

# United Way of Merced County

531 W. Main Street Merced, CA 95340

(209) 383-4242

[www.unitedwaymerced.org](http://www.unitedwaymerced.org)

(A 501 (c) (3) Organization—Donations are tax deductible)

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City of Merced  
c/o Stephanie R Dietz  
678 W 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

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& CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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Manuel J Alvarado

Dear Mrs. Dietz,

The United Way of Merced County (UWMC) respectfully submits this proposal to you for the funding in the amount of \$100,000 to assist with the upgrading the Mountain Valley 211 Program (MV-211) system. At UWMC we stride to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good.

The Mountain Valley 211 Program adheres to the UWMC vision statement, to fight for the education, health, and financial stability of every person in every community. An equitable society has an obligation to remove barriers while providing support to all people. We have the power to end poverty, dismantle racism, and create a just nation for all. This vision is accomplished through providing all residents in the City of Merced with an easy-to-use resource/referral center. This program will reduce barriers for our community.

The goal of the UWMC is to combine the existing Help Hub Merced County with the MV-211 to deliver smooth, real-time assistance to residents of the City of Merced searching for community resources. Development of the Help Hub Merced County website began March 2020 out of the need of residents to locate much needed local resources. Residents would complete an online form asking for PPE, food, financial assistance, housing, and medical assistance. Staff would receive those requests, arrange for help to the individuals than follow up to make sure assistance receive was satisfactory.

The UWMC believes that MV-211 meets the service being requested through the Community Funding Grant. The program is accessible to all City of Merced residents via telephone or online. In fact, since the beginning of 2022, 61% of all calls and requests for assistance to the 2-1-1 program have been from the city of Merced. The reason for not moving completely online is to remain user friendly to our population who are not comfortable with technology. The program assists residents with locating community partners that provide affordable housing or housing for older adults. MV-211 assists residents in finding medical services, test and vaccination clinics, referrals to homeless services, older adult socialization, and fitness program, basically all services available through agencies and community partners in the City of Merced.

In 2019 the UWMC made the decision to bring MV-211 "in house" to the Merced office from United Ways of California. Doing so would allow for not only better referrals but allow for the database to be updated weekly. Due to a loss of \$118,000 in unrestricted funds through annual fundraisers in 2020 and 2021, this community service project had to be postponed.

### **Mountain Valley 211 Program**

Mountain Valley 211 program will provide a comprehensive and localized system of information and referral from those seeking resources in a variety of human services categories, ranging from healthcare to housing to food resources. Services will be provided by live community resource specialists both by phone and by two-way SMS messaging services. In addition, a mobile application will be developed, allowing help seekers to access self-service searches and the existing website will be redeveloped with an emphasis on accessibility and ease of use, allowing more and quicker paths to assistance for those in need.

The Mountain Valley 211 Resource Database contains over three thousand programs in 2438 active categories. See the attached for a listing of the taxonomy terms that describe the needs contained in the database at present. The goal of the service itself is to provide a one-stop contact for connection to any community resource available to those in need with a high degree of convenience and precision and a minimal amount of frustration on the part of the help-seeker.

United Way of Merced County has developed the below timeline/benchmarks to keep the program upgrades/additions/enhancements on track

- a. July 2022: Hire one to two part time bilingual staff members for call center to better serve the diverse population of the county. Having additional bilingual staff will reduce the need to rely on language interpretation services, providing a better overall client experience. In addition, another part-time staff member will be hired to clean up the MV-211 database with the program manager to make sure all information is up-to-date and provides quick service to our clients. The database manager and program manager will complete two major goals: ensure as close as possible to 100% participation by service providers and all records in the database are up to date with current contact information.
- b. September 2022: Locate and secure web developer to assist in mobile app creation. The goal is to create a downloadable app for Android and IOS that will allow clients to search the MV-211 database and find referral contacts in self-service environments. After the release of the app in Fall 2022, UWMC will explore the feasibility of publishing MV-211 data online and/or in an App for smart phone in other languages, especially focusing on Spanish, Hmong, and/or Punjabi. This process would begin January 2023 and extend into the first part of 2023.
- c. September 2022: In conjunction with the app, UWMC would secure another web developer to maximize ease-of-use of the website with a total redesign. The website will be easier to use on mobile devices, will have fresh and modern appearance and will incorporate easy functionality for service providers to request updates to their database entries.

