

United Way - FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is United Way different from other nonprofit organizations?

United Way exists for one reason only, to help us come together as one local community to identify and address the local issues that affect all of us. Those issues, like making sure children start school ready to learn and helping families become self-sufficient, cross lines of race, gender, geography and faith, and can only be addressed with collective focus and action. Your donation stays local!

Can I give directly to my favorite agency?

It is possible to direct your gift to one or more agencies that receive United Way funding or to another area United Way. Because United Way is in the business of community impact, not fundraising for agencies, we cannot help you earmark your gift to other organizations.

What else does United Way do besides fund agencies?

United Way does whatever it takes to help our community focus and get results on important human issues. While United Way does raise and invest dollars, we also help people volunteer, lend their professional expertise, and donate household and office items. Our Staff can connect people with volunteer opportunities in our area.

How do people get help from United Way?

United Way supports more than 35 programs that help people every day. While United Way does not provide direct services to individuals and families, we can help make confidential referrals to organizations that can help with counseling, job training, emergency assistance and other needs.

Our employees and their families are struggling. How can we ask them to give?

Time and again, some of the most generous givers are those who themselves have struggled and needed a helping hand from our community. Everyone should be given an opportunity to express caring through charitable giving, to enjoy the emotional reward that comes from knowing he or she has helped our community become safer and stronger.

How do the troubles at other United Ways and other nonprofits affect our United Way?

They do not. Each one of the 1,400 United Ways in the country is autonomous and managed by local volunteers. In Paducah and McCracken County, over 250 volunteer leaders from all walks of life are involved in and oversee every detail of United Way operations, from fundraising to investments to financial management.

How does an organization apply to receive funding from United Way?

Each year, when resources allow, United Way invites applications from organizations that can demonstrate measurable results in addressing issues our community has identified as most important.

How much of the money raised by United Way is used for administrative purposes?

The Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance Standards for Charity Accountability state that fundraising expenses should be no more than 35% of all related contributions (for more information, go to www.give.org). In 2007-08, less than 18.2 cents of every dollar raised by our United Way is used for fundraising and administration making it one of the lowest overhead costs of any nonprofit in the nation. United Way can be this efficient because community support keeps costs to a bare minimum including extensive volunteer leadership, public service advertising donations and more.

What oversight does your financial reporting receive? Our local Board of Directors oversees the management of United Way of Paducah and McCracken County. Service on the Board is not compensated. Our Executive Board reviews and approves our annual budget and financial statements, which include campaign fundraising results, community investments and operating expenses. Our financial statements are audited annually by an independent accounting firm, which certifies that its financial statements are in full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). A copy of the most recently audited financial statements and auditor's letter are available upon request.

How can my nonprofit receive a grant or funding from United Way? Through our Emerging Needs Grant program, our Executive Director works side by side with community leaders and our Community Investment volunteers to research community needs, invest in top-performing programs and leverage what works. To be eligible for a United Way Emerging Needs Grant, your organization/ program must be aligned with our focus areas (education and care of children, strengthening families, emergency assistance and crisis prevention AND serve the Paducah McCracken County Area. Please contact United Way Executive Director 270.442.1691 for additional information or visit our website to download an application.

“Someone I know didn’t get help from United Way or XYZ agency.”

You are welcome to contact us with your concern so we can investigate it more thoroughly. Through careful investigation, we’ve found that many complaints have been misunderstandings that can be resolved.

“I have heard and am upset that United Way cut one of my favorite agencies’ funding”. Why?

Excellence in stewardship is a top priority of United Way - it always has been and it always will be. This year, as in the past, our volunteer teams have carefully considered the requests for funding, the available resources, financial need of the requesting agencies, and their demonstrated ability to achieve positive results for the people they serve.

United Way Community Investment volunteers face tough choices every year. They do their very best to focus resources where most needed and where the most good can be achieved for those in need. The panels generally make their funding decisions for individual

programs in light of the requests from all of the agencies in their groups so that the relative merits of requests can be compared.

While every United Way funded program is required to measure the results it achieves for the people it serves, each funding decision is separate and unique.

