

## **United Way NWT - 2023 Emergency Response Program**

### **Information for NWT Residents, Donors, and Others**

Many people in our communities, particularly those who are impacted by evacuations and wildfires, have been patiently waiting to hear about how these funds have been used or distributed to be supporting evacuation and wildfire relief efforts.

As an organization that is made up of people who are also impacted by evacuations and wildfires, we understand why people want to know where these donations have gone. We're hopeful that this information will answer some of these questions.

### **About United Way NWT:**

United Way NWT is a volunteer-run charity in the NWT that specializes in providing funding directly to charitable organizations in the NWT. The organization is a separate legal entity from United Way Canada, and is governed by an independent Board of Directors made up of people from the Northwest Territories.

The organization has one permanent part-time contractor, working an average of 10-15 hours per week to support the organization. During Emergencies, UWNWT engages one additional part-time contractor to support the Emergency Response. In rare circumstances, such as the most recent Yellowknife, Hay River & Fort Smith evacuations, UWNWT has engaged some additional support to help with finances, communications and other needs.

Donations collected from the public through the NWT Emergency Fund do not go towards paying for the costs of delivering the Emergency Response Program, including staff and contractor labour. These costs are covered through support from UWNWT's corporate, and government partners.

### **How many donations has United Way NWT received?**

Since May 2023, United Way NWT has received over \$2.8 million in pledged donations from the public, private sectors, foundations, and governments. Around \$730,000 of these pledged donations are from the public.

As of September 30th 2023, just over \$2.6 million in donations had been deposited into the United Way NWT's bank account since May. We've redistributed just under 70% of these donations, and are in the process of working with organizations and groups to address additional needs. We are awaiting the other remaining pledges to be processed and deposited into our bank account, and hope to receive these over the next couple weeks.

## How has United Way NWT distributed these donations?

There are many organizations who received funding from the United Way NWT for their wildfire response efforts who are under-resourced and are led by people who have also been impacted by the wildfires. We recognize that sharing the names of these organizations during an emergency could lead to these groups being inundated with requests that they cannot manage or respond to from evacuees in need. It is our practice, during emergencies such as this, to allow for organizations to choose for themselves how they publicly share information about funding they've received from United Way NWT. For this reason, we are sharing an overview of the kinds of projects and initiatives that we have funded.

### Funds Distributed since August 2023:

Since August 2023, we have distributed over \$1.8 million in funding to community organizations, community governments, Alberta Reception Centres for NWT Evacuees, and Indigenous governments to help with costs associated with evacuations and wildfire relief.

- Fuel Gift Cards: Over \$165,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on fuel specific gift cards that were provided to the Reception Centres in Alberta who are hosting NWT Evacuees.*
- Grocery Gift Cards: Over \$370,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on grocery specific gift cards that were provided to Reception Centres or community organizations who are supporting NWT evacuees.*
- Various Gift Cards: \$160,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on gift cards that were provided to the Reception Centres in Alberta who are hosting NWT Evacuees. These are under “various” because they include gift cards that may have been for clothing, personal hygiene items, laundry, groceries, gas, etc.*
- Pets & Animals: Over \$95,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to both NWT-based and Alberta-based organizations helping with pet evacuations, pet supplies, food, or other needs associated with caring for animals during evacuations.*
- Youth Support & Care: Over \$65,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to organizations supporting youth evacuees, either as organizations that evacuated with youth and are responsible for taking care of youth evacuees, or as organizations that are providing opportunities for youth evacuees to socialize and try and find reprieve from the emergency.*
- Food Needs: Over \$310,000
  - *These funds refer to funds that were provided to help with feeding evacuees. These funds were accessed generally by Indigenous governments, or community organizations feeding NWT evacuees.*
- Human Service Organizations: Almost \$50,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to human service organizations, generally organizations that provide services to vulnerable populations such as people who*



*are unhoused or homeless, people with disabilities, survivors of violence, or other vulnerable groups. Human service organizations have accessed funding to help with the costs of supporting evacuees with complex needs.*

