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**CLEVELAND COUNTY**  
**RECOVERY PROGRAM**

December 11, 2023

**For Immediate Release**

**CLEVELAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AWARD ARPA FUNDS TO UNITED WAY  
More Than \$1.1 Million in Funds Designated to Assist Multiple Area Agencies**

[NORMAN, Okla.] — On Monday, Cleveland County Commissioners awarded United Way of Norman \$1,157,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These funds will be utilized by the organization to provide support to its extensive network of more than 20 partner agencies throughout the county.

“We are thankful for the trust Cleveland County Commissioners have placed with United Way of Norman to distribute these funds to our partner agencies,” said Daren Wilson, United Way of Norman President & CEO. “This funding will make a huge difference for local nonprofits still struggling with the impact of the pandemic. We are excited to be able to help with their recovery, so these agencies can continue to do amazing work in our community helping our neighbors, family, and friends.”

United Way is poised to allocate the excess of \$1 million in funding to 21 of its member agencies that fulfill the award criteria and have not previously received separate ARPA funding. Under this agreement, The Virtue Center, Food and Shelter, and The Salvation Army, all of which have been awarded ARPA monies prior, will not receive further funding from this allocation.

District 3 Cleveland County Commissioner Rusty Grissom said he looked forward to getting these funds to United Way of Norman and emphasized the organization’s efficacy in thoroughly evaluating and disbursing funds to qualified, local nonprofits.

“United Way has a proven track record of vetting and distributing money to deserving area nonprofits,” Grissom said. “By partnering with them on these endowments, Cleveland County can best get the money into the hands of the nonprofits who work directly with populations that can benefit from it.”

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Although the majority of United Way’s member nonprofit organizations are centered in or around Norman, their services extend beyond city boundaries. The affiliated nonprofits offer a range of crucial services, including education and mentoring for youth and families, emergency shelter for at-risk teens and children, vocational support, resources for the homeless and impoverished, mental and behavioral health services, assistance for seniors and individuals with disabilities, as well as support for those who have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse.

“United Way of Norman is an incredibly deserving organization that is staffed with people who bring years of frontline experience to the table,” said District 2 Cleveland County Commissioner Jacob McHughes. “These folks are actively engaged with individuals across the county working to address the impacts of abuse, poverty, and the pandemic.”

Upon receiving a \$55 million allocation in ARPA funding to address public health and mitigate the adverse economic effects of the pandemic, Cleveland County initiated a thorough community engagement process. This effort culminated in the development of the Cleveland County Recovery Plan, which delineates three overarching goals for utilizing the ARPA funds: prioritizing people, investing in infrastructure, and stimulating economic recovery.

The allocation to United Way of Norman, according to District 1 Cleveland County Commissioner Rod Cleveland, directly addresses those primary objectives.

“Our three primary goals for the ARPA funds align seamlessly with the mission of United Way,” Cleveland said. “As you analyze the allocated funds, it’s evident that our aim is to address the broader ramifications of the pandemic. We intend to foster job creation, alleviate food insecurity, bolster infrastructure, and promote prosperity and advancement in public health and community resources. This award stands as a direct means to achieve that.”

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Media Attachment: Photo