

Dear **NAME**:

I don't have to tell you that times are tough. You hear about it in the news day in and day out. In the wake of recent cut backs and layoffs, many people in our community are facing challenges. Just as many of our outstanding corporate citizens are facing tough decisions and hard times, many of our neighbors are finding it hard to support their families.

The slowing economy combined with the rising price of gas and food is hard on everyone. Imagine how much more of a challenge faces those who are already struggling to make ends meet? The bottom line is that the current economic climate is causing diminished resources and growing need in our community. More people than ever need help to get by. Thankfully, United Way is helping those in need, one person at a time, live a better life.

Through its programs, United Way helped over 420,000 people last year alone. This year we know the economic conditions are actually creating more need for United Way programs. It's critical for all of us to dig as deep as we can to give generously to help our neighbors in need.

United Way is focused on helping more people access education, family-sustaining jobs, resources to gain or sustain independence, and support to keep their families safe and healthy. To accomplish those goals, United Way supports a Safety Net of services to meet people's immediate needs. While it also addresses the main symptoms of our community's most serious problems by working to break the cycle of poverty through early childhood education, job training, teen pregnancy prevention, and matched savings accounts that help people save for a home or postsecondary education.

By setting goals and measuring progress of all of its programs, United Way promises the most value for your charitable dollar. And, United Way holds itself accountable, with fundraising and administrative expenses kept very low at 11% – far below the acceptable amount by the Wisconsin Better Business Bureau at 35% or less. The organization has also been recognized as one of the most efficient charities in the nation. For the fourth consecutive year, United Way of Greater Milwaukee earned Four Stars from Charity Navigator, the country's largest independent evaluator of charities.

Regardless of where you live – the health and strength of our community affects us all. It takes the whole community working together to bring about lasting change. It requires a united focus on a common goal: a healthy, safe, thriving community. People of all ages and races, representing different faiths and varying political viewpoints must come together to help each other.

But the change starts with you and me. I am asking you to join me and the thousands of others who are committed to real, lasting change. The time is now. We must turn our concern into action. You may be one person, but you can make a difference. Please consider giving generously to United Way today.

Sincerely,

CEO