

# UNITED WAY A PILLAR OF SUPPORT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

In every crisis impacting our region, from natural disaster to civil unrest, United Way of Greater St. Louis has stood as an anchor of support during chaos and uncertainty leading recovery and resiliency efforts across the region. The devastating tornado on May 16 was no exception.

## AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE MAY 16 TORNADO

### 211 Crisis Response Activation

Our 211 Navigation Center stands at-the-ready daily and quickly moved into crisis response mode following the May 16 tornado. Early weather reports, on-going readiness and strategic planning allowed us to swiftly connect individuals to shelters, hotels, and essential resources within hours of the storm when access to homes was no longer possible. As the region's 24/7 Helpline, United Way's 211 crisis response center remains a primary hub for neighbors affected by the storm. Information gathered through 211 disaster intake is also vital for assessing the disaster's severity, assisting responding emergency management agencies, and ensuring tailored responses to unique challenges as every disaster is different.

[211Helps.org](https://211Helps.org)

### Centralized Coordination for Maximum Impact

United Way plays a critical role in both immediate and long-term disaster recovery efforts. Within 24 hours of the tornado, we helped initiate daily coordination calls with Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), engaging with vital nonprofit partners such as the American Red Cross of Greater St. Louis, The Salvation Army of Greater St. Louis, and the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, among others. We also began daily connections with the mayor's office, The Missouri State Emergency Management (SEMA), numerous emergency response offices and meetings convened by Regional Business Council (RBC) companies to offer our expertise and infrastructure.

These collaborative meetings have proven essential in identifying and addressing emerging needs like repair supplies, food, and volunteer support. By centralizing our coordination efforts, we maximize limited resources and ensure that we are strategically aligned with disaster response agencies and local government offices for long-term recovery planning, recognizing that restoring affected individuals and families is a multi-year commitment.



## UNITED WAY'S MAY 16 RESPONSE BY THE NUMBERS:

- 211 has assisted 3,207 neighbors needing disaster assistance and completed 2,322 disaster intakes, linking survivors to critical services for food, debris clean up, emergency shelter and more
- Provided 80 hours of expert coordination services at the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Co-led more than 50 coordination calls with disaster responding agencies and partners statewide
- Supported 42 requests for assistance through existing employee hardship funds totaling \$39,357
- Managed Ameren's \$200k Tornado Relief Fund, issuing \$63,510 to 206 households to date
- Deployed over \$2.5m to United Way Disaster responding safety net agencies and beyond including American Red Cross, Urban League, Salvation Army, Peter and Paul, St. Louis Area Foodbank and more to support their emergency operations and sustainability
- Managed Food Truck donations and deployment resulting in the delivery of 57,112 meals to the impacted zones in partnership with the Currency of Caring Food Network
- Partnered with AirBnB to bring \$30,000 in emergency housing credits to the area
- Partnered with Uber to deploy \$300,000 in ride credits to ensure survivors were able to travel to and from the Disaster Assistance Center (DAC) over a 3-week period at Chaifetz Arena
- Mobilized and deployed nearly 6000 volunteers into disaster focused efforts, offering essential support across the region
- Regina Greer, Chief Impact Officer, is co-leading the Long-term Recovery efforts for the St. Louis City/County COAD - Community Organizations Active in Disaster

*"Often, United Way operates behind the scenes, yet our impact remains critical in mobilizing and optimizing response and recovery efforts. As virtual first responders, we quickly jump into action in the aftermath of every local disaster. For over a century, we have remained dedicated to strengthening our local safety net, addressing both everyday challenges and urgent needs to help our neighbors navigate challenging times -- an essential community partner delivering impactful results."*

MICHELLE TUCKER

United Way of Greater St. Louis President & CEO



**UNITED WAY**  
Greater St. Louis

[HelpingPeople.org](https://HelpingPeople.org)

## AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE CONT.

### Focused Volunteer Deployment

Volunteers are the backbone of our response efforts. Since May 16, United Way's Regional Volunteer Center has operated in disaster response mode, effectively registering spontaneous volunteers and strategically deploying them to priority areas. So far, we have connected nearly **6,000 volunteers to disaster-related opportunities** that you may have witnessed firsthand. Our updated virtual volunteer site offers a range of needs, from basic cleanup efforts to skilled labor for home repairs and heavy equipment operations.

Our Labor Team has successfully recruited skilled volunteers for construction, plumbing, technical support, and more. Community members are encouraged to visit [STLVolunteer.org/disaster](http://STLVolunteer.org/disaster) to register and explore various volunteer and donation opportunities. Your support remains vital.

[STLVolunteer.org](http://STLVolunteer.org)

### Fundraising to Fuel Our Region's Response

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, United Way activated its Storm Relief Fund. Every dollar raised through this initiative directly supports centralized food, shelter, and cleanup efforts administered by our disaster-related partners across the region.

The United Way of Greater St. Louis has already invested **over \$2.5 million in disaster recovery** funding to support **15 nonprofits** on the frontlines. This targeted investment couples with our **ongoing combined monthly funding of more than \$329,000** to American Red Cross, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Salvation Army, St. Louis Area Food Bank, Operation Food Search, and Peter & Paul Community Services.

Additionally, designated donations have **provided thousands of hot meals** through food truck services for over a month to neighborhoods affected by the storm. We are grateful to our nonprofit partners ensuring long-term food resources, including the St. Louis Area Food Bank and Operation Food Search. Early donations also allowed United Way to secure essential supplies like tarps, nails, and lumber to facilitate immediate repair efforts at centralized disaster hubs.

Our fundraising efforts continue as we prepare for long-term recovery. We remain grateful to all of our donors and partners for their continued support.

[HelpingPeople.org/StormRelief](http://HelpingPeople.org/StormRelief)

### Corporate Partners United

Numerous companies have joined forces with United Way to address urgent community needs by deploying small and large teams of volunteers. Their contributions have varied, including hosting supply drives, clearing debris, tarping roofs, and assisting with feeding, sheltering, and wellness checks.

Many employers have also integrated disaster-related volunteer opportunities into their formal corporate social responsibility strategies, aligning with our Volunteer Center's coordinated efforts to ensure corporate partners are engaged where the need is greatest.

Recovering from such extensive devastation is an ongoing process requiring long-term commitment. While the challenges ahead and limited resources may seem intimidating, United Way of Greater St. Louis and our partners are dedicated to being here for our community when it matters most. We will remain focused and steadfast doing all we can to help our neighbors navigate challenges and obstacles ahead.

The community's unwavering support for our mission to help individuals live their best possible lives through time, talent, and resources year-round is what enables us to respond effectively and efficiently to ongoing needs.

**THANK YOU FOR STANDING UNITED WITH US.**



For more information, visit  
[HelpingPeople.org/UnitedForStormRelief](http://HelpingPeople.org/UnitedForStormRelief)



**UNITED WAY**  
Greater St. Louis

[HelpingPeople.org](http://HelpingPeople.org)