

Questions and Answers

What is Spokane County United Way?

Spokane County United Way is a local, non-profit organization that partners with agencies, volunteers, donors and local businesses to identify community priorities and invest in programs that create lasting solutions for our community's most pressing issues. Through this network of services provided by partner agencies, United Way invests in the building blocks for a good life: Education, Income and Health.

What is LIVE UNITED?

In everything we do, we are all people. Connected. Interdependent. United. When we reach out to lend a hand to one, we influence the condition of all. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.

Everyone has something to give – an hour, a Saturday... a voice as the champion of a cause. Advancing the common good takes money, but it takes heart too. When we give, advocate, and volunteer, we LIVE UNITED.

Why should I participate in the United Way campaign?

Giving to United Way is effective. Among charitable organizations United Way stands out because we raise funds efficiently. Our costs are low. Our standards are high. We put more of your money to work, so when you give, you can feel good about making a difference. In fact, when you give to the Partners Fund, 82 percent of your contribution goes toward program services in our community.

Giving to United Way is convenient through payroll deduction.

Trained volunteers evaluate and fund only the most vital and effective programs to ensure that your money is well invested. Our review process requires that the programs and services we fund set goals and show measurable results.

Your gift will go far, but not far away. When you give to United Way, your money stays right here in Spokane County supporting programs in our community.

We are a key community network. United Way collaborates with government, businesses, foundations and other organizations to make the most of local resources and magnifies the impact of every dollar.

United Way is focused on three priority areas: education, income and health – the building blocks for a good life. Education is essential to getting and keeping a job with a livable wage and health benefits. Income that is adequate for individuals and families to pay for today's necessities and save for the future keeps people financially stable. Access to quality health care helps keep children on track and in school and adults productive at work. Remove any one of these building blocks and the other two topple.

How is my contribution invested?

With the guidance of volunteers, United Way identifies community priorities and invests in local partnerships and programs that make the greatest impact.

United Way is committed to ensuring that your charitable investment is well spent and improves people's lives locally. We invest in 34 local partner agencies that provide 51 programs and services that support Education, Income and Health.

Education - Everyone wins when our children and youth achieve their full potential. Education is essential to getting and keeping a job with a livable wage and health benefits. Thanks to your investments: 3,000 youth have a safe place to have fun, learn and be mentored; 300 children who have experienced abuse and neglect are in a safe, structured environment; and 220 low income working parents can afford high quality child care.

Income - Everyone wins when families are financially stable and have opportunities. An income adequate to pay for today's necessities and save for the future provides families a sense of financial stability. Thanks to your investments: 60,000 people each year receive high quality and nutritious food; 5,000 tax returns are prepared free for low and moderate income households; 500 low income and abused women build job skills and find employment; and 100 low and moderate income families get help buying a home or avoiding foreclosure.

Health - Everyone wins when people make healthy choices. Access to counseling services and social supports keeps children on track and adults healthy and engaged. Thanks to your investments: Thousands of local residents each year receive training in first aid, CPR, family care giving and emergency preparedness; 245 low income seniors have a healthy meal and companionship; and 230 teens get their lives back on track after alcohol and drug treatment.

How do I know United Way is efficient with my donation?

Only a fraction of every dollar is spent on fundraising and administration at United Way (18 percent overhead). Spokane County meets the highest standards of nonprofit excellence of watchdog organizations such as the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance which sets 35 percent and under as the acceptable percentage for overhead costs.

Why should I give to United Way rather than to another agency?

When you give to United Way, you help support agencies and programs that United Way knows achieve measurable results that address the toughest issues and problems in Spokane County.

We do more than simply collect and distribute money. Through our Partners Fund, we provide a strong platform for community change by focusing our investments and measuring results of the programs we fund.

United Way is able to leverage your gifts by working with various community partners- government, business, nonprofit organizations and volunteers to provide comprehensive solutions in a way that no single organization could accomplish alone.

Why should I give to support agency services I never use?

You never know when a member of your family or a neighbor will need a United Way service. Job loss, loss of a loved one, illnesses, accidents, disability, family problems, natural disasters, mental disorders and the problems of growing up and growing old know no boundaries.

Thousands of people use programs funded by United Way every year. These programs reach neighborhoods and communities throughout Spokane County. Anyone who has taken a first aid class at the Red Cross, enrolled their child in a YMCA after school program, been helped by Hospice or called the 211 helpline has been served by a United Way partner agency.

Why should I give if my spouse/partner already gives?

Charitable giving is a personal and voluntary decision. We encourage each spouse/partner to participate in his/her employer's United Way campaign. The combined total of both gifts may qualify you for recognition as leadership givers (\$1,000 or more).

Why should I give through payroll deduction?

Payroll deduction is our most popular form of payment. 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 and confidential: your payroll deduction is handled by your employer and automatically ends should you leave your job for any reason.

What other methods of payment do you accept for contributions?

Contributors may write a check, give cash or use a credit card with no additional charge to make their gift to United Way. Donations of securities, property or other gifts are also accepted.

What kind of tax documents for my charitable contribution will I receive from United Way?

If you give a one-time gift of \$250 or more you will receive a tax receipt directly from Spokane County United Way. For payroll deduction gifts, retain your pay stub, W-2 or other document furnished by the employer that indicates the amount withheld during the tax year for payment to Spokane County United Way. A copy of the contributor's pledge form also serves as documentation.

May I designate my gift and if so, who can I give it to?

By selecting the United Way's Partner Fund you are supporting 34 health and human service organizations that provide services through proven, successful programs. You can designate funds to an individual agency as long as it is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. Or your contribution can be split and portions directed to both.

What portion of my designated gift will be retained to cover costs associated with that designation?

Designated gifts to Spokane County United Way, other United Way organizations in Washington State and Kootenai County will not be charged a designation fee. Ten percent of your designated gift to a United Way member agency and fifteen percent of your gift to other 501 (c) (3) organizations will be retained for costs associated with your designated gift. There is a \$250 cap on all designation fees per each donor.

How can I get involved with United Way as a volunteer?

United Way connects people to a variety of community volunteer opportunities through its Volunteer Center. An on-line database is available at www.unitedwayspokane.org – Just click on Volunteer Now. This will give you access to a current list of volunteer opportunities available in our community. United Way also engages volunteers in support of its various activities – including assisting with our campaign, investment review panels, tax preparation and various board committees.

Where do people turn for assistance if they have a personal or family problem?

For people who need help but don't know where to turn, a simple call to 2-1-1 can get them connected and get them answers. Calls to 2-1-1 are confidential. Trained, local specialists are available to help you find a number of services Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Help is also available to people in time of crisis through First Call for Help, 509-838-4429, which provides additional crisis intervention support seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED™ 
www.unitedwayspokane.org