



Spokane County United Way
UnitedWaySpokane.org

Questions and Answers

What is Spokane County United Way?

Spokane County United Way is a local, non-profit organization. We fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. One person or organization cannot solve our community's toughest issues alone. That's why Spokane County United Way recruits and mobilizes people and organizations that bring the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. Our goal is to decrease child abuse and neglect, cut the high school education achievement gap in half, and reduce the number of people living in poverty.

What is LIVE UNITED?

In everything we do, we are all people- connected, interdependent, and united. When we reach out to lend a hand to one, we influence the condition of all. Everyone has something to give- financial resources, a voice to champion a cause or time to volunteer. We invite you to join us. To live better, we must LIVE UNITED.

Why should I participate in the United Way campaign?

Spokane County United Way provides a strong foundation for community change by focusing investments to strengthen our community and create opportunities for a better life for all. When you give to Spokane County United Way, you help support community partnerships, collaborations and programs that we know achieve measureable results in health, education and financial stability. You can be confident that your personal investments create impact locally in a way that supports healthy family relationships, increases high school graduation rates and improves the financial stability of families.

How is my contribution invested?

With the guidance of volunteers, Spokane County United Way identifies community priorities and invests in local partnerships and programs that create measureable results. Spokane County United Way is committed to ensuring that your charitable investment is well spent and improves people's lives locally. We currently partner with over 30 local non-profit organizations that receive grants from Spokane County United Way to support over 50 different programs and services that are delivering desired results in our focus areas of health, education and financial stability.

Health – Over 5,000 children countywide are victims of child abuse and neglect every year. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. Multiple ACEs contribute to health problems throughout a person's life, including those associated with substance abuse. We focus our tactics to decrease child abuse and neglect and support healthy family relationships.

Education – 73% of low-income students are graduating on time while their more affluent peers graduate at a rate of 92%. This achievement gap contributes to the cycle of intergenerational poverty. We focus our tactics to cut the education achievement gap in half in order to increase high school graduation rates.

Financial Stability – 38% of people in Spokane County are struggling to afford the basic necessities of housing, food, child care, health care and transportation. They are known as Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed or ALICE households. Each month ALICE families are forced to make difficult decisions that often affect their work, children or health. We focus our tactics to reduce the number of people living in poverty in order to improve the financial stability of families.

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

Spokane County United Way exceeds the highest standards of nonprofit excellence of watchdog organizations such as the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance and Charity Navigator. Spokane County United Way's operating costs of 20% support fundraising, management, and general expenses. Those costs also cover our work in the community that has resulted in gaining the confidence of several foundations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Raikes Foundation and the Empire Health Foundation. Because of your financial support and Spokane County United Way's organizational excellence – each of these foundations has made significant investments in our local United Way. These foundations partner with Spokane County United Way because they are confident their investments are producing measureable, long term results that improve lives and strengthen our community.

When is the next funding cycle and how can a nonprofit apply for a grant? What are the eligibility requirements to receive a grant from Spokane County United Way?

United Way makes funding decisions on a two-year basis. The next opportunity for a nonprofit to apply will be the spring of 2021. An applicant must have local programs, with measurable outcomes that align with United Way's strategies to provide safe homes free of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence. Increase graduation rates for low-income and minority youth and assist families in gaining and sustaining assets for a more secure financial future.

Why isn't my favorite charity a United Way Partner Agency?

Spokane County United Way partners with a limited number of local charities. Each charity has successfully completed an extensive application process, led by trained volunteers and have demonstrated their alignment to United Way's goals and their ability to collaborate with other nonprofit programs to create the greatest amount of impact. If United Way does not partner with an organization, it by no means is a reflection on the quality of that organization or their programs.

Does Spokane County United Way make grants to individuals?

Spokane County United Way does not offer scholarships or grants to individuals.

How can I give to Spokane County United Way?

For convenient online giving click the donate button located at the top right hand corner of our website www.unitedwayspokane.org. 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. Contributors may write a check, give cash or use a credit card with no additional charge to make their gift to Spokane County United Way. Donations of securities, property or other gifts are also accepted.

What about giving to another charity?

As a service to donors, Spokane County United Way offers the ability for donors to designate their donation to any federally recognized non-profit organization(s) of their choice. Fundraising / administrative costs will be deducted. Be advised that designated gifts are not reviews by Spokane County United Way nor are the agencies held accountable by Spokane County United Way for results of these gifts.

What is the cost to process my donation to a specific charity?

When a donor elects to designate a portion of, or their entire gift to another non-profit organization, there is a charge to manage a specific designation. Designated request are honored and require personal handling to ensure that the monies are directed properly. Designated gifts to Spokane County United Way, other United Way organizations in Washington state and Kootenai County are not charged a designation fee. Ten percent of a designated gift to a United Way partner agency and fifteen percent of a gift to another 501(C)(3) organization will be retained for costs associated with processing that gift. There is a \$250 cap on all designation fees per each donor.

What kind of tax documents for my charitable contribution will I receive from Spokane County 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.

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

Spokane County United Way connects people to a variety of community volunteer opportunities. Use the Volunteer button on the top right of our website www.unitedwayspokane.org to be connected to an online volunteer center. Here you can create a profile and be matched to volunteer opportunities that match with your interests and time. Currently over 5,000 volunteers and more than 300 local nonprofits utilize this site to connect. Spokane County United Way also engages volunteers in support of its various activities – including assisting with our campaign, helping to determine our investments, tax preparation and various board committees. We also organize group volunteer projects for your business or organization. Please call our office at 838-6581 for assistance.

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. For anyone having trouble reaching 211 – call toll free 866-904-9060. All 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.

Is it safe to invest in this organization? I remember some issue with misuse of United Way funds.

Over 25 years ago there was a scandal involving an individual affiliated with the national United Way organization who had no role with Spokane County United Way. That person was given a seven year prison term for crimes against United Way of America (now United Way Worldwide) and the US government. Since that time major changes were put in place by the national organization. Funds raised by Spokane County United Way stay local and are invested in local programs and services. Our United Way has a Board of Directors who oversees the activities of our local organization. Management of all funds follows the strictest policies and procedures and fall under GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) rules which are set and determined by the accounting industry. Spokane County United Way funds and accounting practices are audited each year to ensure the highest level of compliance.

I have further questions, who should I contact?

Please contact Lisa Curtis, Director of Communications and Marketing for Spokane County United Way. You may reach her via email at lisac@unitedwayspokane.org or call her directly at 509-324-5029.