

# Frequently Asked Questions

**United Way of the Midlands means a lot of things to a lot of people. Affordable child care, family literacy, job and life skills, food and shelter and accessible health care—these are just some of the many critical issues United Way of the Midlands helps address each day. As your company’s United Way representative, your co-workers will turn to you for information about United Way of the Midlands.**

## **What is United Way?**

United Way of the Midlands is donors, partners and volunteers discovering and responding to crucial needs in our community, finding resources to meet those needs and following up to make sure the work gets done. United Way is the most organized efficient and accountable system for investing in our community.

## **Why is there a United Way?**

United Way is the community solutions provider. Donors have the confidence that their human service dollars go the furthest to do the most good, supporting many programs through one effort. Local volunteers use their knowledge of community problems to distribute funds where the needs are greatest. To make the best use of contributor dollars, United Way holds agencies accountable for the programs they run, only funding programs with good results.

## **What is Community Impact?**

Community Impact is the goal of United Ways across the country, including United Way of the Midlands. It simply means that we are focused on getting results from donors’ dollars. UWM distributes gifts from the Community Impact Fund to the most critical community issues and measures the impact on people’s lives.

## **Why give to the Community Impact Fund?**

The human service needs in the Midlands are greater than the level of investment our community is currently making to meet them. You can make the greatest difference when you invest in United Way of the Midlands’ Community Impact Fund. By combining the investments of many contributors, more substantial dollars can be channeled to a portfolio of programs to meet the Midlands most pressing needs. Many local United Way volunteers determine the best way to address these problems. These volunteers minimize duplication among programs and look for measurable results, quality performance and innovative approaches.

## **How much should I give?**

Only you can decide how much you can give. United Way offers several giving and recognition opportunities. Many people elect to give 1% of their annual salary. Usually this amount can be affordable if given through payroll deduction.

## **How much of the money raised through United Way goes to provide services?**

More than 88 cents of every dollar received goes directly to community services. The balance covers United Way’s cost of fundraising, distribution and management.

## **How is United Way making sure my money is well spent?**

United Way's Community Impact Fund is the best way to be certain that your dollars are well spent. Many local, unpaid volunteers are involved in identifying the most serious health and human service problems in our community and determining the best ways to make a meaningful impact on these problems. You support a much broader group of programs and services through the Community Impact Fund than by giving to an agency directly. Volunteers work to minimize duplication among programs and look for measurable results, quality performance and innovative approaches. Programs that do not produce favorable results will not be funded by United Way.

## **I don't use any of the agencies' programs, so why should I give through United Way?**

You may have already used the services of a United Way program and never realized it. One day, we all may need disaster services, after school programs or youth development services, day care services or a variety of other valuable services supported by United Way. Many of the programs benefit everyone, such as those that reduce juvenile crime.

## **I want to designate; why must I choose a Community Council or Certified Partner Agency?**

Four Community Councils determine, prioritize, direct and monitor results of funds awarded to meet needs in specific health and human service areas. Each council oversees specific target areas and works with certified partner agencies to meet the needs as determined by the council. Designating to a Community Council allows you to serve the needs of the people you most want to help. When you designate to a certified partner agency, you choose an agency located right here in the Midlands that meets the high standards you should expect from any non-profit. Regular assessments ensure these agencies meet not only all legal requirements but also specific quality performance measures.

## **Why a minimum of \$50 for each designation?**

Designations cost more money to process than contributions to the Community Impact Fund or to Community Councils. Staff must take the time to verify that the organization meets non-profit, legal and 'Patriot Act' requirements. This must be performed each time the designation is paid. This \$50 minimum will help us avoid spending unnecessarily to process designations.

## **Aren't you limiting my opportunity to contribute?**

We respect your varied interests and your desire for choice in your giving. For those of you who commute and prefer to send your gift back to your home community you can designate your gift to another United Way simply by specifying the location including the city of the United Way you wish to direct your gift.

## **How do agencies receive their designations?**

Designations will be given to agencies in addition to any Community Impact Fund dollars distributed to agency programs. The designations will be sent to the agencies throughout the year, once the campaign has closed and all designation reports have been submitted.

