

**United Way Blackhawk Region**

205 North Main Street, Suite 101  
Janesville, WI 53545-3062  
Tel 608 757.3040  
Fax 608 757.3055  
[LiveUnitedBR.org](http://LiveUnitedBR.org)



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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For immediate release:

For additional information contact:

Mary Fanning-Penny, President & CEO

[mfanning-penny@lubr.org](mailto:mfanning-penny@lubr.org) or (608) 314-8422

## **Free Rides to COVID-19 Vaccination Appointments**

*Call United Way's 211 and get connected to a free ride*

BLACKHAWK REGION – In an effort to identify and remove barriers to accessing the COVID-19 vaccination, United Way Blackhawk Region has been collaborating with community partners to coordinate county-wide transportation to vaccine appointments.

“It is a priority for United Way and our community partners, to ensure equitable access and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine,” said United Way Blackhawk Region President & CEO Mary Fanning-Penny. “That means finding thoughtful ways to reach out and be inclusive of all our neighbors.”

Individuals in need of transportation to their COVID-19 vaccination appointment, may simply dial 211 during the weekday hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and be connected to a live person who will assist them in scheduling a free ride. Fanning-Penny added, “This option may be of particular interest to our elderly neighbors no longer able or comfortable driving themselves, folks who have mobility issues, people without reliable transportation, or families on a tight budget.”

United Way Blackhawk Region is proud to recognize all partners working to provide transportation to COVID-19 vaccine appointments, including: Beloit Transit, Janesville Transit, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Rock County Aging and Disability Resource Center, Rock County Council on Aging, Rock County Public Health Department, and United Way's 211 Call Center.

People who may still have questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine are reminded to visit [RockCountyShot.com](http://RockCountyShot.com) for clear, easy answers. In addition to the section about needing a ride to appointments, the website also features information on vaccine eligibility, safety, cost, provider details, and concerns from communities of color.

United Way has been active in our region's response to the pandemic since the initial outbreak. Thanks to the generosity of our community, access to free transportation is funded in part by a \$5,000 grant from United Way Blackhawk Region's COVID-19 Action Fund. Additional outreach totaling \$4,000 has also been allocated by the Rock County Public Health Department to raise awareness and access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

“Together, we want to help rebuild healthy, strong and equitable communities,” said Fanning-Penny. “All of these efforts are made possible by the generosity of our community and effective partnerships.”

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### **About 211**

Need help? Simply dial 211 from your cell phone or landline anywhere in Wisconsin. If you cannot reach us through 211, call 877-947-2211. United Way's 211 is a free and confidential 24/7 information and referral service. 211 specialists can connect you with a wide range of resources and services. Call 211 to get expert, caring help with food, health care, housing and utilities payment assistance, employment services, veteran services, childcare, crisis and emergency counseling, disaster assistance, and more. 211 operators offer help in more than 180 languages.

### **About RockCountyShot.com**

RockCountyShot.com is a collaborative website in partnership with and funded by United Way Blackhawk Region's COVID-19 Action Fund. This user-friendly, one-stop-shop will be updated regularly by local vaccine providers to help community members successfully access the COVID-19 vaccine. All major healthcare providers (Beloit Area Community Health Center, Beloit Health System, Edgerton Hospital, HealthNet Rock County, Mercyhealth, SSM Health / Dean Medical Group) are participating on the site, as well as local pharmacies (Beloit Homecare Pharmacy, Clinton Pharmacy, Edgerton Pharmacy, Evansville Pharmacy, Janesville Hometown Pharmacy, and McGlynn Pharmacy), national chains (CVS and Walgreens), and the Rock County Public Health Department.

### **About United Way Blackhawk Region**

United Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. We win by Living United, by forging unlikely partnerships and by finding new solutions to old problems; by mobilizing the best resources; and inspiring individuals to join the fight against a common foe, each community's most daunting social crises. United Way Blackhawk Region Lives United against poverty, family violence, hunger and homelessness to name a few, by providing community grants and resources to 50+ human services programs at 28 nonprofit agencies in Rock County, Wis. and northern Winnebago County, Ill. More information is available at [LiveUnitedBR.org](https://www.LiveUnitedBR.org).