

# Frequently Asked Donor Questions



## How much of my gift actually goes to support services?

Volunteers help keep United Way's administrative and fundraising costs very low. On average, United Way spends 14 cents of each dollar on expenses, while eighty-six cents go directly to life-changing initiatives. The American Institute of Philanthropy defines a "good" charity as one that directs at least 60 percent of its contributions to program services. CharityNavigator.com, America's premier independent charity evaluator, awarded United Way of Dane County its top, four-star rating for efficiency.

## Why shouldn't I just give directly to my favorite charitable agency?

United Way makes your gift go further through the power of partnership. We bring together expert community partners such as business leaders, government officials, educators and nonprofit executive directors to discuss the possible challenges and solutions for each issue. Our research, expert partners, and volunteers help determine which strategies and investments will make the most progress towards our goals in the areas of education, safety, and health. As a result, families and individuals are empowered to make positive and lasting changes in their lives, and you can feel confident that your gift makes the most impact possible.

## How is the money raised through the annual United Way Campaign invested?

Community volunteers regularly evaluate the performance and effectiveness of partner organizations that deliver on Agenda for Change strategies. The impact agencies make in those results influences the annual investment level that year from United Way.

## What if I don't feel I can afford to give?

We completely respect that budgets are tight and we are so thankful that you would consider giving. We hope you'll consider investing at a level that is comfortable for you, because all gifts of any size make a difference. The power of your gift, combined with others, changes the lives of men, women, children and seniors across Dane County.

## Why does United Way keep asking for more money each year?

United Way is sensitive to economic conditions. When the economy went into a deep recession in 2008, we held our campaign the next year at the same level (and we reduced the campaign goal in 2010). We used our reserves to keep these important strategies moving forward. With the development of our community's Agenda for Change in 2003, United Way transformed our work to be more effective at actually reducing and eliminating problems, while continuing to build our progress and bringing new initiatives to scale.

## My spouse gives at work. Why should I give?

We're grateful that your spouse supports the campaign. As an individual, your gift is important, too. Every contribution makes an impact in the lives of people in our community. Also, by combining your gift with your spouse, you may qualify for Key Club.

## I'm never going to use these services, so why should I give?

An investment in United Way is an investment in the community, leading to lasting change at the root causes of the issues our community deems most pressing. Your support of United Way results in a more successful, safer, and stronger community in which to live, work, and raise a family. Even though you may not need services now, your gift ensures that services will be there when you or someone in your community need them.

### **Why isn't my favorite agency a part of United Way?**

United Way maintains an open door policy with respect to health and human service agencies interested in partnership. There may be different reasons why agencies are not participating with United Way. Some may elect not to apply for funding and some may not meet United Way's accountability qualifications. You may want to check with the agency for more information.

### **What if I don't want to contribute because I don't like an agency?**

By withholding your support because of one agency, you are limiting the increased impact you can make through our community's Agenda for Change. If you wish, you may exclude an agency from your gift on your pledge form.

### **I heard about someone who needed help but didn't receive it.**

There could be many reasons for this. Our partners work to help as many people as possible with limited resources. That's why your gift is so important: it helps us bring initiatives to scale so that more people have access to services.

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

Fees represent part of an agency's sources of income. Most agencies have a sliding fee scale that takes into account each person's ability to pay. This makes it possible to assist people who wouldn't be able to help themselves.

### **Did my gift help pay for the construction of the United Way building?**

No. United Way completed the building of a new office facility in June of 2000. The building was necessary because of persistent heating and air conditioning problems, annual flooding, insufficient space and lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities. United Way did not use funds raised through the campaign to pay for the new building. Instead, we asked a targeted group of individuals, foundations and corporations to donate funds for the building's construction so that dollars in the campaign could continue to support the Agenda for Change

### **What is United Way of Dane County's relationship with the Glacier's Edge Council of the Boy Scouts?**

The Glacier's Edge Council of the Boy Scouts announced in February of 2002 that they were withdrawing their request for United Way funds in 2002. The local Scouts said they made this decision because the Boy Scouts of America national membership policy was polarizing the Dane County community and had placed United Way in a difficult position. They didn't want the community's support of United Way to be jeopardized. This was a decision by the Glacier's Edge Council, not United Way. We still have a positive relationship with Glacier's Edge. If you'd like to donate to them, you can write their agency name on your United Way pledge form.

**If questions come up that you are uncomfortable answering or are unable to answer, please contact your Loaned Executive or United Way staff representative.**