d. October 2022: Create and launch paper/online marketing campaign targeted toward human service providers which will increase awareness of MV-211 and provide a case for the benefit of inclusion in the database to service providers.

e. January 2023: Identify gaps in the database or gaps in services within the county. Locate organizations to fill those gaps in services or provide funding opportunities to create services in those gaps with UWMC and other community-based organizations.

f. February 2023: Work with Unite Us platform to determine whether integration is feasible

### ***United Way of Merced County Experience***

#### **Experience Past Five Years:**

- 1.) You, Me COVID Free: Working in conjunction with Duke University, UWMC was tasked with distributing 200,000 at-home COVID testing kits to the general populace of the county. Over the six-week period, United Way successfully managed the program by partnering with local Community Based Organizations, county and city organizations, and local businesses. Currently the program is being evaluated as the go-to model for community engagement by Duke University.
- 2.) Small Business Grants: With funding from the City of Merced, UWMC was tasked with distributing \$450,000 worth of grants to local businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The HUD program began in October with the launch of an online application portal and as of March has had four successfully completed applications and forty-five applications in progress. Beginning in May 2022, the program will adapt and focus on businesses in districts who have not begun applying for funding.
- 3.) CIC grant funding: Through January – June 2022, UWMC has granted \$30,000 to 8 local nonprofits for capacity building and general use of funds for their organizations.
- 4.) Aliados por la salud: In partnership with UC San Francisco, Aliados por la salud provides rapid COVID-19 Testing to the residents of Planada and Le Grand at our testing facility. As of February 2022, Aliados por la salud has begun testing in the city of Merced at the UWMC office once a week and looks to expand testing to other parts of the county in the Spring of 2022.
- 5.) VITA: From February 2022 – June 2022, UWMC provides free tax preparation to the residents of Merced County. This service is provided to low-income families. Each year, the VITA program serves upwards of one hundred families and provides thousands of dollars in tax refunds to its residents. The program is made up of two UW staff members and volunteers who are trained in tax preparation and gain valuable experience and training in tax preparation.
- 6.) Mountain Valley 211 – MV-211 is a free phone number for the residents of Merced County to call to receive information regarding the services they need within the county. As of October 2021, the program was taken back by UWMC from the United Ways of California to provide better, more localized services to our residents. The program re-launched locally in March 2022 with a MV-211 app and new website launching towards the end of 2022, early 2023.

- 7.) COVID-19 Pandemic Relief: From March 2020 – present, UWMC has been actively engaged in supporting its community through our Rise United Relief Fund in which over \$1.4 million was distributed within the county in a variety of programs:
- a. Distance Learning Support to schools in Planada, Delhi, and Ballico
  - b. Individual rent and utility relief
  - c. Nonprofit Stabilization grants from \$2,500 - \$10,000 to 30 different county nonprofits.
  - d. Food Support to food pantries in which they could get the groceries they needed at a free/price reduced cost from the Merced County Food Bank
  - e. A partnership with the county of Merced, the Merced County Food Bank, and Better Homes and Gardens Realty which resulted in a senior food delivery program which served 200+ seniors a month.
  - f. PPE and supplies purchased on behalf of the county which was distributed amongst at-risk workers and community members
  - g. Support to county foster youth

Should you need more information or have questions regarding these programs/projects, please feel free to contact Robert Hypes, 531 W Main Street, Merced CA or by telephone: 209-947-1798.

