

## United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta Frequently Asked Questions

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### **How is United Way different from other nonprofit organizations?**

United Way exists for one reason: to help us come together as a community to identify and address the issues that take all of us working together to solve. Issues like making sure children enter school ready to learn and that all people have access to primary health care, cross lines of race, gender, geography, faith and economic status and can only be addressed with a collective community focus and action.

### **What is the focus of United Way's work?**

United Way works to assess community needs to address education, income, health and homelessness. These are the building blocks for a strong community—quality education for children, self-sufficient families, access to primary health care, and the end of chronic homelessness. Our goal is tackle today's tough issues to ensure that our community thrives now and in the future.

### **What is LIVE UNITED?**

It takes the entire community to make a difference. No single shelter, meal program or child care center can solve the challenges we face. But each one of us can do something to change our world. We need you. To LIVE UNITED is to be a part of the change. We invite you to be part of these changes. Together, united, we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow.

### **How does a community impact United Way operate?**

A community impact United Way listens to its community and, in turn, sets an agenda to address the community's important human care issues. After the community agenda has been set, United Way puts its problem-solving capacity to work to develop an impact plan. Once the plan is in place, United Way uses its unique ability to enlist support and gather resources from all areas of the community. This support isn't just monetary—it also takes the form of in-kind resources and volunteerism. With an impact plan in place and community resources at the ready, United Way acts, implementing the plan. Finally, we measure the outcome of the plan so United Way, its donors and partners know that our work has been successful and has made lasting improvements in our community.

### **How do people get help from United Way?**

United Way supports more than 350 programs throughout metro Atlanta that help people every day. While United Way does not provide direct services to individuals and families, it does operate United Way 2-1-1, which makes free, confidential referrals to organizations that can help with counseling, job training, emergency assistance and other needs.

### **What else does United Way do besides fund nonprofit organizations?**

We assess community needs to address education, income, health and homelessness. We invest resources in the community through partnering with nonprofit organizations throughout our 13-county service area to build holistic solutions to solve complex and long-term issues. We work to strengthen everyday systems for those who need help today while also looking down the road to the future so fewer people will need help tomorrow.

United Way leverages its convening power to galvanize the community around critical issues. United Way has taken the lead in metro Atlanta for recovery after major disasters, as in the instances of Hurricane Katrina, the storms of early 2008 and even in response to the current recession. While United Way raises and invests money in our community, it also helps people volunteer their time and professional expertise and advocate on behalf of issues. For example, the United Way VIP (Volunteer Involvement Program) trains people for placement on nonprofit boards. United Way 2-1-1 connects people who need help or want to help with local resources. And, through technical assistance and Gifts In Kind Atlanta, United Way helps nonprofit organizations operate more effectively and efficiently.

## **How can young professionals get involved with United Way?**

Research conducted by United Way of America and other philanthropic study centers, shows that young professionals are more interested in exercising personal philanthropy through volunteerism than through financial gifts. There is also a preference of this group to be engaged by nonprofit organizations in skill-based volunteer opportunities that help them develop leadership skills. Millennials and Generation Xers tend to have a more global perspective generally, and want their philanthropy to reflect an idea of “community” that extends beyond their zip codes or national borders. United Way is currently using social media and the Internet to reach our supporters. Follow us on [Twitter](#). You can find us on [Facebook](#) fan and through a United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta [Linked-In](#) group.

## **How do the troubles at other United Ways and other nonprofits affect our United Way?**

They do not. Each one of the 1,300 United Ways in the nation is autonomous and managed by local volunteers. In metro Atlanta, hundreds of volunteer leaders from all walks of life are involved in, and oversee every detail of, United Way operations, from fundraising to community investments to financial management.

## **What is United Way doing to “go green”?**

United Way recognizes the importance of maintaining and sustaining our environment. United Way supports and participates in a cell phone recycling program managed by CollectiveGood. CollectiveGood recycles more than 60 percent of collected phones back into reuse, domestically and in the developing world, and safely recycles the remaining phones, batteries and accessories to capture 17 metals and make them available for reuse. CollectiveGood programs are supported by the EPA and the Electronic Industries Alliance for their environmental stewardship.

## **Questions about United Way community partners**

### **Does our United Way support the Boy Scouts?**

Each of the 1,300 local and autonomous United Ways decides for itself whether to support each program, and nonprofit organization, based on community needs. This year, metro Atlanta United Way volunteer leaders have chosen to continue investing in Boy Scout programs. These volunteers, from all walks of life, grapple with difficult decisions about where best to invest contributions each year. They believe that thousands of local boys—including hard-to-reach, low-income, at-risk youth—greatly benefit from Scouting's proven record of safe, structured after-school programs.

### **Do any United Way grantees perform abortions?**

No. Abortion is not funded through United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. United Way supports the local Planned Parenthood Association, which provides education, contraceptive and gynecological services for women in need.

