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Frequently Asked Questions

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What is United Way of Northwest Louisiana?

United Way of Northwest Louisiana is a local, nonprofit organization advancing the common good. We focus on the building blocks of a good life: education, income, health and basic needs. Our goal is to create lasting change by addressing the underlying causes of problems. To do that, we involve the community in giving, advocating for change and volunteering.

I already give to charity. Why should I give to United Way?

Because no other organization meets all of the needs addressed by United Way.

- United Way focuses on the most pressing issues for our kids, families and community.
- Your contribution works right here in your own community.
- United Way not only meets needs today, we're working on solutions for lasting change.
- United Way makes it easy to give and raises the level of philanthropy for the whole community. Together, we make a stronger impact.

Why should I give my money to United Way and not just directly to agencies?

United Way does much more than simply collect and distribute money. Through its Community Impact Fund, United Way provides a strong ARM for community change: Assessing needs, Responding and Measuring results.

- United Way monitors programs that receive grants to ensure they follow sound fiscal policies and provide effective services. Careful stewardship is valuable to donors who want their contribution to make the greatest impact. (This oversight is not provided for donations designated directly to agencies.)

- United Way works two ways: meeting immediate needs and addressing the underlying causes of problems for long-term results.
- United Way looks for gaps and duplications to ensure that the services needed in our community are available.
- United Way affiliation enables agencies to leverage public and private funding. This multiplies the effect of your contribution.
- Giving through United Way reduces fundraising efforts for the agencies, so their time and money can be spent helping others.

How is my gift invested?

United Way focuses on helping kids become educated and succeed, building stronger families, enabling older adults to live independently, supporting those with health and disability issues, providing relief in crisis and creating vital neighborhoods.

When you give to United Way, you tap into the strength of Impact Councils who volunteer their time year-round to make sure your contribution is invested in local programs and services that are achieving the most impact.

What is United Way's operating cost?

United Way of Northwest Louisiana operating costs average 20% annually. This is considered excellent by charity watchdog organizations like the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance.

Why should I give through payroll deduction at my workplace?

Payroll deduction offers a number of advantages. It's efficient: lower fundraising costs mean more money is invested in our community. It's convenient: you decide what to contribute and it comes right out of your paycheck a little at a time. It's secure, confidential and automatically ends should you leave your job for any reason.

Why does United Way support some agencies and not others?

United Way funds solutions. Providing grants to agencies is one way of achieving our goals. We currently fund 55 programs and 6 specific projects that provide critical services, produce measurable and effective results and meet priority needs for people.

In making grants, we look for programs that:

- Help kids and youth succeed
- Build stronger families
- Provide basic needs such as housing, food, shelter and healthcare
- Support those with health and disability issues
- Enable older adults to live independently
- Provide relief or support in crisis
- Decrease isolation and build a stronger community

Any 501(c)3 nonprofit may apply for a grant. In some cases, an agency chooses not to apply because its policies do not meet United Way's rigorous standards.

I never use agency services, so why should I give?

You never know when you, a member of your family or a neighbor may need a United Way service. Job loss, loss of a loved one, illness, accidents, disabilities, family problems, natural disasters, mental disorders and the problems of growing up and growing old.

Over 100,000 individuals are impacted by the programs and projects funded by United Way. These programs reach neighborhoods and communities throughout the ten parishes of Northwest Louisiana. Anyone who has learned to swim at the Y, taken an American Red Cross first aid course or called 2-1-1 has been served by a United Way partner agency.

Can I target part of my gift to a specific nonprofit?

Yes. Through United Way you can give to any 501(c)3; however, gifts designated by the donor do not receive the same monitoring that United Way provides for undesignated contributions given out through grants. Contributions designated to a specific agency that is funded by United Way of Northwest Louisiana will be paid in addition to their United Way grant.

Can I use my credit card to make a gift?

Yes. You may use it to [give online](#) or through your workforce campaign.