

# United Way of Greater Cincinnati | FREQUENT QUESTIONS - EXTERNAL

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### **What does United Way do?**

We unite communities to change lives. We bring people, organizations and resources together to find solutions to our community's most complex challenges. We lead programs, partner with others and change systems to help children and families move out of poverty for good.

### **What is United Way of Greater Cincinnati's service area?**

We serve 10 counties in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana with a population of roughly 1.8 million people. Our counties include: Hamilton, Brown and Clermont counties and the Middletown/Monroe/ Trenton areas in Butler County in Ohio; Boone, Campbell, Grant, and Kenton counties in Northern Kentucky; Dearborn and Ohio counties in Southeast Indiana.

### **Who oversees United Way of Greater Cincinnati?**

United Way is a volunteer-led organization. We are governed by a local Board of Directors who represent every sector and region served. The Board develops strategic direction, sets policies and ensures capable staffing. A staff team of 125 works hand-in-hand with the board and dozens of other leadership and community volunteers. Our board members sit on oversight committees which oversee all aspects of our operation including human resources, fundraising, marketing, community impact (programming), accountability and services, and executive compensation.

### **How is Executive compensation determined?**

Executive compensation is determined through a rigorous process, conducted by outside experts who have the objectivity and professional experience to qualify them for this responsibility. This is a process that has been in place for years, which has contributed to UWGC being recognized for its good governance by Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau.

### **How is our United Way connected with other United Ways?**

United Way of Greater Cincinnati is an independent and self-governing member of the United Way Worldwide network. We meet annual membership requirements and receive benefits such as training, national advertising and public policy support, and the ability to draw on "best practices" of United Ways throughout the country.

### **How can I get help for myself or someone I know?**

Simply call 2-1-1, a free, confidential non-emergency hotline that will connect you to health and human services. United Way 211 is available 24/7/365 in more than 150 languages. Our call specialists can connect you with important community services, such as child care, flu-shot information, employment assistance, volunteer opportunities, counseling, food, shelter, and more.

### **Is United Way efficient with the money it raises?**

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Absolutely. We work hard to ensure that the most donor dollars are at work in our community, and we invest nearly 90% of the funds we raise back into our local community. Charity Navigator scores us 100% for Accountability and Transparency and our administrative expense is half the local average of the other 56 largest charities in the Cincinnati region, according to Charity Navigator.

## GIVING

### **Why should I give to United Way?**

Together we can do what no one person or organization can do alone. When you support United Way, you're joining the largest organized community effort to help children and families in our area move out of poverty for good. We're working to create long-term solutions to the challenges facing our community and address immediate needs.

### **How can I give?**

You can donate online at any time at [UWGC.org](http://UWGC.org) or make a gift during your company's annual United Way campaign. Find other ways you can give.

### **Why should I give to United Way's Community Impact Fund rather than designate my gift?**

When you donate to United Way's Community Fund, you're supporting United Way's role in uniting more than 140 incredible nonprofit organizations, and combining your gift with thousands of others to do what no one person can do alone. This collective impact and community investment is essential to changing lives across this region.

### **But what if I want to make a contribution to a specific nonprofit?**

If you have a special interest in one of our impact areas — health, education or financial stability — you may designate your gift to that cause on your pledge form. If there is a specific initiative or agency partner you'd like to support, you can also designate all or a portion of your gift.

### **Are United Way donations tax-deductible?**

Yes. United Way of Greater Cincinnati is a federally registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by an individual's or corporation's circumstances. Those contributing through payroll deduction in their workplace should keep a copy of their e-pledge receipt or signed pledge card and maintain their last pay stub of the tax year or Form W-2 from their employer that summarizes the amount withheld for United Way.

### **How does tax reform and new tax laws affect my donation?**

The new law increases the 50 percent of your adjusted gross income limitation for donations by cash, check or credit card to 60 percent. You will still be able to deduct your charitable contributions when you itemize your taxes. The tax rates on capital gains and dividends remain the same at 0, 15 and 20 percent, depending on your tax bracket. The limitation on charitable gifts of long-term appreciated property to public charities will remain at 30 percent of your adjusted gross income. You can still carry over any excess for up to five additional years. There

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are many ways you can give this year that not only make a difference at United Way of Greater Cincinnati, but offer you benefits as well. Please consult with your tax or financial advisors to determine the best charitable giving strategies for you.

## **How much of my donation goes to administrative costs?**

Our management and general costs are 5.1% of our total budget. That's half the local average compared to the other 56 largest charities in the Cincinnati region, according to Charity Navigator. Fundraising costs are 9.5% of our total budget. We invest nearly 90% of the funds we raise back into our local community. Charity Navigator also scores us 100% for Accountability and Transparency.

## **What if I feel pressured to give?**

Neither United Way nor its volunteers believe people should be forced to give. We discourage pressure in any form. This defeats the very idea of voluntary giving. Any semblance of pressure (whether real, implied or perceived) is contradictory to our operating standards. If you feel that you have been pressured to give in a workplace campaign, please contact the United Way Engagement Leader at your organization to express your concern or contact us.

## **PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES & SERVICES**

### **What organizations does United Way support?**

United Way of Greater Cincinnati invests in more than 230 programs and community change efforts at more than 140 agency partners and in about a dozen initiatives. We're working hard than ever before to help reduce poverty. Significant changes in our investment model and the way we work with agency partners in 2018 are aimed at helping children and families move from poverty to self-sufficiency, with the bold, long-term vision of ending poverty across our region. United Way also provides additional grants throughout the year for innovative new community impact opportunities.

### **Why does United Way support a system of programs instead of a cause?**

The power of United Way is our collective ability to create community solutions to community challenges. At our core is our passion to unite communities to change lives. Instead of focusing on one single cause, United Way invests in a system of programs and services across the areas to meet the varied needs of people in our region with a major focus on children and families in poverty. We view these areas as interconnected, much as the issues people face tend to be. They're often complicated, with no one single solution.

### **How does United Way decide what programs to fund?**

Volunteers make investment decisions based on their impact, alignment to our Agenda for Community Impact and the Bold Goals for Our Region, and accountability. All funding is contingent upon the partner's sound operation, delivery of services and achievement of measurable outcomes.

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## **How do I know that United Way partners use the funds responsibly?**

We are audited each year by an independent accounting firm to ensure we are in compliance with generally accepted accounting procedures, regulations and laws. We are pleased to share our best practices in how we steward our community's investment. In its most recent annual study, we received a 100% rating for accountability and transparency from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities throughout the United States. We strive to meet the philanthropic goals of our donors and offer a donor satisfaction guarantee. We are a long-standing member of the Better Business Bureau.

## **What does United Way support beyond its initiatives and partner agencies?**

In addition to supporting agency partners and a number of strategic initiatives and collaborations, United Way of Greater Cincinnati:

- Helps policymakers, community leaders and service providers identify the health, social and economic issues facing our region through the Community Research Collaborative.
- Develops public sector support for comprehensive solutions through funding and system change through public policy advocacy.
- Provides opportunities for individuals and groups looking to make a difference through United Way Volunteer Connection.

## **How can my nonprofit apply for United Way funding?**

If you'd like to learn more about how United Way makes its investment decisions, contact our Community Impact team.

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*June 2018*