### **How does an organization apply to receive funding from United Way?**

When resources allow, United Way invites applications from organizations that can demonstrate measurable results in addressing issues our community has identified as most important. United Way also supports nonprofit organizations by providing technical assistance and through Gifts In Kind Atlanta, which helps nonprofit organizations access donations of furniture, office supplies and other items. Nonprofit organizations can search for volunteers through Volunteer Solutions, find well-trained board members through the Volunteer Improvement Program and use United Way 2-1-1 to both get and give client referrals.

## **Questions about giving to United Way**

### **Why should I support United Way?**

United Way is how our community comes to work together get to the heart of community problems to create solutions that work for us. It takes an entire community to make a difference and we need you. We are the only place where individuals and companies can work together to make a lasting change now and for the future. United Way is working to ensure that children and youth achieve their potential that individuals and families are financially stable, that people are healthy and that homelessness is prevented or ended quickly. We know in Atlanta:

- 148,900 metro Atlanta households have an annual salary of \$13,100 or less.
- 75,000 people in Georgia will be homeless at some point this year.

- 1 out of every 11 babies born in metro Atlanta is born with low birth weight.
- 143,497 children in Metro Atlanta don't have health insurance.
- Child care in Georgia is 47% more than college tuition

### **How can you expect me to give when the economy is so unstable?**

When the economy is distressed, even more people need help. Your gift is even more critical in challenging times. As you consider the choices available to you and your family, we hope you will remember how much your contribution to United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta provides help for everyone in our community. Help that improves education, income and health. No single shelter, meal program, or child care center can solve the challenges we face. But each one of us can do something to change our world.

United Way is inviting all of us to give our full attention to the basic pillars that support and sustain the quality of life in every community: education, income, health and homelessness. Our actions today determine the reality for tomorrow. A tomorrow that will come regardless of the economy's condition. The decision to give may have been easier in years past, but it has never been clearer.

### **Our employees and their families are struggling. How can we ask them to give?**

Time and again, some of the most generous givers are those who themselves have struggled and needed a helping hand from our community. Everyone should be given an opportunity to express caring through charitable giving, to enjoy the emotional reward that comes from knowing he or she has helped someone else—a homeless mother helped with child care so she can seek employment, a senior able to stay in his home and retain independence, or a family helped to remain financially stable with job training for advancement.

### **Why choose the United Way Community Impact Fund?**

The Community Impact Fund is a powerful way to make a lasting impact on the issues that are important to our community. United Way is a sound investment. We use all the community resources possible—money, volunteer time and expertise, and in-kind donations—to get the results our community needs.

The Community Impact Fund is a unique option in philanthropy that allows you to join with tens of thousands of others to focus resources where to solve big community issues. In addition, the Community Impact Fund provides support and visibility to smaller, less known nonprofits that are doing important work. If a donor chooses to direct his/her gift, we hope he or she will also consider a gift to the Community Impact Fund.

### **Where does the money go?**

United Way volunteers invest your Community Impact Fund contributions in local programs that are proven to strengthen our community and help people live better lives. Those programs include after-school and mentoring activities that ensure youth are successful in learning, job and life skills training to make people more employment-ready, help for people with immediate needs and more.

### **Can I give specifically to my favorite issue area within the Community Impact Fund?**

United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income, health and homelessness. These are the building blocks for a good life—a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health. Every donor has the option to designate to one or a combination of these areas on our pledge card. Donors also have the option to designate their gift toward ending chronic homelessness (to directly support the programs and organizations that are partners in this initiative), United Way 2-1-1 and the Atlanta Aids Partnership Fund.

### **Can I give directly to my favorite nonprofit organization?**

Through the United Way Specific Care program, it is possible to direct your gift to one or more of the many nonprofit organizations that receive United Way grants or to another United Way in the nation. You may also choose to "exclude" a nonprofit, meaning that organization will receive none of your gift.

**How much of the money raised by United Way is used for administrative purposes?**

Less than ten cents of every dollar raised by our United Way is used for fundraising and administration—making it one of the lowest overhead costs of any nonprofit in the nation. United Way has a very low overhead of less than 10 percent. However, what's most important is the impact that we are having in our region by working together. Your investment in United Way provides real, tangible results for our region. We work with our partners to measure our progress, so we can be sure that each gift to United Way—each investment in our community—gets the best rate of return possible. Please visit our website, or sign-up for our newsletter to learn more about the results your United Way gets, and the difference your gift is making.

**Does United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta have a formal financial audit procedure?**

United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta has detailed and rigorous internal controls with regard to our spending and expenses. These internal controls are monitored by the organization's finance and audit committees on a regular basis. Our board continually monitors all aspects of our governance process. Additionally, we regularly conduct external audits and have a whistle-blower program in place.