

Glad you asked!

Why give to United Way of Central Minnesota?

United Way is the most effective way to direct your charitable donations to address community needs of Central Minnesota. We connect resources to accelerate community wide solutions. By bringing area non-profits, government, business and volunteers together we improve people's lives by mobilizing the caring power of Central Minnesota.

How does United Way establish its focus on community issues?

United Way continually assesses and evaluates the changing needs of Central Minnesota. Local volunteers utilize feedback from focus groups and community experts to identify our two Impact Areas: Basic Needs and Education and five goals:

- [Ending hunger](#);
- [Ensuring early literacy](#);
- [Providing quality out of school time](#);
- [Reducing homelessness](#); and
- [Increasing financial stability](#).

In addition, United Way brings together our community to identify and address special issues through partnerships and initiatives.

What does United Way do besides raise and allocate funds?

- Hosts and facilitates [United Way Volunteer Connection](#), connecting volunteers across the area with opportunities through an easy-to-use website and individual referrals. Connects hundreds of youth, adults, families, and groups who want to volunteer with local opportunities year round.
- United Way partners with the Dollywood Foundation to provide a free age appropriate book each month for children ages from birth – age five through our [Imagination Library](#). The books are mailed to children whose parent/guardian lives in our service age.

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- Provides access to resources through [United Way 2-1-1](#). United Way 2-1-1 is an easy to use phone number that connects people with information on community resources for human service needs, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Coordinates a local board that distributes federal dollars to emergency food and shelter programs.
- Creates a more welcoming community through training programs focused on diversity and strengthening human service organizations.
- Addresses basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter and assists people of all ages and abilities gain the skills needed to reach greater independence.
- Meets the needs of Central Minnesota's children of all ages through access to a healthy, safe environment and provides skill-building to fully develop their potential.
- Creates stronger families through access to parenting education, counseling and crisis care.
- Promotes early childhood development through [Read. Talk. Play.](#) An initiative that builds community support for children during the formative years that influence their entire lives.

How does United Way invest my gift?

Each two years, more than 60 trained volunteers work with our staff to carefully review the management and effectiveness of the programs we partner with and use this information to determine funding levels. This information is focused on results. The four key factors in these results include:

- Program accountability
- Demonstrated lasting change in people's lives
- Efficiently and effectively run programs
- Programs that are responsive to changing community needs

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How much of my contribution goes to the people who really need help?

United Way of Central Minnesota takes the business of managing your donation very seriously and performance exceeds [Charities Review Council guidelines](#). Only 12.5% of funds are used for resource development and only 7.2% are used for administrative costs. Low overhead ensures that the majority of your money goes to people in need; 80% of dollars received are used to help people in our community.

Will my hometown benefit?

Wherever you live in Central Minnesota, you can be certain that people from your community are benefiting from United Way. Your family, friends and neighbors are utilizing United Way services and partner programs, and working together to address the root causes of issues to strengthen the [30 communities](#) that make up United Way of Central Minnesota's service area.

Why do programs want to affiliate with United Way?

A partnership with United Way means that the program has met strict accountability standards and financial management guidelines - while showing measurable results. While agencies receive endowments, grants, etc., United Way dollars provide for fundamental programs addressing identified community issues. United Way dollars may also generate additional revenue through grants from local, state and federal governments.

Will United Way allow me to give directly to my favorite agency?

Yes. United Way honors designations made to local partners and any 501(c)3 organization. Please take a moment to consider the powerful impact of your gift when surrounding an issue with support from more than one program.

What if I can't afford to give?

Giving a small amount each pay period through payroll deduction can create a measurable difference in someone's life. Even a small one-time contribution will help someone who might otherwise not receive help.

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My spouse gives for both of us, why should I support United Way?

The success of our community's plan to help people and create lasting results depends on the generous support of each person. United Way has a responsibility to our community and your investment makes it possible for each of us to be powerful catalyst for community change.

Don't my taxes take care of the less fortunate?

Taxes do support some health and human services, primarily through public assistance programs. But tax dollars can't do it all. United Way supports strategies to increase economic self-sufficiency of families and individuals in the community. The result . . . fewer people need long term public assistance.

What if I already give to other organizations?

There are many organizations that we personally support: our alma maters, churches, schools, environmental organizations and personal charities of choice. At United Way, we respect those commitments, and ask that you consider investing in our whole community to address local needs and issues.

Does United Way condone pressure to give?

Giving time or money is a personal matter and completely voluntary. Local employers endorse United Way because it is highly accountable to contributors and is one of the best ways to meet community needs; but everyone's gift should be voluntary.

Are United Way of Central Minnesota and United Way Worldwide affiliated?

United Way of Central Minnesota is a locally managed, not-for-profit organization. 99% of each dollar contributed stays to address community needs in Central Minnesota. United Way of Central Minnesota pays a fee to United Way Worldwide in exchange for services provided to our area including: federal emergency food and shelter funding, research data, donations of needed items to local non-profit agencies such as computer software, logo rights and national advertising. The benefits to our community far outweigh the cost of the services provided.

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Do United Way Board members receive compensation from United Way of Central Minnesota?

No. United Way of Central Minnesota is governed by a volunteer [Board of Directors](#) responsible for establishing the strategic direction of the organization to effectively impact critical community needs. United Way of Central Minnesota works with more than 500 volunteers in all aspects of the organization. Volunteer involvement keeps administrative costs low, ensuring that your investment strengthens the community by improving people’s lives.

Does United Way support abortion?

United Way contributions are not used to provide abortions. Services are provided to educate and support pregnant women through our partners, such as adoption services and counseling.