I already give to my favorite charity (or church). Why should I give to United Way?

- There are many things we can do 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’s where United Way comes into play. There is no other place where one gift can make a greater impact in our community.
- This community would not raise over a million of dollars, year after year to make this a better place to live without a concentrated, well-planned, community effort. United Way brings together the dollars, talents and energy of hundreds of people and organizations to improve more lives than they could working alone. The overhead costs that all of the agencies would incur if they had to raise those funds themselves would be tremendous.
- No other gift touches more lives. Through United Way, you help support over 35 local programs that touch the lives of two out of three people in our community at some point in their lives.
- When possible, we form partnerships with government, businesses, schools and other nonprofits to make a greater difference than we could alone.
- Because many people need the help of more than one agency, United Way ensures that a wide range of services is available.
- And, our community is prepared in times of disaster and tragedy, because we are the primary funder of local private disaster relief services through agencies like the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

United Way's community expertise helps ensure that the money is used in a way that makes the most measurable impact on improving lives and the overall well-being of our

Does United Way discriminate against (any group)?

United Way values diversity in our community. United Way will not discriminate based on race, color, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status or national origin in accordance with the law.

United Way will reflect diversity in its organizational governance, volunteer structure, staffing, funding decisions and policies. Through our commitment to diversity, we will strive to be a role model in our community.

United Way mandates participating agencies to practice without discrimination in accordance with the law. United Way recognizes the unique mission of each agency it funds and recommends the following:

- Provide service regardless of race, gender, age, religion, disability, veteran status or national origin, guided by the parameters of an agency's target population.
- Maintain an affirmative action statement and operate by policy and practice without discrimination in staff hiring.
- Strive to achieve a board of directors and volunteer committees that are appropriately representative of the constituencies they serve and are organized to make informed decisions sensitive to the constituencies it serves.

When you support United Way, your donation touches two out of three people in our community at some point in their lives, through the programs provided by our local organizations. We are a truly diverse population. These support education and care of children, strengthening families, emergency assistance and crisis prevention,

Does United Way support abortions or Planned Parenthood?

Every one of the 1,400 local United Ways in the U.S. is a separate, independent organization. What this means is:

- Each raises its own funds, sets its own policies, and decides what local services it will support.
- The volunteer board of directors in each community makes decisions.
- Decisions made in one community have no bearing on decisions made in any other community.

United Way of America does not control local United Ways, and is not “corporate headquarters”. It is a training and service center for local United Ways that can choose whether or not to be members.

United Way of Paducah and McCracken County does not support any programs or agencies that provide abortions or any programs of agencies who have a planned parenthood program.

How is United Way structured? United Way of Paducah and McCracken County is an autonomous organization that supports agencies and other service providers that serve our area. United Way Paducah and McCracken County is governed by a local board of directors made up of volunteers from our community. These volunteers, along with many of other volunteers, plan and organize the annual fundraising campaign, collect contributions and determine how United Way's Campaign pledges will be distributed to local human and health providers and agencies.

Why should I give if none of the United Way agencies help my family or me? You're lucky, but no one is immune to disaster, misfortune or problems. Your gift will make sure services are maintained should you need them. And everyone benefits from a healthy community in which people's needs are met. Every year, United Way touches the lives of one out of every three people living and working in our community. You may have been helped by a United Way agency without even knowing it. United Way funds programs and agencies such as American Red Cross, Family Service Society, Four Rivers Behavioral Health, Friedman Abuse Center, Girl Scouts, Heartland Cares, Oscar Cross Boys and Girls Club, Paducah Day Nursery, Purchase Area Sexual Assault Center, EHomes, RSVP, Senior Citizens Center, Boy Scouts and St. Nicholas Family Free Clinic. Many people give because there are a number of persons in our community who cannot contribute, or even help themselves: an abused child, a disabled youth, an elderly shut-in or the mentally ill.

Is my contribution tax deductible? Your gift is tax deductible if you itemize deductions.

Do you know why most people don't give to United Way?

Because they weren't asked!