Sincerely,



Manuel J Alvarado, CEO (he, him & his)  
United Way of Merced County  
531 W Main Street  
Merced, CA 95340  
(209) 383-4242  
[ceo@unitedwaymerced.org](mailto:ceo@unitedwaymerced.org)

## INDIVIDUAL STAFF EXPERIENCE

211 Program Manager: Andrew Burkum – 25 Years Experience	
<p>Andrew has spent the last 25 years in leadership positions, managing individuals and processes with a number of organizations. He has been a supervisor/training coordinator for two previous call centers, most recently a high-volume fraud claims and investigation center for Chase bank. He also has a background in creative communications and marketing, having completed multiple successful campaigns for local organizations within the last five years.</p>	<p><b>Program Manager Core Functions:</b> The 2-1-1 Program Manager assures that daily operations of the 2-1-1 Merced program are high quality, efficient and in accordance with United Way of Merced County standards. 2-1-1 Mountain Valley provides accurate, compassionate and appropriate referrals of community, health and social services to people who are navigating the social services network. Through community outreach and by developing strong relationships with organizational partners, the Program Manager's work increases overall client satisfaction.</p>
211 Call Center Specialist (2 Hired, 2 TBD)	
<p><b>Marty Christman – Four and a half years experience</b> Marty worked in the customer service/call center area for over four and a half years with AT &amp; T and San Jose Collection Agency. In addition, she brings over 10 years experience in office management having worked in medical offices, the Greater Chamber of Commerce and United Way.</p>	<p><b>211 Call Center Specialist Core Functions</b> Deliver high quality, professional information and referral services to callers and actively support department functions. Assess caller needs, search online database for organizations that are capable of meeting those needs, provide caller with referrals to multiple organizations and thoroughly document each call. Other duties as assigned.</p>
<p><b>Luis Mejia-Jimenez</b> Luis studied Psychology at UC Merced, graduating in 2019. He then worked directly with clients as a counselor for Creative Alternatives, Inc., a foster family agency. Coming to the United Way of Merced County in 2020 he has since worked as a program coordinator, overseeing logistics for multiple Human Services projects and has performed significant data entry and registration at UWMC's Planada-based COVID-19 test sites.</p>	
<p><b>2 Call Center Specialists (TBD)</b> Bilingual with a focus in Spanish and Hmong</p>	

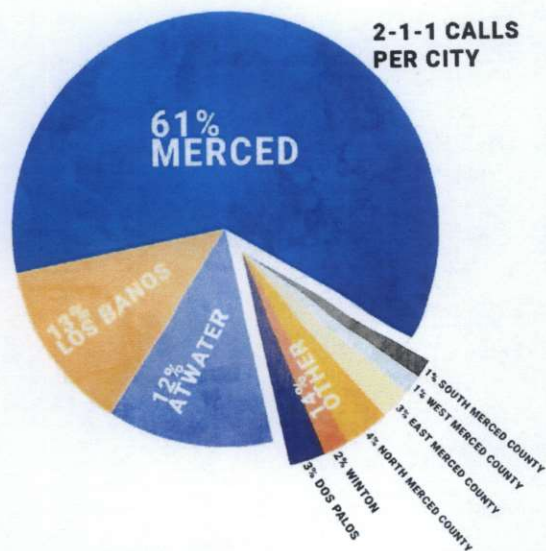
211 Database Coordinator (TBD)

(TBD)

211 Database Coordinator  
Core Functions

Responsible for developing and maintaining 211 resource database entries representing Merced and Mariposa Counties to ensure the 211 Contact Center and the public have access to accurate, easily understood, up-to-date information about health and human services in each area. Requires the ability to maintain high quality, detail-oriented, efficient work on multiple projects on an ongoing basis. Reports to 211 Resource and Project Supervisor.

## PROPOSED PROJECT AND SCOPE OF SERVICES



Mountain Valley 211 program will provide a comprehensive and localized system of information and referral from those seeking resources in a variety of human services categories, ranging from healthcare to housing to food resources. Services will be provided by live community resource specialists both by phone and by two-way SMS messaging services. In addition, a mobile application will be developed, allowing help seekers to access self-service searches and the existing website will be redeveloped with an emphasis on accessibility and ease of use, allowing more and quicker paths to assistance for those in need.

