWCM impacts those in our area who are suffering the most and struggling to remain housed, to keep the lights on, to have nutritious food on the table, and to increase family income when age and disability are not factors.

Even before Covid-19, WWCM has seen an increased need for services over the last three years – 23% increase in the average number of households served per month (752 individuals per month in 2017 to 921 individuals per month in 2019) and 10% increase in households receiving financial assistance to prevent eviction or utility cut off. In 2019, \$88,370 was provided to 436 households. Families with children make up approximately 53% of all service recipients and 44% are households with adults over 60.

HOW WILL THE FAMILY RECOVERY FUNDS BE USED?

Funds will be used to increase housing, food and financial stability for families in the Western and Southwestern regions of Wake County by providing appropriate and limited financial assistance, case management, coaching and resource support for families most at-risk of food and housing insecurity.

Families facing food and housing insecurity are defined by 1) family income (60% or less than the Area Median Income) or unique hardship that has direct impact on food and housing such



as domestic violence, illness (physical or mental), loss of job, or other trauma (current pandemic), 2) facing difficulties paying basic bills or buying food or accessing supports due to income or other hardship, 3) lack of family or other supports to meet basic needs.

During the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, services are provided via phone and video chats by our Social Worker and dedicated resource volunteer team. As the stay-at-home-orders are lifted, three volunteers per day (Mon-Thurs), plus a Social Worker will be available on site for walk-ins and coaching or case management appointments.

Regularly, individuals and heads of households complete a self-assessment measuring the level of crisis versus stability they are experiencing in the following domain areas: food security, housing security, income/job security, transportation, and adult education. They are also asked to complete a monthly budget and provide documentation of income and current needs.

Direct financial assistance is available for families in danger of loss of housing or utility cut off or the inability to pay for a prescription. With the Family Recovery Fund, we anticipate being able to help with other critical needs such as transportation, childcare, or in some cases, brief hotel stays while getting connected to a shelter program.

Impact Coaching is available upon request and by appointment to help clients “get unstuck” and determine their best course of action to move from crisis to stability in any of the domains listed above; to make an action plan; and to begin to implement their plan. Impact Coaching is not a long-term support option, but rather a “kick-start” to making life changes. Coaching is offered for up to a four-month period. While receiving coaching, participants are connected to other long term supports if needed.

Resource Assistance includes directly connecting clients with additional resources to meet urgent needs including but not limited to: SNAP, WIC, Medicaid and other mainstream resources; homeless prevention or homeless shelter/rapid rehousing programs; mental health and substance use programs; child care and parenting supports; workforce development; transportation; housing repair; education; and other resources. Resource Assistance and Support Services are provided by volunteers who go through extensive training and by a master’s level Social Worker who provides both direct services and supervision of volunteers. Resource services are offered weekly, Monday through Thursday.

Western Wake Crisis Ministry has a robust infrastructure that is based on over 150 regular volunteers and only 5 staff (4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)). The volunteers are on the front lines. Staff provide the structure, guidance, policy, and support, with a focus on leadership and leveraging resources more often than direct service. Our Social Worker is one staff person who brings a unique skill set required for direct intensive case management and counseling for



families experiencing complex issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, health crisis, job loss, immigration issues, etc. The Social Worker also provides training and supervision for skilled volunteers who receive extensive training and provide front line support through financial assistance, connecting with community resources, and Impact Coaching. This includes daily individual supervision and weekly or monthly group supervision as well as individual and group training. Volunteer Impact Coaches go through 16 hours of intensive coach training before beginning to work directly with clients; Resource Support Volunteers go through at least 12 hours of individual on-the-job-training before working independently with clients. The Social Worker is always available for consultation when volunteers are working directly with clients.

PARTNERING

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. If there are any questions or considerations, we are happy to meet with prospective donors to discuss in more detail.

In deep appreciation,

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