



**WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER**

**LIVING UNITED**

**COLLABORATES**

# Disaster Preparedness And Response

## OPPORTUNITIES

When the September 2013 floods hit Weld County, Marsha’s mobile home and everything in it was completely destroyed. She had no idea what to do or who to turn to. Marsha’s neighbors were going to the Disaster Recovery Center to seek assistance, so she went with them. There, Marsha started talking with a United Way of Weld County 211 Colorado representative, who sat down with her and explained the available services. In addition to FEMA and the Red Cross, Marsha found out that United Way had a fund available for those affected by the floods, and that 211 would always be just a phone call away if she needed more help finding resources.

## ABOUT UNITED WAY OF WELD COUNTY

United Way has the vision, experience, relationships, and ability to take on and solve some of Weld County’s biggest challenges. Through United Way, together we are building a better Weld County, one where children are reading to learn by the start of fourth grade, youth are working at good jobs by age 25, families have stable housing, older adults are aging well, and people are connecting to the help they need. **Will you join us?**

Connecting Weld programs help human services increase in visibility, accessibility, and capacity.



## CHALLENGES

Being prepared for disasters is a shared responsibility. It takes the whole community working together to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from the destructive forces of nature and other emergencies and disasters. In 2020, there were a total of 416 natural disaster events worldwide. Economic damages were estimated at \$99.2 billion. In a typical year, taxpayer spending on the federal disaster relief fund is almost 10 times higher than it was three decades ago, even after adjusting for inflation, according to a

Washington Post analysis.

United Way of Weld County helps when disaster strikes. And being ready is up to all of us. Ways to prepare include:

- get informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you
- develop an emergency plan
- collect and assemble a disaster supplies kit
- learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards
- identify the community warning systems and evacuation routes
- practice and maintain your plan
- visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for more ideas

Approximately **50%** of American households claim to have a disaster plan and supplies, but when pressed for more information in a follow-up question, it was found that only **35%** of all households had prepared adequately.





## INVESTMENTS

Disaster preparedness and response has always been a function of United Way of Weld County and 211 Colorado. Following September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, the United Way role in Weld County and other locales increased. When there is a disaster, 211 makes information including road closures, locations of temporary shelters, pre-evacuation areas, and much more readily available for both callers and website visitors. 211 also publishes a print and electronic guide with the most needed resources.

Additionally, United Way staff assume other disaster roles in the community including: staffing Emergency Operations Centers and Disaster Recovery Centers; coordinating in-kind donations; connecting volunteers with opportunities; accepting and facilitating the allocation of relief and recovery fund donations; facilitating the work of long-term recovery committees; and more. United Way staff attend the monthly meeting of Northeast Colorado disaster preparedness personnel, held at various locations throughout the region. Staff members also attend training drills held to prepare for disaster response. Additionally, United Way of Weld County has provided staff expertise to help with disaster response throughout Colorado and nationwide.

**“Disasters are complex events. The ability of systems to respond effectively in the immediate and long-term aftermath of a catastrophic disaster is the product of many factors: organizational policies and practices, encompassing both the public and private sectors; sufficient information, gained through situational awareness, robust early warning systems, and comprehensive communication strategies; significant preparedness and training; appropriate resources; and the capacity to innovate at a moment’s notice.”**

**– National Center for Disaster Preparedness**

**In 2020-2021, 5 volunteers and staff were available to take calls in times of disaster.**

**In 2020-2021, United Way staff participated in 20+ Weld County and regional planning meetings.**

## GIVE

Make a donation to support United Way of Weld County’s disaster preparedness and response efforts. Also, when a disaster occurs, United Way can direct your donation to any disaster response fund in the world.

## ADVOCATE

Start a conversation with your friends and family about their personal disaster preparedness plans.

## VOLUNTEER

During times of disaster, United Way connects dozens, even hundreds, of volunteers with those who need help.

**Please contact the UWWC Community Impact team at [Impact@UnitedWay-Weld.org](mailto:Impact@UnitedWay-Weld.org) or 970-353-4300 for more information or to get involved.**