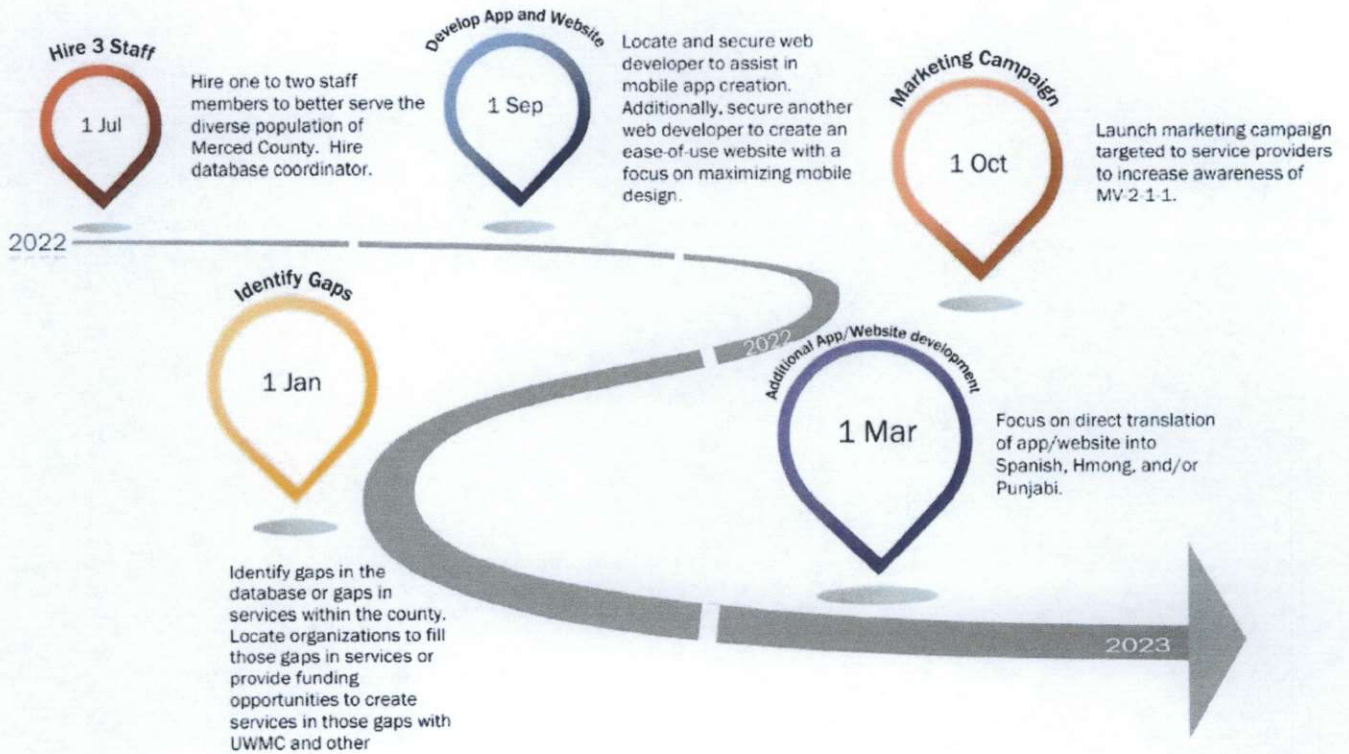
The Mountain Valley 211 Resource Database contains over three thousand programs in 2438 active categories. See the attached for a listing of the taxonomy terms that describe the needs contained in the database at present. The goal of the service itself is to provide a one-stop contact for connection to any community resource available to those in need with a high degree of convenience and precision and a minimal amount of frustration on the part of the help-seeker.

### **PROJECT TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES**

The major goals of the 2-1-1 program for July 2022 – June 2023 occur in multiple milestones.

