

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What does United Way of Allen County do?

United Way of Allen County is a locally controlled non-profit organization dedicated to helping build a stronger community by improving lives and providing lasting change. United Way partners with 37 local non-profit agencies to address three primary goals: helping meet residents' most basic needs, improving the academic success of area children and helping individuals and families become financially and emotionally stable. These issues are addressed by funding 64 local programs and several grant-funded initiatives.

### Why give to United Way?

Top 10 Reasons to Invest in United Way of Allen County:

- 1) Volunteer decision-making: volunteers help determine the community's top needs and the best programs to meet those needs
- 2) Low overhead: 13.5% for 2009
- 3) Workplace payroll deductions: spreads donations over an entire year
- 4) Continuous oversight: staff/volunteers regularly examine agency operations/results
- 5) Expertise in fundraising: United Way bears much of the local responsibility for social service fundraising from private individuals
- 6) Central social service agency: helps local agencies coordinate, communicate, fundraise, track needs and evaluate programming to create efficiencies
- 7) One gift helps many: donations support more than 64 programs and initiatives in partnership with 37 local agency partners
- 8) Local investment: donations support only local programs and agencies
- 9) Better Business Bureau Accredited: meets 20 standards of charity accountability, including standards for governance and oversight, finance, fundraising expenses and measuring effectiveness.
- 10) Transparency: Most recent audits and 990s online at [www.UnitedWayAllenCounty.org](http://www.UnitedWayAllenCounty.org)

### Who makes decisions for United Way of Allen County?

United Way of Allen County is a volunteer-driven organization. Its board of directors is composed of knowledgeable community leaders, all of whom live and/or work in Allen County. The board establishes policy and allocates resources to ensure that United Way is properly managed.

### Is United Way of Allen County controlled by its national organization, United Way Worldwide?

No. United Way of Allen County is an autonomous local organization. All funding policies and decisions are made by local volunteers. The organization receives services from United Way Worldwide, an organization that assists more than 1,000 local United Ways with market research information, provides training opportunities, licenses use of the United Way logo, and helps cultivate relationships with major national employers as well as the National Football League (NFL).

### Does United Way provide the services it funds?

Generally not, although it does provide [2-1-1](tel:219211), a free information and referral phone service directing people to health and human service agencies. Many of the services United Way funds are carried out by 37 agency partners.

### **Who decides how much money goes to each service?**

People just like you! Trained volunteers work on Investment Teams, which study community problems and the best ways to address them. The volunteer groups make recommendations on funding, identify programs that will help our community reach goals and even recommend partnerships or changes in public policy that should be adopted to influence change. United Way's board of directors makes final funding decisions.

### **How can I become a volunteer?**

People can inquire about openings on United Way's board and committees, assist with the annual Day of Caring or help run a company fundraising campaign. Hundreds of volunteers are also needed to work with local children struggling to read at grade level. Interested volunteers should visit [www.LearnUnited.org](http://www.LearnUnited.org) or call 260.469.4030.

### **I don't like feeling pressured to give.**

We believe strongly that giving is a personal choice. In fact, we encourage peer solicitation and employee meetings specifically to avoid the possibility of coercion and to give interested individuals the opportunity to be both informed about, and involved in, our mission. Any pressure is contradictory to our operating principles. If you feel pressured to give, we recommend you discuss your discomfort with your campaign coordinator.

### **I never use United Way-supported services. Why should I give?**

Your financial and volunteer support ensures that help is available to people in need. In the end, our community is only strong if we work together to provide all residents with opportunities to build a better life.

### **I don't live in Allen County. Why should I give?**

United Way of Allen County supports local services, and United Way services are available to people who live OR work in Allen County. If you like, you can choose to give to a United Way in another community. But consider this: some services are not available in smaller communities, so people in those areas depend on accessing them in Allen County. Also, United Way can only forward donations to a United Way in another community, not a specific agency in that county.

### **United Way funds programs at an agency I don't like.**

United Ways' Community Fund supports more than 60 services and initiatives, all judged important by volunteers serving on allocation panels. These programs serve a wide range of human needs, such as emergency shelter, health care, counseling, mentoring and literacy instruction. If you feel strongly about directing your gift, you can designate to services you most want to support. Your gift will be separated from the community allocation process, shrinking the pool of funds available for distribution by the volunteer panels.

### **Does United Way of Allen County fund abortion?**

No. Some people have incorrectly assumed, or been misinformed, that United Way of Allen County funds medical procedures to terminate pregnancy. That is not, and has never been, true. We will be happy to provide you with a list of funded programs upon request.