## **Do United Way partner agencies have other income?**

In most cases, United Way funding represents only one component of each agency's resource development plan. Most agencies have developed additional income sources such as foundation grants, government contracts, membership enrollment programs, special events and service fees based on an individual's ability to pay. United Way also provides technical assistance and workshops to enhance the management and development of financial resources.

## **Do United Way partner agencies only serve the poor?**

Dollars contributed through United Way are distributed where they will do the most good for the entire community. Partner agencies provide services aimed at helping all people in need. Perhaps you, a member of your family or one of your neighbors or co-workers has benefited from services supported by United Way. The United Way process supports services such as quality child care, the scouting programs, disaster relief, shelters for the homeless and abused, agencies that provide information and support to those dealing with cancer and mental illness and many others.

## **Doesn't the government take care of these health and human problems?**

In recent years, there has been a dramatic reduction in federal and state government funding for human service needs. All indications suggest that the cuts are going deeper than ever. Yet at the same time, there are more people needing assistance. As a result, your gift through United Way is increasingly important because it stays in our community, helping your family, friends and neighbors. In addition, United Way works with local and state government to coordinate efforts and improve delivery of services to those who need help.

## **Why should I give if my spouse does?**

We hope both you and your spouse will consider a gift. United Way and our community depend on each working person making a gift based on his or her own income. These gifts are united with others to make the greatest impact on needs. United Way programs can only continue to provide services if as many people as possible contribute.

## **Why should I give to United Way of the Midlands when I already give to my favorite charity?**

We all have things we support as individuals to make a difference, like volunteering as a mentor or giving to our church or favorite charity. But after that, there is some work that we can only do together – as a community. That is where United Way of the Midlands comes into play. When you give a gift through the Community Impact Fund, you ensure that an individual's total needs are met, instead of addressing only one part of the problem. In addition, through United Way you assist in funding smaller, lesser known agency programs which are meeting important needs but might not otherwise receive contributions.

## **Does United Way of the Midlands fund the Boy Scouts?**

Yes, we do. United Way of the Midlands has had a long-standing positive relationship with two Boy Scout councils in our area – Blue Ridge Boy Scout Council and Indian Waters Boy Scout Council. Funding decisions are made by local United Way volunteers.

## **What is United Way of the Midlands relationship with United Way of America?**

United Way of the Midlands is a separate, local organization governed by a local, volunteer Board of Directors. United Way of America is a service association to which local United Ways may belong. United Way of the Midlands pays less than a penny from each dollar raised through campaigns as service fees for data, campaign analysis, research, national account development, advertising, human resources assistance, staff and volunteer training and campaign materials.

## **Who pays for United Way's special events?**

Events held to thank and inspire volunteers and donors are partially paid for by ticket sales and sponsorships. The balance is included in United Way's budget.

## **Can I be directly billed for my gift?**

Yes you can. Direct bill requires a minimum donation of \$500. Just check the direct bill option on your pledge card.

## **What is United Way's policy against pressuring employees to give?**

United Way of the Midlands has a policy against coercion, and under no circumstances should an employee be threatened or coerced into contributing. Giving is a personal matter and a personal decision; whether people give and how much they choose to give is up to each individual. The purpose of United Way is to offer people an opportunity to care so that others can receive the help they need. We hope you will give because you are able to and because you feel good about it.

## **If I stop working, what happens to my pledge?**

Should you stop working, your payroll deduction pledge stops too. Your pledge through United Way is made in good faith based upon your employment. When you start a new job, ask to sign up for payroll deduction again or call United Way for further details.

## **How do I find information about services when I need help?**

Just dial 211 – United Way's Information and Referral line. This 24-hour crisis intervention telephone hotline provides information about hundreds of services available in the Midlands area.

## **How carefully are agency expenditures overseen?**

An important element in United Way's comprehensive agency admission review is having sound fiscal management. Ongoing oversight is ensured by annual information reports, which include program expenditures, program outcomes and certified financial audits.

## **Why do some agencies charge fees?**

Because United Way funds do not cover 100% of their expenses. People who can afford to pay for services do so; others pay what they can. Most service providers operate on a sliding fee scale. This maximizes and stretches your contribution – allowing more people to receive help.