PHASE	DELIVERABLE
<p>Hire one to two part time bilingual staff members for the call center to better serve the diverse population of the county.</p> <p>In addition, another part-time staff member will be hired to clean up the MV-211 database with the program manager to make sure all information is up-to-date and provides quick service to our clients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduce the need to rely on language services, reducing cost of language translation services by 50%</li> <li>-Ensure as close as possible to 100% participation by service providers and all records in the database are up to date with current contact information</li> </ul>
<p>Locate and secure web developer to assist in mobile app creation.</p> <p>Locate web developer to maximize ease-of-use of the website with a total redesign of the 2-1-1 website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create a downloadable app for Android and IOS that will allow clients to search the MV-211 database and find referral contacts in self-service environments.</li> <li>- website will be easier to use on mobile devices, will have fresh and modern appearance and will incorporate easy functionality for service providers to request updates to their database entries.</li> </ul>

Create and launch paper/online marketing campaign targeted toward human service providers which will increase awareness of MV-211 and provide a case for the benefit of inclusion in the database to service providers.	-Increase service provider participation
Identify gaps in the database or gaps in services within the county.	-UWMC provides up to \$25,000 in funding to CBOs within the county to provide services for gaps identified by the 2-1-1 program
Work with Unite Us Platform	-Identify whether integration is feasible
Explore feasibility of publishing MV-211 data online and/or in an App for smart phone in other languages.	-Provide Spanish option for app and website



## 2-1-1 PROGRAM BUDGET

United Way of Merced County is requesting \$100,000 from the city to assist us in growing and expanding our 2-1-1 program in order to better serve the needs of our community. As part of the overall budget for 2-1-1 for July 2022 – June 2023, United Way has already secured funding from First Five of Merced County and Sunlight Giving. Additionally, we are seeking funding from outside sources to continue with the project.

211 Program Budget (July 2022 – June 2023)					
Personnel	Total Budget	Requested City Funding	First 5 Funding	Sunlight Giving Funding	Additional Funding
Salaries/Wages	\$123,450	\$52,000	\$71,450	0	\$0
Benefits	\$19,014	\$8,092	\$10,922	0	\$0
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>\$142,464</b>	<b>\$60,092</b>	<b>\$82,372</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Operational Expenses</b>					
Office Expenses	\$2,000	\$250	\$1,000	\$0	\$750
Travel and Training	\$4,605	\$3,048	\$1,057	\$0	\$500
Program Expenses	\$46,300	\$14,367	\$1,736	\$0	\$30,198
Other Expenses	\$9,200	\$9,200	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>\$62,105</b>	<b>\$26,865</b>	<b>\$3,793</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$31,448</b>
<b>Indirect @ 15% of Operating + Personnel</b>	<b>\$30,685</b>	<b>\$13,043</b>	<b>\$12,925</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4,717</b>
<b>Total Personnel + Operating + Indirect</b>	<b>\$235,254</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$99,090</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$36,165</b>
<b>Subcontractors</b>					
211 Call Outsourcing	\$25,910	0	\$910	\$25,000	\$0
<b>Total Personnel + Operating + Indirect + Subcontractors</b>	<b>\$261,164</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$36,165</b>

## United Way Budget Justification

### **PERSONNEL**

#### **Andrew Burkum: Program Manager: 1.00FTE - \$61,050**

Mr. Burkum will serve as the Program Manager for 211 Merced. He has extensive experience in leadership, training, and call center management. As the Program Manager Mr. Burkum will be responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the program, ensuring quality assurance controls are in place and met, and overseeing program expansion via advertising and outreach

#### **211 Call Specialist(s); 1.0FTE- \$41,600**

The Community Resource Specialist will be responsible for delivering high quality, professional information and referral services to callers and actively support department functions. The 211 Call Specialists will be our boots on the ground and will be taking the majority of inbound calls.

#### **Database Coordinator; 0.50FTE - \$20,800**

The Database Coordinator is a temporary only position. The current database has not been updated in a few years and needs to be reviewed for validity. The Database Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing the existing database for accuracy by contacting all of the service providers listed and updating / confirming that the program info they offer is still valid and current as well as assisting with data entry for new service providers that are being added to the database.

