

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Who runs United Way?

A volunteer Board of Directors and professional staff ensure that United Way is working effectively and efficiently to improve people's lives. Hundreds of local volunteers help keep United Way a dynamic, growing, and responsive organization. United Way is community owned, volunteer-driven and staff managed.

How much of my contribution actually goes to program services?

Administrative and fundraising costs are kept very low because of the large number of volunteers involved in raising and allocating funds. United Way's overhead is less than 10%. Without United Way support, agencies would need to spend more of their own money and energy on fundraising.

How are campaign funds distributed?

Through the United Way Review Process, volunteers consisting of United Way Board members and other community members review agency applications, interview staff and board members as well as tour program sites. These volunteers use a structured system to evaluate community needs, program efficiency, and review program results and outcomes. This helps United Way and the community to determine where to invest donations that have the greatest impact.

Why give to United Way instead of the charity I care about?

An investment to the United Way will assure the availability of an entire network of human services. For example, a homeless family needs food, clothing, and shelter. If you give to a specific agency, you can make this happen. But what if the family also needs job training, daycare, and counseling to leave the shelter? No one agency can meet all the needs of this family. United Way makes sure all these services are available, from the temporary bed to the long-term solution.

What is the value of giving to United Way when I can donate directly to an agency?

With over 85 years of experience in Oswego County, United Way focuses on people and the issues close to us: food, health care, emergency services, children and youth, people with disabilities, financial stability, and older adults. Services funded by United Way have a broad reach – touching 1 in 5 community members each year. Through one donation to United Way of Greater Oswego County, you are able to help the most people. When you give to United Way, you invest in high-quality, results-oriented programs managed by United Way's member agencies. Nonprofits are also able to use United Way allocations as matching funds for state, federal, and private grants. Because our member agencies don't need to spend as much money fundraising, more money goes to services in the community. United Way also offers resources, materials, professional development opportunities, and support to strengthen the ability of all local agencies to serve their clients most effectively. Low administrative costs here and reduced fundraising costs at our member agencies mean that more money goes to services in the community.



Why do United Way funded program partners do their own fundraising activities and charge for services?

The United Way fundraising campaign does not cover any agency's entire budget. United Way funds are used only for programs and services. Therefore, portions of an agency's budget need to be funded by other means, such as government contracts, fees and supplemental fundraising activities.

Can I designate a particular agency to receive my donation?

Donors can address a wide range of community issues with one gift through United Way. As an additional option, United Way allows contributors to direct all or part of their gift to a specific member or non-member agency or to a United Way in another county. Direction are on our pledge cards. In order to keep processing costs low for our donors, designated gifts must be at least \$25 per organization, or they will be directed to the general fund.

How much of a donation stays local?

Over 98% of your gift remains in Oswego County helping families, neighbors, and co-workers. We voluntarily pay dues to our state and national associations in exchange for valuable information and referral services, consultation, supplies, trainings, and grant opportunities. Networking with other United Ways allows us to share ideas, materials, and other resources. As always, all our decisions are made locally by staff members and a volunteer board of directors who know this community best.

Does United Way have a non-discrimination policy?

Yes, the non-discrimination policy ensures that all who would benefit from the high-quality programs of our agencies are eligible to receive those services. Member agencies cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, marital or familial status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, nationality, age, disability, veteran status, gender identity, housing status, or any legally prohibited classification.

I know someone who couldn't get help from United Way. Why?

United Way of Greater Oswego County does not provide direct service. We partner with local experienced nonprofits to provide services and support to our community. If someone was unable to get assistance from a United Way funded program, most likely, the person asked for a service the agency couldn't provide or went to the wrong agency for the services needed. Eligibility guidelines are sometimes dictated by government regulations or other funding sources. United Way is ready to look into any instance where someone feels help was unjustly refused.

Are donations to United Way tax deductible?

United Way of Greater Oswego County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your donation is tax-deductible as allowed by current federal and state tax law. Often payroll deductions are even made pre-tax to save our donors even more.

What is Leadership Giving?

Our giving society, Admiral's Society, is made up of gifts of \$500 or more to the annual campaign. Our leadership society make it easy for you and your family to get involved and



make a difference in Oswego County. Membership offers opportunities to address our community's most pressing problems, engage your philanthropic spirit, and help you achieve your personal and professional goals. Other benefits of giving include increasing your knowledge of the innovative ways needs are being addressed, building your reputation as a community leader, and being recognized as such through your employer and United Way. Members of the same household may combine their gifts to participate in Leadership giving.

What is your association with United Way Worldwide?

United Way Worldwide is the leadership and support organization engaged in nearly 1,800 communities across more than 40 countries and territories. It provides national media advertising including television Public Service Announcements broadcast during the NFL football season. United Way Worldwide **DOES NOT** provide funding of any kind to any program, organizations, or any local United Way. United Way of Greater Oswego County pays 1% of its annual campaign dollars to United Way Worldwide for dues. We are completely autonomous from United Way Worldwide and New York United Ways—all of our decisions are made locally. However, we voluntarily pay dues to the state and national associations in exchange for valuable information and referral services, consultation, supplies, publications, training and grant opportunities, and conferences. Networking with other United Ways allows us to share ideas, materials, and other resources. Over 98% of your gift remains in Oswego County helping families, neighbors, and co-workers.

Does United Way pressure people to give?

No! We believe giving is a personal decision. United Way has a strong policy against coercion. Whether a person gives to United Way and how much the person chooses to give is up to the individual. United Way of Greater Oswego County does not support the use of threats or coercion of any kind.

I don't benefit, so why should I give?

You, a family member, friend, or coworker may have already used the services of United Way of Greater Oswego County partner agencies, initiatives, and programs without realizing it. But we also know, we all win when children succeed in school, when families are financially stable, and when people have access to basic needs. When you support United Way of Greater Oswego County, you help to create lasting change for all in our community.

What is United Way 2-1-1?

Your link to community resources. When you dial 2-1-1, you will be connected to a trained operator who is available 24/7 to access to a comprehensive database with services in our community. This three-digit hotline number can connect you with information and resources including information related to basic needs services, childcare services, consumer help, volunteer opportunities, crisis intervention, healthcare, and more. A call to United Way 2-1-1 is free, confidential, and available 24/7! Visit www.211cny.com to do online searches or "Chat" with one of our Community Resource Specialists.