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LOCAL COLLABORATION FILLS \$370,700 FUNDING GAP FOR SHELTER BEDS

*ESL, United Way and Rochester Area Community Foundation
join forces to support four local shelters serving clients through winter months*

Rochester, NY – ESL, United Way and Rochester Area Community Foundation announced today that they are collaborating to solve a shelter funding crisis this winter, amounting to \$370,700 that will fill short-term funding gaps anticipated by the Salvation Army, Spiritus Christi, Volunteers of America, and the YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County.

The redirect of federal and state funding has left these four local shelter providers struggling to meet increasing demands for emergency housing. The four providers are working with Partners Ending Homelessness to develop a comprehensive evaluation and strategy for continued services, including advocacy and community investments necessary to replace the lost funding.

While this long-term planning and sustainability work is in progress, ESL, United Way and the Community Foundation have rallied to provide critical short-term support for the next nine months. This will allow the shelters to serve nearly 2,000 homeless men, women and children through the coldest time of year in Rochester.

“This investment will assure those who need housing have access to it,” said Ajamu Kitwana, Vice President/Director of Community Impact, ESL Federal Credit Union. “We at ESL are inspired by the work being done by the four shelters, United Way of Greater Rochester and the Community Foundation to rally support for our community’s most vulnerable citizens. The collaboration taking place—from funding critical needs to working on long-term planning—is the type of action our community needs in order to address our most critical issues.”

“This is collaboration in its truest form,” said Jaime Saunders, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester. “We are proud to work with ESL and the Community Foundation to invest in supporting those who are struggling this winter season. The work being done by the four shelter

providers to address a more sustainable solution for the future speaks to the strength of this network and the drive to overcome challenges in our community.”

The Community Foundation reached out to donors who previously supported these shelter providers and asked for their help. “When there is a crisis in our community, our donors respond quickly and generously—and they did that once again. We are so fortunate that the needs of those who have little is of great concern to so many,” said Jennifer Leonard, the Foundation’s president and CEO.

Individuals struggling with housing and/or homelessness challenges can call 2-1-1 for referrals to local shelters and housing resources.

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