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MEDIA RELEASE

Economy, sharper focus affect 2011-12 grant investments

Community Impact Fund grants part of strategy to create deeper impact in key social areas; measurable stewardship mark United Way disbursement decisions

ATLANTA (JULY 21, 2011) — On July 19, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta's Board of Directors approved an investment package of \$20.9 million. The investment package has three components: The Community Impact Fund, initiatives and an Innovation Fund. This year's package represents a 10 percent decrease from last year's \$23.1 million package.

One of several powerful ways United Way invests in our community is through the Community Impact Fund (CIF). This fund represents discretionary dollars disbursed by trained United Way volunteers, who identify and prioritize community needs and direct CIF dollars to address those needs. This year, grants totaling \$15.2 million will go to 124 community agencies in the organization's 13-county service area.

These critical dollars help ensure that metro Atlanta has the tools for a good quality of life and bring measurable results in education, income, health and homelessness, United Way's core focus areas. This year also marked a major shift in the grant application process to address donor and community demands for sharper alignment and impacts in those core areas.

"After an exhaustive and competitive process by more than 190 volunteers and Board members, we are happy to put these essential dollars to work in our community because we know how much our grant partners depend on these resources," said Milton J. Little, Jr., president of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. "Unfortunately, many agencies saw a reduction in their grant awards this year, and 49 agencies will not be funded at all, but these are the tough decisions our Board and community volunteers had to make based on the current climate."

A total of 173 agencies submitted applications. Of those, 124 agencies will be funded. Programs that did not receive funding were determined by volunteers to have the least amount of alignment with the focus areas.

"This is not to say that programs that did not receive funding are not worthwhile and important community assets, because they are," says Larry Keys, outgoing Board Chair for United Way. "With fewer dollars to invest, however, and donor demands for those resources to be more focused, volunteers implemented a methodology in this tough economy that gets the most impact and ensures long-term viability for United Way. This was the right decision at the right time and these volunteers deserve a lot of credit for their commitment to the community."

Even some applicants that competed well did not receive awards because funds just were not available. United Way received requests for funding in excess of \$20 million above what was available. This shows the growing needs in the community in this down economy. To highlight the matter, the Community Investment Fund pool is down 20 percent overall from last year.

In 2011-12, United Way is projected to invest more than \$82 million in the 13-county region, which represents total revenue (fundraising and all grants) minus unfulfilled pledges, depreciation, administrative and fundraising costs. Of that, \$25 million will go toward ending long-term homelessness and early learning projects, Gifts in

Kind and operating the United Way 2-1-1 call center. \$15.2 million is allocated to the Community Impact Fund. Other community investments include \$3.8 million for initiatives, including Smart Start and Regional Commission on Homelessness, \$2.1 million through the new Innovation Fund — dollars that will address specific service gaps as they are identified through the year. Also, \$36 million will go directly to specific nonprofit organizations at donors' requests.

Agencies receiving United Way funding in 2011-12 through the Community Impact Fund include (in no particular order): Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta, American Red Cross Metro Atlanta Chapter, Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers, Families First, Salvation Army, Goodwill of North Georgia, Cherokee Family Violence Center, Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. and more.

For the first time in the investments process, volunteers initiated a zero-based application process. This means all grant applicants started on an even playing field and had to demonstrate their impact in one or more of United Way's focus areas.

To ensure the integrity of the grant process, fairness and transparency were cornerstones throughout the application process and site visits. Final approval came from the United Way Board. For a complete listing of 2011-12 grant awards, go to unitedwayatlanta.org.

"Sometimes change and sharpening focus can be difficult," says Keys, "but keeping a 'business as usual' model means being mediocre at best and communities lacking sufficient support and lasting change. This was a community decision, and we look forward to metro Atlanta coming together now more than ever to help our neighbors thrive."