#### **Fringe and Related Benefits @ \$19,014 (See budget for breakdown of benefits per position)**

Medical and Dental Benefits	\$6,600
Social Security Employment Tax	\$7,654
Medicare Employment Tax	\$1,790
Workers Compensation Insurance	\$1,235
Unemployment Insurance	\$1,736

### **OPERATING EXPENSES**

#### **Office Expenses: \$2,000**

Yearly office supply budget which consists of consumable office supplies, postage, printing costs, and promotional expenses.

**Travel & Training: \$4,605**

Onboard training for Community Resource Specialists which consists of:

- Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) - Training that teaches new call specialists on how to handle calls, make recommendations, the taxonomy of referral systems and how to manage databases.
- Crisis training - Training that teaches call specialists how to react and respond to a caller who is in a crisis situation (natural disasters, job loss, homelessness, suicidal thoughts)
- Travel - Mileage reimbursement to cover travel costs for Program Manager. Reimbursable at maximum federal rate of \$0.585 / mile

AIRS Training for Call Specialists	\$267.50 ea. - \$2,675 total
AIRS Training for Database Specialists	\$367.50 ea. - \$735 total
Annual AIRS Membership	\$305.00 / year
Crisis Training	\$39.00 ea - \$390 total
Travel - Mileage allowance	\$500.00 / year

**Program Expenses: \$46,300**

Program specific 2-1-1 expenses related to:

1. **Advertising / Marketing** - We are planning a large social media campaign to let all of Merced County residents know that 211 is back and should be there one stop shop for when they need help. We will advertise via: Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, Pandora, and local transit ads (Merced The Bus)
2. **Meeting Expenses** - Costs associated with hosting meetings such as space reservations/rentals, food, etc.
3. **Live Translation Services** - Our 211 Call Specialists will be bilingual, but for any calls we receive in languages other than English or Spanish we will utilize an on demand translation service called Language Line which charges us \$1.15 / minute. This line item will cover approx. 21 hours of phone translation services for the year.
4. **10 New Call Workstations** - The 211 calls are routed through a voice over internet provider (VOIP) allowing our 211 Call Specialists or 211 Call Volunteers the ability to answer calls from anywhere. To do so they will need access to reliable technology. These workstations will consist of (1) business class laptop & accessories (mouse, carrying bag, etc), and a high quality headset.
5. **Website Development** - Currently the 211 website is outdated and clunky. We plan to hire a third party website developer that specializes in creating accessible websites to redesign / refresh the website. We anticipate this to cost \$15,000
6. **App Development** - We will be deploying a 211 Merced mobile application that will be compatible with all smartphones and tablets. This app will integrate directly with our database and making connecting residents to local resources even easier We anticipate this to cost \$15,000

Advertising / Marketing	\$8,000
Meeting Expenses	\$800
Live Translation Services	\$1,500
10 New Call Workstations @ \$600 ea.	\$6,000
Mobile App / Website Development	\$30,000

**Other Expenses: \$9,200**

iCarol Database Subscription \$5,000 - iCarol is the resource database that houses all of the available programs, the contact information for those programs, and the eligibility requirements.

Five9 Call Software \$4,200 - Five9 is a cloud based telephony system that will handle all inbound and outbound 211 calls. Utilizing a cloud based system instead of an on-premise system allows our call specialists to answer calls from anywhere.

***CONTRACTORS***

**Community Action Partnership of Kern County: \$25,910**

Community Action Partnership of Kern County provides assistance to the call center by providing trained Call Specialists during off hours. These hours include: Monday - Friday 5:00 pm - 8:00 am, all day Saturday & Sunday, and holidays.

***INDIRECT COSTS***

**United Way of Merced County @ 15%: 30,685**

It is standard policy for the United Way to have indirect costs calculated as 15% of the total program costs. Indirect costs are those that are incurred to support the program, but cannot be directly linked back to the program. Examples of these are executive oversight, human resources, finance, and quality management

***TOTAL BUDGET***

**Year Two: \$261,164**

**Secured Funding: \$125,000**

**Requested Funding: \$100,000**

**Additional Funding to be sourced: \$36,125**

## REFERENCES

Michael Cohen-Wolkowicz, MD PhD  
Kiser-Arena Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, Duke University  
Head, Pediatrics, Duke Clinical Research Institute  
Co-Investigator, You & Me COVID-Free Program  
[Michael.cohenwolkowicz@duke.edu](mailto:Michael.cohenwolkowicz@duke.edu)

