

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 34 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 **self-sufficient** and stable. These issues are addressed by fundraising to support more than 60 local programs and several grant-funded initiatives.

Why give to United Way?

One gift addresses many needs. United Way of Allen County helps meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. United Way funds programs that meet basic needs like food and shelter, as well as programs that help people become self-sufficient, such as literacy training and counseling.

Oversight. United Way volunteers ensure that all Partner Agencies and funded programs meet strict standards for performance, ethics and program results.

Coordination. United Way of Allen County helps local non-profits work better and work better *together*. For example, United Way is helping coordinate a local response to national changes in programming for the homeless. United Way's education initiative, Learn United, is bringing local youth-serving organizations together to find ways to help more local children.

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 the local board of directors. The organization receives services from United Way Worldwide, an organization that assists more than 1,000 local United Ways with: market research information, training opportunities, use of the United Way logo, and 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](#), a free information and referral phone service directing people to information about more than 2,000 area health and human services. Many of the services United Way funds are carried out by 34 agency partners.

Who decides how much money goes to each service?

Trained volunteers work on Investment Teams, which study community issues and the best ways to address them. The volunteer groups: make recommendations on funding, identify programs that will help the 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. Many volunteers are needed on Investment Teams that review program funding applications and ensure agencies are meeting United Way standards. Hundreds of volunteers are also needed to work with local children who need help with reading skills. Interested volunteers should visit www.LearnUnited.org for opportunities to help children, or call 260-422-4776 for general United Way opportunities.

United Way of Allen County
334 E. Berry St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46802
260-422-4776 phone
260-422-4782 fax
www.unitedwayallencounty.org

I don't like feeling pressured to give.

United Way staff and volunteers believe strongly that giving is a personal choice. In fact, United Way encourages 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, the United Way mission. Any pressure is contradictory to agency operating principles. If you feel pressured to give, United Way recommends 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: May I designate my gift?

United Ways' Community Fund supports more than 60 services and initiatives, all judged to be efficient and effective 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. When you designate a gift, United Way retains 12.5 percent of the amount collected on pledges to local Agency Partners in order to recover a portion of fundraising costs. United Way retains 10 percent of designated gifts to other Northeast Indiana United Ways/Funds.

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. United Way invests in more than 60 programs and initiatives in our community and none of these programs or initiatives provide abortions; there are no plans to fund organizations or programs that engage in this practice. A list of funded programs is included in the campaign brochure or is available on the website.

What is United Way of Allen County's Administrative Cost Percentage?

For every dollar United Way spent in 2010, almost 83 cents went to programming. United Way of Allen County's administrative costs ratio (management and general plus fundraising costs divided by revenue) for 2010 was 18.5 percent. United Way of Allen County has a lean staff so small expense variations, combined with volatility in revenue, can cause the administrative cost ratio to fluctuate.

Better Business Bureau guidelines state that no more than 35 percent of an agency's dollars be spent on administration, and United Way of Allen County is well below that threshold. One of United Way's primary functions is to raise money to support critical programming and fundraising requires staffing and overhead expenditures.

The Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Guide also states that charity finances are just one part of an agency's accountability. Other standards such as governance, effectiveness, fundraising practices, website disclosures and donor privacy must also be considered. United Way of Allen County is Better Business Bureau Accredited and meets all 20 standards of charity accountability. All recent audits and 990s are online at www.UnitedWayAllenCounty.org

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