



**United Way of the
Southern Alleghenies**

Serving Blair, Cambria & Somerset Counties

From **THE BOTTOM** *up*

Local Diaper Bank Demand Mirrors National Trend



Click on the above image to go to our Amazon diaper wish list page.

Supporting healthy families can sometimes start at the bottom.

A stable supply of diapers not only means clean baby-bottoms, it also can alleviate stress, worry and other factors that can impact family health.

Surprisingly, about half of U.S. families don't have enough diapers each month, resulting in alarming problems, according to the National Diaper Bank Network. The network studies diaper need, and its impact on growing families.

The need is growing, up from 2010, when about one-third of families struggled with diaper supply.

THE LOCAL SOLUTION

The United Way of the Southern Alleghenies started a Diaper Bank in 2022 to address this need. A network of distribution points from southern Somerset County to northern Cambria County are open the last Tuesday of each month to provide a supplemental supply of diapers to families.

The national need is reflected locally, as demand for diapers is growing each month. The United Way is now giving out about 6,000 diapers a month.

"I have three children under 3, so providing them diapers is very expensive," a mom participating in the diaper bank told WTAJ-TV in a recent report.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Diaper need impacts a family's ability to buy other essential needs, including food, formula, or utility bills. The National Diaper Bank Network said that 46% of families cut back on other expenses so they could buy enough diapers.

The network's survey found that 70% of families suffered from stress and anxiety as a result of this problem, in part for fear of being judged as a bad parent because they can't afford diapers. Some families reported skipping meals. What's more, diaper need wasn't limited to low-income homes. About 34% of homes in need of diapers were middle-income or higher.

The problem is also a circular one, as it can impact parents' ability to earn wages. About a quarter of parents and caregivers with diaper need told the network that they had to miss work or school, as they can't get their children into childcare without a diaper supply. In terms of dollars, the average loss of income is estimated at \$296 per month for a parent earning the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, according to the network's survey.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can make a direct, local impact to help families in Cambria and Somerset counties facing this need. The United Way Diaper Bank needs diapers and wipes, but specifically sizes 5,6,7, 3T, and 4T. The organization accepts partial packages of diapers, as well.

To support the diaper bank:

- Organize a diaper drive at your church, workplace, or other agency.
- Drop-off or schedule a diaper donation pickup. Every package helps, even partial bundles.
- Shop online and have the diapers delivered to the United Way. Go to our Amazon wish list here (<https://a.co/1Svf7hg>). Diapers can be mailed to: UWSA, 422 Main St., Suite 203, Johnstown PA 15901.
- Send monetary donations to United Way to buy diapers in the size of greatest need. Put "Diaper Bank" in the subject line of checks, which can be sent to UWSA, 422 Main St., Suite 203, Johnstown PA 15901. You can also donate by credit card using our secure site: www.uwlaurel.org/donatediaper

Support the Diaper Bank



Community Impact in Practice

When you make a gift to United Way, it is invested into the community through our community impact process -- a volunteer-driven system that ensures we are investing in programs that meet priority community needs.

What's more, we carefully vet the programs, reviewing results quarterly. This month, we met with leaders from our Blair County Partner Agencies as we start to roll out this process in Blair. **We are Better Together.**

The Power of Volunteerism



We are supported and powered by the community. The diaper bank is a perfect example of the caring power of our community being leveraged for great impact. Thanks to **Anthony Hutzell from North American Hoganas High Alloys** for delivering diapers to some of our distribution sites.



Thanks to the Johnstown branch of the AAUW for the diaper drive.

The group collected 835 diapers, which will be directly provided to families in Cambria and Somerset Counties who need them most. About 1 in 2 families statewide fall short of diapers each month. United Way of the Southern Alleghenies provides about 6,000 diapers a month to families, and we need sizes 5,6,7, 3T, and 4T.

[See Our Amazon Wish List](#)



Red Ribbon Rally Kicks Off in Somerset

What a great Red Ribbon Rally earlier this month in Somerset from Somerset County Drug-Free Communities. A lot of great kids and supporters working toward a substance-abuse-free future. A great crowd of supporters helped to kick off this year's Red Ribbon Campaign.

Youth drug and alcohol prevention is one of our key initiatives, and we are happy to support this project.

Before you go ...

We live in a world of social media influencers who preach of self-care.

Facials, massages, fillers, hair appointments and the like all seem to make the list of how to nurture oneself.

However, if you've ever had depression, or have sifted through a crisis, self-care pertains to the bare minimum. Self-help articles give you steps, like prioritize sleep, eat nutritious meals, and make time for exercise.

When is the last time you've been in a time of great stress and made exercise, nutrition, and rest important to your daily routine? For those struggling, these items fly out the window first, or we become simply incapable of doing them.

A year ago, when I first left my then-husband, I was hit with the gravity of the situation like a ton of bricks. Outwardly, I was functioning, but when I retreated to my little rental cabin after the workday was over, I was confronted with reality.

To re-establish some semblance of normalcy in the evenings, my friend developed a basic checklist for me before bed, 1) change into pajamas, 2) wash face, 3) brush teeth, and 4) drink a glass of water. It was four basic things, but they help to create an easy routine.

I've largely been thinking about this topic as I am recovering from disc replacement surgery, and I'm permitted to do next to nothing. Patience with myself is not one of my finer qualities, yet permission to rest, even with doctor's orders, feels like a flimsy excuse for not crossing items off the to-do list.

An involuntary pause is in effect. Perhaps I'll learn to give myself some grace. When busyness is a hallmark of success, it leaves little room for self-nourishment.

As we head into November, let's aim to harvest self-compassion and gratitude. It is my hope that we all learn to give ourselves the care we need, so we're not just surviving, but thriving.



– Karen Struble Myers,
President & CEO

United, We Help More than 58,000 People Each Year



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"With the support of the community, we invest in programs that improve and transform lives in Blair, Cambria and Somerset Counties."

*– Karen Struble Myers,
President & CEO*

[Make a Contribution Today!](#)

United Way of the Laurel Highlands | 422 Main Street, Suite 203, Johnstown, PA 15901

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