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Merced County Sheriff's Office  
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Merced, CA 95340  
209-385-7445  
Partnered in the COVID Free You and Me Program

Doug Dunford, City Manager  
City of Gustine  
352 Fifth St  
Gustine, CA 95322  
209-854-6471  
Partnered in the COVID Free You and Me Program

Assemblyman Adam Gray  
State Assembly  
P.O. Box 911  
Merced, CA 95341  
2069-536-2131  
Partnered in the COVID Free You and Me Program

UCSF  
Gabriel Chamie (or) Carina Marquez  
Department of Medicine, Box 0874  
995 Potrero Ave, Bldg. 80, Floor 4  
San Francisco, CA 94143



Manuel Alvarado  
Chief Executive Officer  
United Way of Merced County  
531 W Main St, Merced, CA 95340

February 1, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This serves as a letter of recommendation for United Way of Merced County as they seek American Rescue Plan Act funding. I am the Head of Pediatrics at the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), which is the largest academic research organization in the world with 900+ faculty and staff. The DCRI leads and oversees >500 clinical studies and has >\$250M in annual revenue from research programs sponsored by the federal government, industry corporations, and non-profit foundations. The DCRI leads national research programs addressing COVID-19 research questions including the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics in Underserved Populations Coordination and Data Collection Center (RADx-UP CDCC). This program aims to increase access and uptake of COVID-19 tests in historically marginalized populations and it is the single largest investment in health disparities in the history of the National Institutes of Health.

Collaborators from the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), University of North Carolina Center for Health Equity Research, and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health collaborated with United Way of Merced County from Nov. 2021 to Jan. 2022 to address at-home testing during the COVID-19 pandemic through the RADx-UP-funded [You & Me COVID-Free/Tú y Yo LIBRES de COVID](#) program. United Way of Merced County served as the lead community partner for the program, which provided free, at-home test kits to Merced County residents to slow the spread of COVID-19 by encouraging testing before gathering.

In their role as lead community partner, United Way of Merced County:

- Facilitated the distribution of **200,000 test kits** to Merced County residents in **six weeks**;
- Recruited more than **65 community partners** to assist with the effort;
- Coordinated more than **34 distribution events** to place test kits into the hands of community members; and
- Managed all on-the-ground logistics for the program, including the warehousing, tracking, and distribution.

Results from a survey of more than 30 community partner organizations in Merced County suggests that partners overwhelmingly agreed that the United Way met their expectations to support the You & Me COVID-Free program. According Pastor Ella Luna-Garza, United Methodist Church, Merced:

“What an amazing and productive partnership United Methodist Church of Merced has participated in with the You & Me COVID-Free program. The effort to distribute 200,000 test-at-home kits has helped to care for the health and wellness of families across Merced County. Persons were able to make safe holiday plans, receive needed care in a timely manner, and reduce the probabilities of larger outbreaks. Because of access to the COVID at-home tests, new grandmothers were able to hold newborn babies, brothers and sisters were able to visit each other over the holidays, friends could



share a meal together, the faithful could worship in community, and others could isolate safely. We are thankful for the outreach of the tests, and the ways in which it has cared for Merced.”

As the lead community partner, United Way was confident, competent, enthusiastic, and worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the You & Me COVID-Free program. On behalf of the entire You & Me COVID-Free leadership team, I wholeheartedly endorse United Way of Merced County to support future public health programs in Merced County and beyond. Our partnership and experience with United Way will inform similar strategies to increase at-home testing in underserved populations nationally.

Regards,  
Micky

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micky".

Michael Cohen-Wolkowicz, MD PhD  
Kiser-Arena Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, Duke University  
Head, Pediatrics, Duke Clinical Research Institute  
Co-Investigator, You & Me COVID-Free Program  
michael.cohenwolkowicz@duke.edu, @mickycwMD  
He/him/his