



Did you know?

Some frequently asked questions about giving to United Way



WHAT ROLE DOES UNITED WAY OF CNY SERVE?

United Way is involved in much more than just raising dollars. UWCNY identifies community issues and needs, works with community groups and develops special initiatives. Feedback from our Partner Agencies, the unique research we do with our annual trends report, and 211cny gives us real time information to work with.

VETTING AGENCIES

UWCNY funded agencies are certified and held accountable for outcomes. Some have called United Way's certification the "Good Housekeeping" seal of approval for nonprofit agencies. We do the homework on agencies for you which safeguards your donor dollars. Agencies must first show they are fiscally and structurally sound before they can apply for funding. The agencies that meet that criteria, can then apply for funding for specific programs.

FUNDING PROCESS

Community volunteers, just like you, make funding decisions based on research detailing the greatest needs in our community. These volunteers make recommendations to our Community Impact group and final decisions are approved by the UWCNY Board of Directors. Funding must be used for specific programming that matches the greatest needs. Then we follow-up with the agencies making sure their programs are on track with the desired outcomes. Agencies submit updated reports every six months to UWCNY, and must meet agreed-upon benchmarks in order to continue to receive funding.

THE DIFFERENCE

UWCNY strategically invests in effective programs, innovative approaches and collaborative solutions, including multi-agency initiatives. It supports invaluable services necessary to strengthen the community. Programs are funded for a three year period to ensure stability and continuity. Our

WHY SHOULD I GIVE TO UNITED WAY INSTEAD OF DIRECTLY TO AGENCIES I CHOOSE?

Donors often times have personal reasons and specific causes that they want to support, which we applaud. At the same time they would like to help the community as a whole, but do not have the time to research who, where and how to give. That's where UWCNY can help.

United Way is the only way you can give to the whole community. So, while supporting a single health and human service organization is certainly a choice you can make, please also consider giving a portion of your gift as undesignated to benefit the Community Fund. That way, you can maximize the impact of your gift by combining it with the giving power of thousands of others. You will then be part of a community force that works together to strengthen our entire community. Another benefit to you is convenience. Most employers allow you to use payroll deduction to make your pledge. This allows you to spread your pledge out and afford you the opportunity to give more than if you were to make a single gift. Some companies match your gift as well. The great part about payroll deduction is you do it once a year and then don't have to worry about it again.

No single agency can meet all community needs and often times a person that is looking for help needs a combination of agency services. UWCNY partner agencies often work together producing the best outcome. United Way of CNY supports a broad network of services, providing essential services with specific programs. United Way planning and the coordination of services gets the most out of your contributed dollar.



Did you know?

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WHAT IS UNITED WAY'S OVERHEAD RATIO?

United Way of CNY is committed to responsible stewardship of your donations. 85 cents of every dollar goes directly to funded programs as reported by Charity Navigator. United Way's overhead ratio (defined as fundraising and administration expense divided by total revenue) is 15%. That is well below the Better Business Bureau standard for nonprofit organizations, which is 35% or less. Just as importantly, UWCNY's fundraising and collection structure actually reduces the fundraising expenses of our funded agencies. Our funding allows agencies more time to focus on what they do best: serve their clients in need. Their overhead costs are reduced in part because of the fundraising and development work we do on their behalf.

DO UNITED WAY FUNDS REMAIN IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Undesignated gifts to United Way's Community Fund go to **local** programs that serve residents of Onondaga County. Your donated dollar goes further when it is *undesignated* and combined with other donor dollars, and is part of the UWCNY stewardship / vetting process.

WHY AREN'T ALL AGENCIES INCLUDED IN UNITED WAY'S COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN?

Some agencies do not apply to United Way. Other agencies may have not met standards for admission as United Way member agencies. Others may have applied but were not funded because the total of program requests was greater than the money raised in the campaign. Volunteers have tough decisions to make as they allocate limited dollars in a prioritized way.

I DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS RECEIVED UNITED WAY HELP

Last year, United Way of CNY's funded programs helped thousands of people. United Way funded services help everyone, because a healthy community benefits everyone. A popular misconception is that only the jobless and truly "at-risk" individuals benefit from United Way and its partner programs. Everyone has problems and needs at some point in their life. Your United Way contribution impacts the lives of people all around you, no matter where you live. 1 out of 4 people in Onondaga County will benefit from our partner agency programs. However, there are still people who will not be served due to the limited funds that our partners have available. That is why it is so important to participate. You, a family member, friend or coworker may have already used the services of United Way partner agencies without realizing it.

DON'T MY TAXES TAKE CARE OF THE LESS FORTUNATE?

Taxes don't do it all, and, there have been significant cuts to human service funding by the government over the past several years. Keep in mind too that United Way-funded programs increase the economic self-sufficiency of families and individuals in our community. The result is fewer people requiring public assistance.

ARE ALL UNITED WAYS THE SAME?

There are over 1,800 separate, autonomous United Ways in 40 countries and territories.

HOW ARE THE FINANCIAL RECORDS OF UNITED WAY OF CNY MADE AVAILABLE?

All United Way financial records are handled in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. A volunteer Finance Committee, chaired by the Board Treasurer, oversees the financial operations. United Way is audited annually by an independent accounting firm and practices full voluntary disclosure of its 990 and audits, with reports available on our web site.



Did you know?

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Did you know about these UWCNY Initiatives and Collaborations?

211cny.com

211cny is a free informational website and phone line that answers your human services questions. Whether it is a question about housing, healthcare, transportation or anything else, 211cny will get you connected and get answers. Dial 2-1-1 or go online to www.211cny.com

WORK TRAIN

Work Train is an initiative that gives unemployed a chance to learn new skills and connect them with local employers in need of workers.

CA\$H COALITION (Creating Assets, Savings & Hope)

CA\$H works to ensure low income working families receive all the tax credits to which they are entitled. Free tax advice and tax return preparation are offered by trained volunteers and certified professionals.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE

The Early Childhood Alliance is a collaborative effort in Onondaga County working to develop a more coordinated and strategic early childhood system to benefit children and their families.

HOPE - HEALING, OPPORTUNITY, PROSPERITY, EMPOWERMENT

HOPE is a grassroots effort to reduce poverty in our community.

GIFTS IN KIND

This program acts as a collection and distribution center for agencies that participate in the program, giving them access to donated and discounted items from businesses and coalitions within the community.

VOLUNTEERCNY

This program organizes and coordinates volunteer efforts and opportunities in our community. Visit volunteercny.org to find out more.

TRAUMA RESPONSE TEAM - TRT

A group that works as a liaison between the community and emergency responders with the goal of better communication and understanding in times of emergency situations throughout the city and county.



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