

United Way's ambitious funds goal necessary

Give what you can amid rising demand on human service agencies

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The United Way of Larimer County has set an ambitious - and necessary - fundraising goal for its current campaign.

The goal of \$8 million is a 20 percent increase above the previous year. The new campaign began Thursday.

As the recession has continued, human service agencies funded through United Way have seen a significant increase in demand for services.

House of Neighborly Service in Loveland had a 269 percent increase in requests for emergency shelter, and the Food Bank for Larimer County served 30 percent more people in 2009 than 2008.

"The increased need and the increased demand for services that we're seeing is really unusual," said Mary Atchison, United Way's vice president for community investment. "We really feel that (our goal), while ambitious, is really what we need in this community to help folks who are struggling."

The same economic conditions that are driving the increases in service demand also will make it difficult for United Way to meet its goal. The United Way campaign is primarily focused on workplaces, and Larimer County has about 1,700 fewer jobs than it did a year ago, according to state records.

For United Way to meet its goal, the people in a position to give will have to be even more generous than in the past.

As the United Way campaign kicks off, keep in mind the community needs and give what you can.
