

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to often asked questions and common concerns

What is the United Way Campaign?

It is the fundraising arm of United Way of Island County, an organization operated by a volunteer group of local citizens.

The object of the United Way campaign is to eliminate the effort and cost of many separate campaigns. It does this by conducting a single, annual campaign for the financial needs of the health, social services, youth and rehabilitation agencies that apply for funding from United Way of Island County.

United Way assures the contributor that maximum value is received for each contributed dollar and that member agencies maintain a high degree of efficiency and quality of service.

What are the advantages of United Way?

- Saves money wasted in having separate campaigns;
- Reduces annoyance of separate campaigns;
- Meets the most serious community needs first;
- Encourages high standards of agency service;
- Frees agency personnel to devote their time to helping people, with minimal time out for fund raising;
- Is the most economical, efficient approach to community fundraising yet devised;
- Allocates funds for services according to need, not popularity;
- Conserves the energy of volunteers; and
- Assures contributors that their contributions will be used effectively and they are doing what their contributor intended them to do.

Who may belong to United Way?

Any bona fide health or human service agency may apply for funding. It should have a worthwhile program that meets a community need that is not already being met by another agency. It must also agree to present its finances, budget, audit and program to United Way's volunteer agency review panel.

United Way dollars go as handouts to deadbeats who refuse to help themselves.

Not true. One of the advantages of giving to United Way is the assurance to you, the giver, that these United Way dollars are budgeted to agencies that serve the people with the greatest need. Volunteers, many of them your neighbors do this budgeting, so you can know that the dollars are helping the right people.

If I stop working, what happens to my pledge?

Your pledge to United Way is made in good faith and is based upon your earnings. Should you cease to be employed, you are completely and immediately absolved of your pledge for that period.

I don't like "x" agency, why should I give?

Although you may not like a certain agency, you can be sure it's providing a valuable service to the area or it would not be funded by the United Way. All of the organizations receiving United Way funding do not have equal appeal to everyone. Each one, however, is an essential part of the total human services necessary to our community. There are hundreds of people looking to these agencies for help and guidance. United Way funding is based on the service of the agency and the need for that service, not agency popularity. In addition, with our donor designation policy, you can write on your pledge card the name of the partner agency you would like your money to go.

Who determines how much each agency receives?

The United Way has a Community Investment Team consisting of board members and volunteers who carefully review each request for funding. Each year, the agencies' finances, programs and more are examined by the United Way. Funding decisions are based on all factors, plus site visits and personal interviews.

I've got a complaint: Someone I know didn't receive help from a United Way agency.

Get the facts...names, dates, all the pertinent information, and then call the United Way of Island County. All complaints will be checked out thoroughly. No one who needs help is ever deliberately turned down. Over the years, we have found through careful investigation, that many complaints are usually misunderstandings that can be resolved. Occasionally, however, there are cases where an agency has been allocated only enough funds to assist a specific number and the budget simply cannot be stretched any further.

Are the campaign workers paid?

No. From the Campaign chairperson to volunteer solicitors, no one receives any pay. In addition to giving their time, talents and contributions, they pay all expenses incurred in working on the campaign. There are only 2 full time paid staff members who work at the United Way office.

Why should I give, I never use any agency services?

Are you sure you don't? You might be surprised. Do your kids go to Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts? Are your parents/grandparents part of the Senior Services of Island County? Are you children in daycare? Have you ever been to the YMCA? There are many services that you may already use and not be aware that they have received funding from United Way.

Even if you don't use the services, the health, happiness and well being of everyone in it directly influence the wholesome atmosphere of a community. Delinquency, abuse, neglect of the needy and handicapped, and drug abuse—these all imperil everyone in the community. Illness, family problems and other such things know no economic boundaries. You or members of your family may not need United Way services now, but you may in the future. It is comforting to know that if you should ever need them, they will be available. In the meantime, an investment to United Way is clear expression of concern for your neighbors.

What if I can't afford to give?

The reality is, "Can we afford not to give?" The needs of people are not going to be ignored. It boils down to a choice; freedom of choice of doing it ourselves, voluntarily through local decision-making, or less effectively and at greater cost, through non-voluntary, compulsory ways.

Thank you for your time and dedication