

COLUMBIA  
Cares



# GIVING BACK REPORT

Columbia Gas®



2020

2020 Contributions  
**\$1.6M**

2020 Grants  
**170**  
Grants

Organizations  
Supported in 2020  
**113**  
nonprofits

## Breaking down the numbers:

- Provided approximately 110,000 meals to food insecure people in Ohio (avg. \$2.76/meal according to feedingamerica.org)
  - Contributed more than \$300,000 to help provide food to those in need
- Provided approximately 930 families with safe shelter for a night, while they made their way back to stable housing (based on Community Shelter Board statistic that \$100 provides a family with safe shelter for a night)
  - Contributed \$93,000 to a help provide shelter for those in need and keep people safe and warm in their homes.
- Contributed approximately \$190,000 to local United Way COVID-19 Emergency Response Funds
- Provided utility bill assistance to more than 560 Columbia Gas customers through HeatShare
  - Together with the contributions of generous donors, employees and our company match, we contributed \$140,000 to the Salvation Army HeatShare Program

## Total contributions by impact area:



**Basic  
Needs**  
**\$922,456**



**Public Safety  
and Emergency  
Response**  
**\$427,918**



**Economic and  
Workforce  
Development**  
**\$171,029**



**Energy  
Education and  
Environment**  
**\$151,252**

### United Way Giving

Ohio employees gave \$141,850 to local United Way

### Volunteerism

307 projects | 946 hours of service

### Leadership Board Service

\$60,000 total value of board service to 24 nonprofit organizations

## Basic Needs: Hunger

In 2020, many were faced with having to make difficult decisions such as choosing between paying for gas bills, rent payments and groceries for the month. Columbia Gas partnered with local agencies around the state to make sure families had nutritious meals including Children's Hunger Alliance and local United Way chapters across Ohio. We provided funding to Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio that allowed them to purchase equipment needed to feed families safely during the winter months through their no-touch outdoor mobile pantries. We also partnered with the Mid-Ohio Food Collective to help them secure additional truckloads full of fruit and veggies to be distributed across their 20 county footprint. And speaking of healthy foods! Our partnership with the Local Matters Veggie Van has provided fresh produce to 1,900 families and served an additional 5,500 families through meal kits filled with fresh, healthy ingredients and energy assistance information. During the holiday season, we were proud to partner with Lutheran Social Services to provide turkeys and all the fixings for Thanksgiving sides to nearly 3,000 families during their Thankful Holiday distributions that took place in Columbus, Delaware, Lancaster, and throughout Southeast Ohio.

*"Warm smiles, grateful hearts and bags full of Thanksgiving blessings. Because of the generous support we received from NiSource/ Columbia Gas, thousands of individuals and families throughout our community enjoyed a hearty, traditional Thanksgiving meal." – Karen West, Director of Philanthropy, Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio*



Our mission at Columbia Gas of Ohio is simple – to be there for our customers. While our priority is to provide safe, reliable natural gas service, we're also focused on strengthening the communities where we live and work and supporting our customers who need it most.

Through our Columbia Cares program, we donate time, money and other resources each year to hundreds of local philanthropic programs and organizations across our 61-county service area. Every organization we support must value the importance of inclusion and diversity and be committed to advancing equality in our communities.

2020 proved to be a year of unprecedented challenges. Because of the health and economic struggles brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Columbia Gas narrowed our focus to support customers with their very basic needs – because everyone deserves to have a warm place to live and food on their table.

While there's more to do, we are proud of the support we were able to provide our local non-profit partners this past year and thank them for the incredible work they are doing in our communities. Click on the links below to read more about our 2020 Community Impact.



## Basic Needs: Shelter

Making sure our neighbors in need have a safe, warm place to stay was another area we were focused on supporting in 2020. With more than 1,200 people sleeping in homeless shelters in Columbus and Franklin County on any given night, and more than 600 unsheltered on the streets, Community Shelter Board (CSB) needed immediate support to help slow down the spread of COVID-19 among the vulnerable families and individuals experiencing homelessness. With our support, CSB was able to quickly open three temporary facilities, in collaboration with the YMCA of Central Ohio, to achieve social distancing in the regular shelters. The three temporary shelters for social distancing serve up to 250 individuals nightly with continued safety, lodging, food, and showers. The community of Springfield also saw a 200 percent increase in need for emergency shelter services since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We provided support to the United Way of Clark, Champagne and Madison County which helped 26,617 individuals in Clark County with securing shelter, rent and utility assistance.

*"Community Shelter Board is grateful for our longstanding partnership with Columbia Gas of Ohio and NiSource. Your timely support of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic is already making a critical difference in our community, helping us prevent and slow down the spread of COVID-19 among the vulnerable families and individuals experiencing homelessness." – Michelle Heritage, Executive Director, Community Shelter Board*



## Workforce and Economic Development

Strengthening our communities and promoting economic growth is important to us. Each year, we give more than \$150,000 to economic development organizations across Ohio. We also give to programs that help disadvantaged individuals find employment and prepare young adults for successful careers. With our support, 126 young women participated in Dress for Success Columbus' Boss Girl programs and now walk with new confidence ready to execute plans for their future.

