

I AM YOUR  
NEIGHBOR.



Better  
Together

**A COVID-19 Community Response  
Toolkit**

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# #IAMYOURNEIGHBOR

UMR has been serving communities across the U.S. and abroad for more than 6 years. During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, we have been receiving an overwhelming amount of requests from our volunteers to help their communities during these hard times. To help our volunteers, UMR has launched the "I Am Your Neighbor" initiative. This includes a step-by-step guide for our volunteers on how to get involved in this time of crisis. To register, please complete [THIS FORM](#)

## OUR MISSION

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To help underserved and marginalized communities build their capacity towards resilience.

## OUR VISION

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To become the organization of choice for improving lives worldwide.

## OUR APPROACH

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- Robust Project Design
- Innovative Community Solutions
- Respect the Dignity of the Beneficiaries

# How to Get Started

*Before you can begin serving your community, here are a few things to keep in mind:*

- Always abide by local and federal guidelines and restrictions
- There are many ways of helping others without putting yourself at risk
- Get creative -- think of new ways to reach people in need
- Always treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Use this as an opportunity to build bridges and provide support to your community
- Let us know how we can help! Reach out to us at [info@umrelief.org](mailto:info@umrelief.org)

## A Step by Step Guide

### **STEP 1:**

#### **START WITH YOUR FAMILY**

- Make sure the people in your immediate circle are taking the necessary precautions set forth by authorities.
- If you have older family members, urge them to stay indoors.
- If you have younger siblings, encourage them to practice good hygiene and reassure them that there is no need to panic or be afraid.

## **STEP 2:**

### **IDENTIFY THE NEEDS**

*When supporting a community, first identify the needs, and then start small.*

## **STEP 3:**

### **BUILD YOUR NETWORK**

- Community action works #BetterTogether. Gather some friends, extended family members and neighbors and (virtually) collaborate.
- Having a team helps you stay accountable, and can make your work easier.
- When creating a network, you may realize that you have more resources than you originally thought.
- Whether it is your building, your street, your school, or your town, building a network of community volunteers can take time. Don't be discouraged.

Here are a few ideas to help you jumpstart your team:

1. Go through your phone contacts -- remember that friend you made 2 years ago? Check in with them!
2. Reach out to people via email -- you probably have a lot of contacts in your inbox! Former classmates? Work colleagues? Check!
3. Use social media -- this can be the easiest way to connect virtually! Use apps to help open lines of communication and create online groups.
4. Check list-serves -- parents may be on special mailing lists for sports clubs, or their children's schools.
5. Post flyers -- if you have access to a piece of paper and some art supplies, get creative! Post these flyers in your building or around your neighborhood.

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## INVITATION TEMPLATE

"Hello! I'm [NAME] and I live [in your building/on your block/in your neighborhood] and this is my number: [PHONE #].

I'm reaching out because I am working with a nonprofit organization called UMR on their "I Am Your Neighbor" initiative. We are supporting our communities during COVID-19, and it's important for us to stay connected to each other so we can pool resources, share information, and help support one another.

I'm going to coordinate a group text or a phone call for our community.

Will you please reach out to me on my phone so we have your contact information? Thank you!"

### STEP 4: BEGIN PLANNING

*Once you have established a small group of awesome volunteers, hold a brainstorming session. This can be done via phone, email, video chat, and many other online resources! Here are some questions to get you started:*

- Introduce yourself -- keep a list of names of the people in your group, with their contact information like a phone number or email. Remember, only do this with people you trust.
- Ask them what special skills they have -- are they a teacher?
- Ask them what their daily schedules look like to get a better idea about how much time they can dedicate to your group.
- What are their needs? Are they or someone they know in need of assistance?

*It will take more than one discussion to get your team moving. Focus on building relationships with your team members, and take notes about what your team discussed. This can be done on something like a Google Form, and shared with the rest of your group. That way, you can all have access to what is going on, without having to meet in person!*

## STEP 5: SUPPORT EACH OTHER

*Everyone in your community has different needs. Be respectful of people's time, level of commitment, financial situations, family environments, and health needs.*

- Food -- is there someone in your identified group or network that is in need of food assistance?
- Childcare -- as schools close, could you lend a hand to a neighbor by (virtually) helping with childcare? You could tutor them through online e-learning activities, watch a movie online together, teach them a new skill, etc. This is the time to be creative!
- Medicine -- is there someone who is afraid to pick up their essential medicine? Many places like CVS are offering delivery services. Connect them with a service and/or pick up their medicine if possible.
- Cleaning -- we all know there is a shortage of supplies at the grocery store. If you have extra, leave a pantry out for people to take what they need.
- Emotional support and socializing -- people who live alone may be suffering in silence. Reach out to them by picking up the phone and chatting! Something simple can go a long way.
- Language -- this world is filled with many people who speak many languages! However, in a crisis, this can leave people scared if they cannot understand the news or the precautionary messages from authorities. Translating and supporting those needs can be an easy way to comfort someone!
- Resources -- we are all in this together. But we also have limitations on how we can help. Locate the proper community resources and direct neighbors to where they can find professional help.

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# Health & Safety Tips

*Always remember, your safety is what is most important. Never put yourself in danger, and always take extra precautions to protect yourself and your community from the spread of COVID-19. Minimize your exposure to people, stay at least 6 feet apart from anyone you come in contact with.*

- Practice social distancing. Minimize face-to-face contact and instead connect via phone and the internet.
- Only visit grocery stores when absolutely necessary. Limiting your outings means flattening the curve.
- Use delivery services when possible so you can stay home.
- When dropping off food or medicine or aid to a neighbor, agree to drop off at a spot where you can leave it so that you don't have to come in contact with them.
- Use digital forms of payment so that you limit handling of cash.
- Avoid public transit.
- When you are outside, stay 6 feet away from people at all times.
- Wipe down and disinfect everything you bring into your home.
- Let us know how we can help! Reach out to us at [info@umrelief.org](mailto:info@umrelief.org)

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To learn more about UMR and how you can support our domestic and international programs or to donate, visit our website at [www.umrelief.org](http://www.umrelief.org)