

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is United Way?

A: United Way of Washtenaw County is an independent nonprofit organization governed by local volunteers representing the community, bringing people and organizations together. United Way acts as a catalyst for positive change, helping to create and build the resources necessary to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in our area.

Q: How does United Way serve the community?

A: United Way of Washtenaw County supports health and human service providers through its strength in raising funds and effectively investing them, through the investment of volunteer resources and by building community collaboratives and partnerships. United Way is the single largest funding stream supporting human services in Washtenaw County. UWWC's Campaign provides financial support for more than 60 programs through 44 affiliated agencies.

Q: What kind of agency programs does United Way support?

A: The agency programs supported by United Way provide a variety of critical services including food, shelter and emergency services, child care and family support, health care services, care for the elderly, and youth development.

Q: How do agencies receive funding?

A: Agencies go through a formal review process. Agencies that receive funding through United Way of Washtenaw County are nonprofit, tax-exempt charities governed by local volunteer boards. Each agency must submit to an annual independent financial audit and provide services to the community at a reasonable cost. A re-certification process ensures that agencies maintain high standards of stability, accountability and quality service.

Q: Who is eligible for United Way services?

A: Services supported by United Way of Washtenaw County are available to people who live and/or work in Washtenaw County.

Q: Who governs United Way?

A: Volunteers from the community, both residents and employees of local businesses, govern United Way of Washtenaw County by serving on its volunteer board of directors and policy-making changes.

Q: Why should I choose to give to United Way?

A: Through United Way's annual citizens' review process, trained volunteers assess community needs and determine how to distribute funds to have the greatest impact. When you contribute to United Way's Community Care Fund, you know that your gift is reaching those with the greatest need. The dollars raised in the community stay in the local community and help support 44 partner agencies and more than 60 programs.

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Q: Why should I give if my spouse does?

A: We hope that you and your spouse both will consider a gift. United Way and our community depends on each individual to make 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. In addition, your combined gift with your spouse may qualify you for recognition as a Leadership Giver.

Q: How much of my contribution goes directly to service providers?

A: Making use of a vast network of volunteers and with a strong emphasis on efficiency, United Way strives to keep administrative costs low so that nearly ninety percent of total dollars received goes to support needed services right here in Washtenaw County.

Q: Why should I consider using payroll deduction for my contribution?

A: Payroll deduction is an easy and affordable way to give, allowing you to contribute a small amount of your paycheck over a longer period of time. If your company has a matching gifts program, you can automatically double the amount of money being pledged to help those in need.

Q: Can I specify where I want my contribution to go?

A: United Way strongly recommends that you invest your gift in UWWC's Community Investment Fund, where your dollars will have the greatest impact on addressing the community's most critical needs. Donors also have the option of designating all or a portion of their annual gift to another United Way.

Q: What is the United Way's policy against pressuring employees to give?

A: United Way of Washtenaw County has a policy against coercion, and under no circumstances should an employee be threatened or coerced into contributing. Giving is a personal matter and decision; whether people give and how much they choose to give is up to the individual. The purpose of United Way is to offer people an opportunity to give so that others may receive the help they need. We hope you will give because you are able to and because you feel good about helping others. Your giving should be personal and "from the heart."

Q: How can I find a volunteer opportunity that fits in with my hectic schedule?

A: VolunteerWashtenaw.org provides volunteer referrals to community agencies. If you are interested in helping with a one-time project or serving long term, VolunteerWashtenaw.org can help find the right opportunity for you.

Q: How can I find out more about health and human service agencies in the community and how their services could be of help to me?

A: Simply dial 2-1-1, an information and referral service for health and human service needs. A 2-1-1 information and referral specialist can refer you to an agency that can help with the specific need.

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Q: What is the affiliation between United Way of Washtenaw County and United Way of America?

A: Each United Way is independent, separately incorporated and governed by local volunteers. United Way of America is the national organization dedicated to leading the United Way movement in making measurable impact in every community across America. It invests in the programs and services that strengthen the ability of local United Ways to identify and build a coalition around a set of community priorities and measure success based on community impact. There are approximately 1,300 community-based United Ways.

United Way of America provides a variety of services for local organizations and supports their efforts by producing national advertising campaigns. Nationwide, United Way supports approximately 47,000 agencies, helping millions of people from all walks of life. United Ways have been leading the cause of caring for more than 100 years.

Q: How can United Way afford advertising?

A: National and local commercials, including the NFL advertising is provided through United Way of America at little or no cost to local United Ways. Newspaper, electronic media and corporate advertisers are great supporters of United Way, donating or reducing cost for time and space for these promotions as just one facet of their support. United Way of Washtenaw County also participates in a regional marketing effort with the Michigan Association of United Ways which has proven to be both cost-effective and favorable to the media and our donors. In addition to these, many companies make "in-kind" donations to offset the cost of time or materials.

