

United Way of the Midlands Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is United Way?

United Way of the Midlands is made of 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 an organized, efficient and accountable system committed to advancing the common good.

2) Why is there a United Way?

For more than 80 years, United Way has been 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.

3) What is Community Impact?

At United Way of the Midlands, Community Impact is more than just a department—it's why we're here. Community Impact directs resources to programs that meet the needs of individuals and families. Everyone deserves opportunities to have a good life: a quality EDUCATION that leads to a stable job, enough INCOME to support a family through retirement, and good HEALTH. Community Impact is a cost effective way to invest in a broad range of services with a single contribution. Ultimately, Community Impact represents community results. United Way annually evaluates Community Impact funded programs to gauge and improve their effectiveness.

4) Why let United Way invest my donation?

By allowing United Way to invest your gift, you are ensuring that your gifts, combined with those of others, are going to address the most critical needs in the community. Local volunteers who are knowledgeable about community problems determine the way to address priority needs, investing in proven programs with measurable results.

5) 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. Payroll deduction makes giving easier.

6) How much of the money raised through United Way goes to provide services?

The percentage of total revenues generated by the organization that is being returned to the community through competitive grants, initiatives and donor directed funding is 86.5%.

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

When we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all. While you may not have school-age children, we all win when a child succeeds in school, when at-risk families become self-sufficient and when all our neighbors have good health.

8) I want to designate; why must I choose a United Way Certified Partner Agency?

Growing concern that gifts contributed through United Way were leaving the community and were directed at non-health and human service needs prompted the United Way of the Midlands Board of Directors to limit designations to local certified partners. When you choose to designate to one or more than 80 certified partners, you are choosing a local agency that meets high standards and legal requirements and which is regularly assessed to meet quality performance measures.

9) Why a minimum of \$50 for each designation?

Designations cost more money to process than contributions directly to the Community Impact Fund. 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 helps us avoid spending your donation on processing costs.

10) How do agencies receive their designations?

Designations to agencies are provided separately from any Community Impact awards distributed through agency programs. Designations are sent throughout the year after the campaign is closed and designation reports are completed.

11) How carefully are agency expenditures overseen?

An important element in United Ways comprehensive partner review is having sound fiscal management. Oversight includes review of annual reports, a certified audit, program expenditures and outcomes. United Way also provides technical assistance and workshops to enhance the management and development of financial resources.

12) Do United Way partner agencies have other income?

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.

13) Doesn't the government take care of these health and human service problems?

Human service delivery is a shared responsibility of both the public and nonprofit sectors. An excellent example of this partnership was the new Volunteer Income Tax Assistance project, which engaged United Way volunteers helping low-income, working families prepare income taxes for free and also apply for tax credits for which they were eligible but may not have been aware. Recent public sector budget cuts and increasing costs for fuel and food are resulting in even more people needing assistance. As a result, your gift through United Way is increasingly important because it stays in the community to address local needs.

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

Many of us have a favorite charity for which we volunteer and support financially. A gift through United Way recognizes problems experienced by individuals, families and neighborhoods are rarely one-dimensional. Complex problems require complex solutions which frequently involve multiple partners providing program support to create lasting change. When you give through United Way, you are supporting comprehensive solutions.

15) Who pays for United Way's special events?

Events held to thank and inspire volunteers and donors are paid for primarily by ticket sales and sponsorships.

16) Can I be directly billed for my gift?

Yes you can. Direct bill requires a minimum donation of \$100. Just check the direct bill option on your pledge card and indicate your billing schedule preference.

17) What is United Way of the Midlands relationship with United Way Worldwide?

United Way of the Midlands is a separate, local organization governed by a local, volunteer Board of Directors. United Way Worldwide 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.

18) 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.

19) 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. If you are retiring, please contact United Way to continue your contributions and volunteer your time. You may even find you have more time to volunteer.

20) How do I find information about services when I need help?

Just dial 2-1-1 — United Way's information and referral line. This 24-hour service provides information and referral to hundreds of programs available in the Midlands area.

21) Why does United Way want to know my birth date and e-mail address?

United Way of the Midlands is taking steps to thank and inform people about the results of their contributions. Using your preferred e-mail address helps us to reduce postage and printing costs. Having your birth date allows us to access The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation funds awarded to attract donors age 21-45. In order to track our progress in attracting donors in this age group, we are now requesting birth dates from all donors. All of your information is kept confidential. United Way of the Midlands does not sell or give away any personal information to outside organizations.

22) What are affinity groups?

People like to be involved with others who have similar interests and goals. The generic term for people who unite to further those interests is an Affinity Group. United Way of the Midlands currently has two of these groups: Young Leaders Society (YLS) and Women in Philanthropy. These affinity groups were

created to provide community involvement and personal development opportunities to their members. YLS consists of donors age 21-44 and offers a step-up program with a \$250 minimum gift and a commitment to grow gifts to \$1,000 within four years. WIP additionally promotes an entry gift of \$250 and its members share an interest in promoting giving and advocacy around women and children's issues.

23) What counties are served by United Way of the Midlands?

United Way of the Midlands currently serves six counties: Calhoun, Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg and Richland. The counties of Calhoun and Orangeburg are also served by United Way of the Midlands Edisto Council.