

OUR DERECHO RESPONSE



United Way
of East Central Iowa

For many in Eastern Iowa, August 10, 2020 started out as any other Monday. Everything changed that afternoon when whistling straight-line winds, booming thunder, and torrential downpours completely uprooted cities and small towns across the state. With the support of numerous donors, volunteers, and partners from across Eastern Iowa the Midwest, and the nation, United Way of East Central Iowa (UWECI) is ready to continue creating solutions to respond to lead the long-term recovery process.

UNITED WAY OF EAST CENTRAL IOWA

Along with working as part of the LAP-AID collaboration to help our community recover, UWECI launched several community collaborations, spearheaded additional storm-related communications, and provided resources and funding to local nonprofits.

MAJOR PROJECTS

DISASTER RECOVERY FUND

UWECI established the Disaster Recovery Fund on August 14 to support emerging needs through funding area nonprofits with derecho-related projects and needs. This fund is designed to complement the work of local health and human services nonprofits, as well as expand local capacity to individuals and families experiencing hardship. Within the first month, the fund:



Raised **+\$1.1 million***
from over 2,000 donors.

PROJECT RECONNECT

Alongside the Alliant Energy Foundation, HACAP, and the Local Labor Management Cooperation Committee (LLMCC), UWECI helped launch Project ReConnect. This collaboration was created for Alliant Energy homeowners to receive assistance reconnecting their service masts, electrical boxes, and weather heads at no charge. This funding helped HACAP handle case management and dispatch electricians.



Total over
\$100,000

PROJECT RECONNECT EXPANSION

After discussion, Project ReConnect was expanded to support the Derecho Recovery Homeowner Program.

The funds from Project ReConnect will provide Matthew 25 with a full-time construction manager who will identify and coordinate contracted and volunteer efforts to provide housing rehabilitation for derecho repairs.



Dedicated Manager
to provide help with
derecho repairs

FARMER APPRECIATION FRIDAYS

UWECI designated \$25,000 of a \$75,000 Cargill Disaster Fund contribution to ISU Extension & Outreach to support rural farmers through UWECI's Cultivating Community strategy. Farmer Appreciation Fridays provide storm and recovery education and support to farmers in Linn and Benton Counties.



\$25,000 Donated
to the Disaster Fund

INTERNET HUBS

UWECI partnered with Jane Boyd, the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and ImOn to create 5 different internet hubs around Cedar Rapids for students who don't have great access to internet at home. UWECI provided personal protective equipment and devices for this project.



Provided PPE
to workers & volunteers

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC OUTREACH

In the days and weeks following the derecho, UWECI:



Part of Eastern Iowa United

a 3 television station simulcast telethon that raised more than \$60,000 for UWECI's Disaster Recovery Fund.



Derecho Resource Map

Created as an interactive community resource to easily find food, shelter, and other vital services.



Over 50,000
individuals

reached through social media platforms with derecho-related information.



22 News stories
contributed to by UWECI staff members.

*as of Oct. 19, 2020

PATCH PROGRAM

Three months after Project ReConnect was established, the Alliant Energy Foundation expanded the program to include the PATCH Program (Providing Assistance to Community Homeowners). This system provides Matthew 25 with a Volunteer Coordinator and Housing Rehab Coordinator, who identify and coordinate house repair efforts for low-income families.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

In December 2020, a revolving loan fund was added to PATCH to help homeowners repair homes that were damaged in the storm. PATCH participants are able to borrow up to \$15,000 from the revolving loan fund until their benefits arrive, and then pay back the funds when FEMA or insurance funding is granted.

RENT/UTILITY ASSISTANCE

In January 2021, UWECI worked as a convener to bring eleven area nonprofits together to create a more streamlined process for individuals seeking rent and utility assistance. This collaboration allows households seeking assistance and enhances communication among community programs to ensure all financial resources are being used in the most efficient manner.

LAP-AID

Linn Area Partners Active in Disaster (LAP-AID) rallied individuals from nonprofit organizations and communities to expedite Linn County's response to the derecho and provide long-term recovery resources. UWECI is the hub and fiscal agent of the collaborative effort of more than 40 local nonprofits has many leaders from UWECI.

VOLUNTEER & DONATION COORDINATION

Within 24 hours of the derecho, Linn County Emergency Management (EMA) activated the Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC). This center, spearheaded by United Way of East Central Iowa (UWECI) as part of the LAP-AID collaboration, led the organization and recruitment of local and national volunteer teams to help with the clean-up process, as well as take in donations. We accomplished:



Coordinated volunteers

for all City of Cedar Rapids meal sites, which served meals 2 times per day for 1 week.



Coordinated intake of donations

and secured a warehouse to hold them.



56% of volunteers*

helped in more than one volunteer category (food distribution, debris clean up, etc.)



1,350+ LAP-AID volunteers*

engaged in multiple volunteer opportunities throughout the county.



12,947 hours*

worked by 2,589 volunteers, averaging out to 5 hours per volunteer.



Coordinated resource centers

for 5 neighborhoods with other area partners, such as the City of Cedar Rapids and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation



MAJOR PROJECTS CONTD.


100+ Homes Repaired


\$25,000 Donated to the Disaster Fund


300+ Calls received daily requesting support

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC OUTREACH

In the days and weeks following the derecho, LAP-AID:



Attended daily press conferences to share updates on disaster recovery, volunteer efforts, and community collaborations with area officials and the general public.



Developed, distributed, & delivered essential communications on local resources through social media channels, the UWECI website, and the LAP-AID websites.



15 News stories

initiated on volunteer coordination and disaster preparedness.

Learn how you can help at uweci.org

