

# Most Frequently Asked Questions About Your United Way

## Q&A



**1 Can you give me a brief description of the United Way of Greenville County?** United Way of Greenville County (UWGC) is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization that unites donors, companies, volunteers, partner agencies, and other organizations to improve lives and achieve measurable results that make our community stronger. United Way achieves this by doing two things: 1) helping people in need right now through ongoing support of 92 essential local programs, and 2) helping eliminate future needs by developing strategies to impact the underlying causes that negatively impact school readiness, high school graduation, and financial stability.

**2 How is United Way different from other nonprofit organizations?** United Way has a unique ability to help us come together as a community to identify and address the issues that take everyone to solve. Those issues, like making sure children are ready to start school, keeping kids in school through high school graduation and beyond, and helping families become more financially stable, cross lines of race, gender, geography, faith and economic status and can only be addressed with collective focus and action. Your contribution is combined with those made by others to impact our community in ways no single organization or individual can.

**3 Who makes program funding decisions?** Deciding which programs receive United Way funding is placed in the capable hands of trained community volunteers who work together to carefully invest contributor dollars and other resources in important local programs. United Way of Greenville County currently funds 92 programs at 50 agencies.

**4 Who may receive program funding from United Way of Greenville County?** Any tax-exempt, nonprofit organization which conducts health or human service programs in Greenville County may apply. The agency must provide programs that address one of the five priority areas and agree to present its budget information and a certified audit to United Way. The United Way Board of Trustees makes the final decisions on all allocations.

**5 What were the results of the 2008 United Way campaign in Greenville County?** In 2008 UWGC raised \$14,418,275; 249 companies gave corporate gifts; 41,000 individuals contributed; and 663 workplace campaigns were conducted.

**6 How much of the money raised by United Way is used for administrative purposes?** Only 12.7% of funds raised by our United Way is used for fundraising and administration—making it among the lowest overhead costs of any nonprofit in the nation. For that reason, Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, has awarded United Way of Greenville County its highest rating, a four-star (★★★★) rating, for maintaining sound fiscal management. United Way is this efficient because community support keeps costs to a minimum—including extensive volunteer leadership, executives "loaned" by companies, public service advertising donations and more.

**7 Why should I give? I never use United Way services.** Inadequate health care, juvenile crime, neglect of the needy, emergency assistance in times of crisis—these concerns affect everyone in a community. There are no religious or economic boundaries. Because United Way funded services are community-wide, they reach beyond the care provided by a single group. A gift to United Way is a clear expression of concern for your neighbor.

**8 Since I live in another county, why should I give here?** United Way asks people to give where they work, but services can be used where they work or live. If you wish, you may designate your gift to United Way in the county where you live by completing a Donor Choice Form. These are available from your campaign coordinator or the United Way office.

**9 The United Way Fair Share Scale is too high. Do I have to give that much?** Fair Share is a guide, not a demand. Fair Share was designed to ask each person for the same amount in proportion to his or her earnings. It is a response to people who ask, "How much should I give?" Obviously, only you know your own circumstances; your gift must be your decision.

**10 My spouse and I both work. Why should we both give?** United Way doesn't ask families to give, but asks individuals to contribute according to salary and ability. If both the husband and wife work, each is asked to consider giving a Fair Share of what he or she earns.

**11 What if I feel pressured to give?** United Way has a non-coercion policy, so no one should be forced to give. United Way is made possible because so many people give voluntarily, and volunteerism is what United Way is all about.

**12 Can I give to specific agencies?** Yes. Keep in mind that United Way volunteers have researched the community and identified the areas of greatest need for Greenville County. A gift to United Way will be used to support programs and initiatives that are directly addressing these areas of need. However, if a United Way funded agency or other nonprofit 501(c)(3) health and human service organization is especially important to you, complete both a pledge card and a Donor Choice Form that is available from your campaign coordinator or the United Way office to designate your gift.

**13 How do donor designations to specific agencies affect the overall funding to that agency?** Designated funds and the pool of undesignated funds available for allocation are accounted for separately. The designated dollars and the allocated dollars are separate streams of income to the agencies. For example, XYZ agency receives \$5,000 in designations from donors and \$50,000 in allocation from the United Way Community Impact Funds—total dollars received by the agency will be \$55,000. In some cases there is a fee of 12.7% for the processing of donor designated dollars. There is no fee for a designation to other United Ways in Upstate SC.

