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## **In the face of the challenging economy, United Way announces steps to maximize available resources for the community**

BOSTON – With the economy creating many challenges for families, government, businesses and nonprofits in the region, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (UWMBMV) announced today that it is taking steps to focus even more sharply on its core priorities of helping to create positive, lasting change for children, youth and families and ensuring that their immediate basic needs are met now. The economic volatility of the past few months has compelled UWMBMV to take a close look at all aspects of the organization, with a particular focus on how it maximizes the impact of the resources it is investing in the community.

“More people need help, and the availability of resources to meet their needs is becoming increasingly uncertain,” said **Michael K. Durkin**, president and chief executive officer of UWMBMV. “Early indications from fundraising efforts within the workplace, community leadership and foundations show that we are on track to raise \$48 million this year. The measures we are announcing today are responsible and necessary steps that will enable our organization to weather the current economic storm, support our community partners and position our organization for the future.”

The launch of United Way’s Community Support Fund, a special appeal to provide emergency assistance to families in financial crisis this winter, is an example of recent efforts to get more funds into the community at a time when they are most needed. UWMBMV is also actively working to diversify sources of revenue and increase collaboration with community partners such as other funders and government entities to maximize the impact of its work. This growth and these partnerships are essential to the achievement of United Way’s community goals of helping ensure children are ready for school, youth graduate high school and families are financially stable.

But these efforts to increase available resources are not enough. UWMBMV has also been keeping a watchful eye on its overhead and has, over the past few months, been working aggressively to contain costs. To date, the organization has created significant savings by reducing occupancy, administration and costs of outsourced services. It is also leveraging new technology to move a large portion of marketing efforts online in order to reduce print costs.

As UWMBMV has seen the changes in the economy unfold over the past year, it has also reorganized its staff to ensure that it is most effectively positioned to achieve its community goals and drive revenue growth. These moves have resulted in the elimination of 11 vacant positions. But under today’s economic climate, these steps are not enough. Although each one of its staff members is highly committed and makes a critical contribution to UWMBMV’s mission, the organization has made the difficult decision today to further reduce staff by 9 filled positions.

The full effect of these efforts will result in a 15 percent decrease in operating expenses this fiscal year. These savings, combined with efforts to grow and diversify revenue, will enable UWMBMV to maximize the resources it invests in the community.

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