



For Immediate Release

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## **United Way Achieves Amgen Foundation Challenge Grant to Support Homelessness Efforts**

**Ventura, CA, June 25, 2020** – United Way of Ventura County has successfully met the Amgen Foundation \$100,000 challenge grant to launch a Landlord Engagement Program thanks to the generosity of six founding local funders. The goal of the program is to increase housing stock and utilize existing housing vouchers and housing subsidies provided by local jurisdictions and community partners to prevent and end homelessness. The challenge grant provided the foundation for a new funding mechanism designed to generate permanent supportive housing for chronic homeless individuals through a streamlined, one-stop funding collaborative comprised of public and private funders dedicated to ending homelessness.

The founding funders include:

- City of Oxnard
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Pacific Western Bank
- Sherwood Cares Foundation
- Union Bank

“Homelessness continues to plague so many communities around the nation, including our own. It is inspiring to see how Ventura County has come together to support the Landlord Engagement Program,” said Eduardo Cetlin, president, Amgen Foundation. “Our fellow funders have recognized the tangible impact this program is having, and we are proud to stand with them to help end homelessness in Ventura County.”

The funds will further leverage public support provided by a Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant in the amount of \$200,000 by the Ventura County Continuum of Care for United Way’s Landlord Engagement Program.

Since United Way launched the Landlord Engagement Program in December 2019, 18 unsheltered homeless households including seniors, veterans, individuals, and families have been permanently housed. As a rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, United Way has helped 29 unsheltered veterans and family members by securing temporary housing in a motel and providing daily food service. Through a partnership with Salvation Army's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), the program will be extended through July 2020 as United Way seeks permanent housing solutions for those veterans and their families. Additionally, United Way provided 2,000 Rapid Response Homeless Care Kits which were distributed by the Ventura County Healthcare for the Homeless Backpack Medicine team.

"We are grateful to the Amgen Foundation for leading the way with this generous challenge grant and the six founding funders who have joined the cause to bring an end to homelessness in Ventura County," said Eric Harrison, president and CEO. "Permanent supportive housing enables Ventura County's most vulnerable individuals, families, and veterans to thrive at a much higher rate than short term shelters and we are encouraged by our success rate to date with this program."

To become a member of the funding collaborative, please email [Eric.Harrison@vcunitedway.org](mailto:Eric.Harrison@vcunitedway.org). Landlords interested in becoming a member of the program, please email [Amy.Duganne@vcunitedway.org](mailto:Amy.Duganne@vcunitedway.org).

To make a donation, visit <http://igfn.us/form/hEGFmg>

### **About the Amgen Foundation**

The Amgen Foundation seeks to advance excellence in science education to inspire the next generation of innovators, and invest in strengthening communities where Amgen staff members live and work. To date, the Foundation has donated more than \$325 million to local, regional, and international non-profit organizations that impact society in inspiring and innovative ways. The Amgen Foundation brings the excitement of discovery to the scientists of tomorrow through several signature programs, including Amgen Scholars, Amgen Biotech Experience, and LabXchange. For more information, visit [www.amgeninspires.com](http://www.amgeninspires.com) and follow us on Twitter @AmgenFoundation.

### **About United Way of Ventura County**

Since 1945, United Way of Ventura County has advanced the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. United Way identifies the root causes of poverty and works strategically to solve them by building alliances across all sectors, funding targeted programs and advocating for change. When we work together in common purpose, we LIVE UNITED. For more information about United Way of Ventura County, visit [www.vcunitedway.org](http://www.vcunitedway.org).

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