

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Advancing the Common Good: Creating Opportunities for a Better Life for All

One of nearly 1,300 independent United Ways nationwide, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania serves Philadelphia County and large portions of Delaware, Chester and Montgomery Counties. A local 60-member volunteer board of directors oversees our operation. The 2008 Campaign raised \$51.1 million for health and human services, with all funds remaining in the four-county region except as directed by individual donors.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the money go?

Approximately half of the funds raised from individual and company donors are directed to United Way's Community Impact Fund, which makes strategic investments in Education for Children, Income for Families and Health for Seniors. The other half of funds raised are directed by donors to individual agencies of their choice.

I get asked for money by so many organizations. Why should I give to United Way? How is United Way different from other non-profits?

There are many reasons to choose United Way for your charitable contributions:

1. Our experience in the region – we have been helping businesses and donors with their philanthropy since 1921 – all dollars used locally in the Greater Philadelphia region.
2. With a single gift to United Way's Community Impact Fund, you support a broad range of services that you know make a measurable difference with measurable results.
3. United Way actively monitors the use of your Community Impact gift, selecting highly effective agencies and holding them accountable for results.
4. When donors pool their money through United Way, they not only fund local services, but also help to attract national funding to the community.
5. United Way listens to the community and works hand-in-hand with community leaders to make quality services available where they are needed most.

I am personally involved with a particular organization. Why shouldn't I just send my money directly to them instead of paying United Way's overhead charges?

To those donors who faithfully give to an organization of your choice every year, we thank you. We simply ask that you give in partnership with United Way so that we have the capacity to reach out to the nearly half a million others who *need* for us to ask. In this way you help to leverage gifts from others that might never be made otherwise, and build philanthropy community-wide.

What are United Way's administrative fees? How much of the money goes to the community?

Administrative fees are charged against all agency payments to recover the cost of United Way fundraising and administration. All non-profits have fundraising costs and – at 12.5% – United Way's are among the lowest in the business. As a result United Way is able to pass over 87 cents of every dollar received through to community services.

If United Way deducts an administrative charge and the agency then deducts more overhead, doesn't this duplicate overhead costs?

United Way's fee recovers our fundraising costs. The agency may have additional overhead expenses related to their delivery of services but we have saved them the expense of fundraising. Thus there is no duplication.

How can the organization I am involved with get money through United Way Donor Choice Program?

Simply making a pledge and writing an agency's name on the form will kick off the eligibility process. If a donor designates an agency that is not currently in our program, we send an application for eligibility to the agency. Agencies can also apply directly to this program for a small fee to cover handling costs. All agencies that have been reviewed and found eligible for donor designations are listed on the United Way web site at www.uwsepa.org. The most common reason that agencies are found ineligible is because they do not provide human health or social services.

Eligibility Requirements for an agency to receive Donor Choice funds:

- Provide Human Health and/or Social Service programs;
- Have federal tax exempt status 501(c) 3;
- Comply with the US Patriot Act; and
- Provide services to residents of PA, DE, and/or NJ.

Why hasn't the agency I designated my gift to last fall been paid yet?

Donors generally make their pledges in the fall but their gift is deducted out of their paychecks over the course of the following calendar year, beginning in January. These deductions are remitted to United Way by the donor's employer at 1 to 3 month intervals. Final payments of payroll deductions made in December of the year following the campaign, may not be made until the March that comes fifteen or more months after the pledge was made. United Way can only pay out these funds *as they are received*, cutting checks every two months. In addition, some donor information comes to United Way tagged "anonymous" so that agencies don't necessarily know whose gifts are included in the checks they receive from us. Please consider whether you truly want to remain anonymous, as the agency to which you give will not then know your name.

In what measurable ways has United Way made the community better this past year?

United Way directed the \$22 million invested through our Community Impact Fund to improve the lives of people throughout the region. These investments supported the work of a regional network of high-quality agencies in providing services that prepare children and youth to succeed in school and in life, building financial stability and independence for families and keeping seniors healthy and safe at home.

- Over 53 United Way-funded programs provided 4,300 children with preschool education. United Way was also able to link 5,000 youths with mentors last year, while 52,000 children and youth attended United Way-funded after school and youth development programs.
- United Way-funded agencies provided workplace training programs for 3,500 low-income individuals, offered adult basic education instruction to more than 2,900 adults, and connected thousands of individuals and families to emergency assistance such as rent, mortgage, utilities, food, emergency shelter and temporary housing.
- United Way-funded agencies helped more than 50,000 elderly neighbors remain independent by connecting them to services that allowed them to socialize, remain active and prevented them from being isolated.

Wasn't there some kind of scandal associated with United Way a few years ago?

Although there were incidents at other United Way organizations (2003 United Way of the National Capital Area and in 1992 at United Way of America), our volunteer-driven United Way was not involved in any way. Each United Way is separately and locally incorporated and governed. United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania continually examines its own practices and maintains the highest standards of accountability. These practices and procedures are in line with the practices, values, and guidelines of United Way of America and United Way's national system.

If United Way did not exist, what mechanism would replace it to assure that organizations providing essential human services obtain the resources they require?

Unless a new organization were formed to do what United Way does, each of the more than 9,000 tax exempt, charitable health and human service organizations in the Greater Philadelphia region would have to solicit corporations and their employees on their own.