## **14** I give through payroll deduction; why do I need to keep a copy of my pledge?

Due to IRS regulations, individuals giving through payroll deductions will be required to show a copy of their pledge form as well as documentation from their employer with their charitable deduction noted on it. This documentation is required for anyone who itemizes charitable contributions on their income tax return. United Way of Greenville County's pledge card includes a tear-off stub that provides the information required by the IRS. This stub or a copy of the entire form should be kept for tax records.

## **15** If I stop working or leave the company where I made my donation, what happens to my pledge?

Should you stop working, your payroll deduction pledge stops too. Your pledge through United Way is made in good faith based upon your employment. When you start a new job, ask to sign up for payroll deduction again or call United Way for further details.

## **16** Why do some agencies charge for services?

Agencies supported by United Way serve all of us. If there is a fee for service, it is usually based on one's ability to pay, and represents another source of income for the agency. This is necessary because United Way cannot cover the full cost of every agency's operation.

## **17** How do people get help from United Way?/What is United Way 2-1-1?

United Way supports 92 programs throughout Greenville County that help people every day. While United Way does not provide direct services to individuals and families, it does operate United Way 2-1-1. When callers dial 2-1-1, they can speak with a counselor who provides free, confidential referrals to help them contact organizations that can assist with counseling, job training, emergency assistance and other needs.

## **18** How does United Way pay for events and luncheons?

Hundreds of volunteers work each year with no compensation and "no free lunch." Volunteers are asked to pay for lunches. Local companies very generously provide "event sponsorships" to offset the cost of recognition and cultivation events for donors.

## **19** Someone I know didn't receive help from an agency supported by United Way. Why?

It is difficult to answer the question without the details of the specific situation. First, get the facts: names, dates, and all pertinent information. Then, call the United Way office at 467-3333. Any concern will be explored fully, and a response will be provided to the inquirer.

## **20** What is the United Way of Greenville County's position on funding Boy Scouts?

United Way of Greenville County currently funds programs provided by Boy Scouts of America, Blue Ridge Council at approximately \$257,000 (includes United Way program funding and donor-directed gifts). United Way of Greenville County volunteer leaders have chosen to continue investing in Boy Scout programs because they believe that thousands of local boys—including hard-to-reach, low-income, at-risk youth—greatly benefit from Scouting's proven record of safe, structured life skills programs.

## **21** Does the United Way support Planned Parenthood and agencies that promote abortion?

The money raised in Greenville County stays in Greenville County. There is no chapter of Planned Parenthood in Greenville County. United Way of Greenville County does not fund Planned Parenthood. None of the agency programs funded by United Way of Greenville County promote, endorse, or make referrals on abortion.

## **22** Does United Way of Greenville County have a formal financial audit procedure?

An audit of United Way's financial statements is conducted annually by an independent, certified public accountant whose examination complies with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Volunteer finance and audit committees monitor all aspects of the organization's finances and audit relationships to ensure that United Way adheres to the highest standards of financial accountability. In addition to an annual audit, United Way is in compliance with all state and federal laws, and meets or exceeds United Way of America membership requirements and standards.

## **23** How many staff work at United Way?

United Way employs 46 staff in full-time, part-time and internship roles who provide fund-raising, community planning, financial administration, and communications leadership. Many of the staff are grant-funded positions whose primary purpose is to provide programs and services to benefit the community. Staff also recruit and engage more than 1,300 volunteers during the year, effectively utilizing their expertise to help further the mission and work of United Way. Specific questions regarding staff should be directed to Ted Hendry, President of United Way of Greenville County at (864) 467-3333.

## **24** What is the relationship between the United Way of Greenville County & United Way of America?

United Way of Greenville County (UWGC) is autonomous and managed by local volunteers. United Way of America (UWA) is a national training and service center providing services to local United Ways across the country. UWGC pays membership dues to UWA in return for services that include the use of the United Way name and logo, market research, promotional items, national/NFL advertising, and training for staff. UWA does not govern UWGC. Led by a board of local volunteers, all funding and leadership decisions for UWGC are made right here. The \$142,940 paid by UWGC to UWA for services are included as part of UWGC's overall fundraising and administrative costs which are among the lowest in the nation (see question 6).

**LIVE UNITED™** 

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