*"We are incredibly grateful for the leadership role Columbia Gas holds in our community. You walk beside us and invest - both with financial resources as well as human resources - in the development of our workforce by investing in our Dress for Success sisters. This year, your support of our Boss Girl program ensures that young women will have the skills and resources necessary to thrive as they prepare for the workforce - your workforce. Together, we will continue to empower women with career development opportunities ensuring she is successful in work and in life." Angel Harris, Executive Director, Dress for Success Columbus*

## Basic Needs: Energy Assistance

Through our We're Here for You campaign, we urged customers to reach out to us so we could work together on payment plans and educate customers on assistance available to them. Annually, we contribute significant financial resources to the Salvation Army's Heat Share Program, a fuel fund that combines customer, employee and stakeholder donations with a Columbia Gas company match to assist eligible customers with paying their bills. Together with the generosity of those who donated to the fund, we were able to help more than 560 customers pay their natural gas bill through this program alone. We were also proud to help The Breathing Association remodel their Mobile Medical Unit enabling them to serve more medically vulnerable, energy insecure central Ohioans through health care services and energy assistance referrals. With our support, the Breathing Association was able to serve more than 1,300 Central Ohioans, of which approximately 25 percent were referred to energy assistance program services.

Our Energy Efficiency Team also:

- Provided more than 1,200 income eligible customers with no-cost weatherization services through the WarmChoice program.
- Distributed over 6,000 tote bags stuffed with energy efficiency and energy assistance information to local food pantries and non-profit organizations.
- Provided more than 300 classrooms with energy efficiency education through the e3 smart program, with approximately 51% of participating teachers in schools with 50% or greater free/reduced lunch programs

*"The grant we received from Columbia Gas / NiSource Charitable Foundation has been a transformational gift for The Breathing Association. Not only has the grant supported our outreach services to medically vulnerable, energy insecure residents who are uninsured or underinsured, it also helped us to rebrand our Medical Mobile Unit with imaging and messaging that reflects our efforts for those who are lung health challenged." - Joanne Spoth, BSN, MBA President and CEO*

## Public Safety and Emergency Response

At Columbia Gas, we are and always will be committed to supporting the safety of our customers. One way we do this is through our public awareness program. We continuously aim to educate the general public, public safety agencies, emergency responders and excavators on how to excavate around our gas lines and how to respond to possible natural gas leaks. In 2020, we were able to increase our message reach with a variety of tactics and partnerships that strongly support our goals of reducing the percentage of damages per 1000 locates, and increasing the detection and reporting of natural gas odors. Another way we support emergency response is through contributions to the American Red Cross, who is always there to step up to take care of those who require emergency assistance in any disaster or crisis. During this past year of heightened need, we made a \$300,000 contribution to American Red Cross chapters across Ohio to support their efforts to provide essential care for our communities in need as a result of the Covid-19 public health crisis and natural disasters. We were also proud to continue our partnership with the Maria Tiberi Foundation whose mission is to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. This year, our support helped to purchase a driving simulator which allow drivers to experience the dangers and consequences of driving distracted in a virtual environment.



## Energy Education & Environment

Engaging young students in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) studies is an important first step in developing our future workforce. This is why we sponsor STEM programs and initiatives including the Girl Scouts Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, an annual event we host at our Columbus office that introduces more than 100 girls from local Girl Scout troops to careers in Engineering. We also provided funding that helped Metroparks Toledo complete the construction of a landing dock in the Manhattan Marsh Metropark providing safe access to a water-based learning lab for more than 300 students from the Chase STEMM Academy, a Toledo Public School located adjacent to the metropark. This was part of the Manhattan Marsh Metropark project which involved the development of a 70 acre area with physical improvements needed to provide public access to Manhattan Marsh. We were also excited to once again partner with the Columbus Crew SC on a community clean-up project. Volunteers from Columbia Gas and Crew SC accomplished spreading 3,000 pounds of mulch throughout a local park.

*“The contribution from Columbia Gas of Ohio & the NiSource Foundation provides students at nearby Chase STEM Academy a chance to learn outdoors and utilize the marsh in their studies. The boardwalk specifically will allow better access to the marsh water for their science curriculum. It’s a true win-win for the students and the community.” – Ally Effler, Director of Philanthropy, Toledo*



## Employee Giving

Throughout the many challenges in 2020, our employees found ways to give back and help where it was needed most. Whether it was volunteering their time sewing masks for first responders, checking on elderly neighbors, delivering meals, giving blood, donating toys and personal hygiene items to people in need, or contributing to local COVID-19 community response funds, Columbia Gas employees once again stepped up and showed that Columbia Cares. Despite many of our in-person community volunteer projects being put on hold this year, our employees still found ways to dedicate nearly 950 hours of service which resulted in more than \$23,000 in contributions to 26 nonprofit organizations through our Dollars for Doers volunteer match program. Our leadership also contributed \$60,000 to 24 non-profit organizations through our Leadership Board Service Grant Program.

*“Columbia Gas is driven by our hard-working employees. Helping others and giving back are commitments that extend beyond the workday. Our employees are truly the heart and soul of Columbia Cares.” – Vince Parisi, President and COO, Columbia Gas of Ohio*

