

United Way of Olmsted County Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why do people give to United Way of Olmsted County?

A: We all have a stake in creating a prosperous, healthy community. For a building to be stable for the long term, it needs a solid foundation. The same is true in life. The building blocks for a solid life are a good education, financial stability and good health. United Way is an effective way to direct your charitable giving. Your gift is combined with others to work towards long-term solutions, as well as short-term needs. Your United Way partners with local non-profits, schools, government, and the faith community to find solutions that address issues that destabilize our community.

- Education: ensuring children are ready to learn and are motivated to stay in school to graduation, creates contributing citizens for tomorrow.
- Income: many are walking a financial tightrope, as a community we can broaden the tightrope into a path making it less likely people will fall.
- Health: access to healthcare strengthens our entire community.

It takes an entire community to make a difference. We need you!

Q: How much of my gift actually goes to help people?

A: Every dollar you give is carefully invested to create opportunities for a better life for all. We take the business of managing your donation very seriously and our performance exceeds the Charities Review Council's guidelines. Because United Way of Olmsted County is a volunteer driven organization, our low overhead and maximized giving ensure that your money is invested to achieve the most impact possible. Over 85% of every dollar goes directly into programs to create the change you want to see in your community.

Q: Who decides how my contribution is spent?

A: Every three years, United Way of Olmsted County issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the community at large. Organizations and collaborations submit proposals for funding in the areas of education, income, health and/or community basics. Community Solutions Teams and the Vision Council consist of 40 volunteers with expertise in these issues. They select programs which have the capacity to deliver outcomes against goals effectively and efficiently. The team's work does not end when grants are awarded; they continue to monitor progress through the three years of funding and review program results reports every 6 months. The key factors in these results include: program accountability and a demonstrated improvement in people's lives. For the latest progress report [click here](#).

Q: I'm interested in being a part of a Community Solution Team. How can I join?

A: We recruit people and organizations from across Olmsted County who bring passion, expertise and the resources to get things done. We welcome your interest. [Click here](#) for more information.

Q: What does United Way of Olmsted County do besides raise and allocate funds?

A: We also join with community organizations in many *Community Partnership Initiatives*, including:

- [Community Gang Initiative](#)
- [Community Information Sharing System](#)
- [Community Winter Outerwear Drive](#)
- [Financial Stability Partnership](#)
- [Harvest for the Hungry](#)
- [Imagination Library](#)
- [Running Start for School](#)
- [2-1-1](#)

For more information about the initiatives, click on the name of the initiative above.

Q: My spouse gives at work. Should I give too?

A: Each and every contribution, no matter the amount, is important and makes a difference. Many of our donors choose to both give and ask to combine their household contributions to be recognized at a Leader in Giving level. For more information, Click [Leaders in Giving](#)

Q: How much should I give?

A: The decision of whether or not to give is a personal choice. Only you can determine what is appropriate for your circumstances and United Way respects your right to make this decision. By giving a small amount each pay period through payroll deduction, most working people feel they can contribute. Every contribution, no matter the amount, *will* make a difference in the life of someone in our community.

Q: I don't live in Rochester, why should I give to United Way?

A: If you live in Olmsted County, you can be certain that people from your community are utilizing United Way supported programs and services. They may be a friend, neighbor or co-worker. If you live outside of Olmsted County, you can choose to give to your local United Way, or the non-profit organization of your choice. Link to [In Your Town](#)

Q: Why should I participate in payroll deduction as part of my annual United Way workforce campaign?

A: Many of us would like to provide help, but may feel that we have limited financial resources of our own and are wondering how our gift could possibly make a difference. Your gift through payroll deduction is your opportunity to spread your generosity throughout the year, in an affordable way. By utilizing payroll deduction you can have a small amount deducted from each paycheck. For as little as \$1 a week, your generosity can greatly impact the lives of others. It is an easy way for you to make a *real* difference.

Q: Can I pledge to a specific non-profit organization?

A: You have many choices with United Way

- Direct your pledge to the Live United Community Fund
- Direct your pledge to any of the Community Impact funds: Education, Income, Health or Basic Needs or to a specific United Way initiative such as the Imagination Library or "Running Start for School".
- Direct your pledge to your local United Way.
- Direct your epledge to any tax exempt organization.