- **Direct Aid:** Almost \$360,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to organizations, Indigenous governments, or Indigenous organizations who distributed direct financial assistance to their members, or to the public, impacted by evacuations, or evacuees in need.*
- **Transportation Needs:** Over \$65,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to initiatives that supported evacuees with ground transportation in the communities they've evacuated to.*
- **Families & Children:** Over \$80,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to Reception Centres, organizations, and charities that are providing direct aid or evacuee support to families, pregnant or post-partum individuals, babies, or small children. Examples include providing diaper hampers, providing direct financial assistance, or other needed baby supplies.*
- **Cultural & Mental Health:** Over \$45,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to organizations, Indigenous governments and Reception Centres to help address cultural and mental health needs of NWT Evacuees throughout the evacuations.*
- **Personal Hygiene & Laundry:** Over \$8,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to organizations, Indigenous governments and Reception Centres to give evacuees personal hygiene supplies or products, and to help evacuees with cost of laundry services.*

### **Funds Distributed from May to July 2023:**

From May to July 2023, we distributed over \$460,000 in funding to community organizations, community governments, the Yellowknife evacuation centre, and Indigenous governments to help with costs associated with evacuations and wildfire relief.

- **Fuel Gift Cards:** Over \$50,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on fuel specific gift cards that were provided to the Yellowknife Evacuation Centre during NWT communities evacuations to Yellowknife.*
- **Grocery Gift Cards:** Over \$75,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on grocery specific gift cards that were provided to the Yellowknife Evacuation Centre during NWT communities evacuations to Yellowknife.*
- **Various Gift Cards:** \$70,000
  - *These funds refer to funds spent on gift cards that were provided to the Yellowknife Evacuation Centre during NWT communities evacuations to Yellowknife. These are under "various" because they include gift cards that may have been for clothing, personal hygiene items, groceries, gas, etc.*
- **Pets & Animals:** Over \$35,000



- *These funds refer to funds provided to the NWT SPCA & Veterinarians Without Borders to help with pet evacuations, pet supplies, food, or other needs associated with caring for animals during evacuations.*
- **Youth Support & Care:** Over \$7,000
  - *These funds refer to funds provided to youth organizations to help youth evacuees during their evacuations to Yellowknife from other NWT communities.*
- **Food Needs:** Almost \$185,000
  - *These funds refer to funds that were provided to help with feeding evacuees. These funds were accessed generally by organizations feeding evacuees who evacuated to communities other than Yellowknife, where there weren't options to purchase gift cards.*
- **Accommodation Needs:** Over \$28,000
  - *These funds refer to funds that were provided, in exceptional circumstances, to help with the cost of local Indigenous community governments who housed evacuees in communities that didn't have access to hotels or other accommodations. We generally do not make it a practice to fund accommodations, and this allocation was made in an exceptional circumstance.*
- **Transportation Needs:** Over \$12,000
  - *These funds refer to funds that were provided to help with costs associated with transporting evacuees, supplies, equipment or needed resources during evacuations.*

## **When will the public see which organizations actually received funding?**

Every year, United Way NWT releases our financial statements on our website. These financial statements include a full list of the recipients of funding from our organization.

Members of the public can anticipate seeing a full list of recipients who received contributions throughout the NWT Wildfire season in our 2023/24 financial statements which will be released following our fiscal year end in March 2024.

This financial statement will be made available on our website at <https://nwt.unitedway.ca/about-us/governance/>.

## **Why haven't all the donations been distributed yet?**

We know that members of our community may be curious about why 100% of the donations that we've received have not yet been distributed. Based on our experience with previous emergencies, such as the floods in the Southern NWT back in 2021, we know that communities will continue to have a need for financial support for a while. We also know that donations from the public and from the corporate sector may dwindle, meaning that we won't as easily be able to replenish our Emergency Response Fund.

With that in mind, we are working to ensure that there are appropriate funds available for charities, non-profits, community governments, and Indigenous organizations that may need



them to be able to continue supporting evacuees. To date, we have distributed almost 70% of the total donations that we've received.

### **How to contact the United Way NWT's Emergency Response Team:**

If you have any questions, you can contact our Emergency Response Team using the contact information below.

**Emergency Response Coordinator:**

Jacq Brasseur

*Pronouns: they/them*

(867) 675-2643

[support@nwt.unitedway.ca](mailto:support@nwt.unitedway.ca)