

Written by Reporting on the People who Make a Difference

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Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, Desert Financial Credit Union is donating \$500,000 in emergency funds to five Valley non-profits supporting critical community needs. United Food Bank and St. Mary's Food Bank will each receive \$150,000 from the credit union, while Midwest and Desert Mission Food Banks will each receive \$50,000. Valley of the Sun United Way will receive an additional \$100,000.

"We are making this donation immediately in order to support these vital non-profits with distributing essential resources," said **Jeff Meshey**, President & CEO of Desert Financial. "We are a local credit union with an 80-year history in the Valley, and we are committed to helping this community - our community - through this unprecedented challenge."

(Pictured above are Desert Financial employees who helped pack materials for last year's Valley of the Sun United Way drive.)

More than 650,000 Maricopa County households were struggling to meet basic needs as recently as last month, according to some sources. With the arrival and resulting fallout of COVID-19, that number has already increased exponentially.

St. Mary's Food bank reported that the demand for their emergency food boxes doubled overnight. The United Food Bank was expecting to serve three times as many individuals in the coming week.

"Seeing a huge surge of families in need while simultaneously losing much of our grocery rescue donations has made for a challenging time at St. Mary's," President and CEO **Tom Kertis** said. "And this could be only the beginning. But we have great friends and partners in our community. This incredible gift from Desert Financial will help ease the strain and allow us to continue to say 'Yes' to every family that needs help during this pandemic. We will be here for them because companies like Desert Financial are here for us."

Desert Financial's food bank donations are strategically placed to reach communities across the state, helping make more resources available to more of those in need. "In United Food Banks' 35-year history, we've never seen so much food leave from our warehouse in one week," said **Dave Richins**, CEO of United Food Bank. "A donation like this from Desert Financial is needed right now more than ever to help us deliver nutritious meals to Arizonans in need during this crisis."

The Valley of the Sun United Way donation will go to a COVID-19 response fund addressing critical needs as they arise.

Desert Financial plans to continue working with existing non-profit partners and the broader community to identify emergency needs. Work has already begun in this area. For example, Desert Financial worked with Valley-based non-profit A New Leaf, to purchase a month's worth of toilet paper addressing critical shortages for their housing program. The credit union also purchased food to help A New Leaf meet increased demand for children staying home from school.

In addition, the Desert Financial Foundation is developing programming to help members and individuals facing financial difficulty, including webinars on crisis budgeting, resources for employers and more.

The credit union's Random Acts of Kindness program is also continuing, with new restrictions in place following CDC and state health guidelines for social distancing. Members of the public are able to submit their ideas for Random Acts of Kindness [here](#).