

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is United Way?

United Way is a local movement of volunteers, advocates, and donors committed to creating opportunities for a better life for all. Our focus is on school readiness, income stability and access to healthcare – the building blocks for a good quality of life.

2. Why should I contribute to the Live United fund rather than giving my money directly to agencies?

With one gift you can help support a broad range of quality human service programs that are coordinated to maximize your gift and avoid duplication of services. United Way, with its network of agencies, can do what no single agency can do alone.

When you give to a specific charity, you support a local organization and its purpose. When you give to United Way, your gift becomes part of a collective effort. United Way convenes strategic partners who bring the passion and expertise to accelerate and advance the community's progress. Your gift to United Way allows you to accomplish more than you can alone or through a single charity.

3. Who decides which local programs receive funding and how much each one receives?

Community members just like you who serve on "Community Investment teams." Donor volunteers are trained to review agency applications, make site visits, and evaluate efficiency. They make sure your dollars are well spent. After thorough review, these volunteers then make the final decisions regarding how much each agency receives based on expected outcomes. The volunteers look at the WHOLE service network and seek a balanced distribution of resources across the county and across a wide range of human services. Only donations to the LIVE UNITED Fund are quality assured and guaranteed to remain in our local community.

4. Where does my money go?

Your gift to the LIVE UNITED Fund stays right here in Lane County, Oregon. Because of United Way's extensive use of volunteers, only 15 cents out of every dollar is required to cover the costs of countywide fundraising for our 40+ partner agencies.

5. What is United Way of Lane County's relationship with United Way Worldwide?

United Way is an independent, locally governed organization. We pay a membership fee of 1% annually to United Way Worldwide (UWW) that saves us thousands of dollars every year. These services include staff and volunteer training, campaign and market research, access to national branding materials, and national media coverage. We have found that the value of these services far, exceeds the actual membership fee paid by United Way of Lane County.

6. Will my small gift really make a difference?

Every gift is important and contributes to the whole. The power of the LIVE UNITED Fund is that it leverages EVERY gift with matched and in-kind donations, and volunteer resources. Even the smallest gift has great impact when added to others in the LIVE UNITED Fund.

7. I have felt pressure to give in my workplace.

United Way of Lane County has an explicit policy against coercion. Giving money to improve people's lives and strengthen our community is a personal choice. We want you to feel good about your decision to invest in those who need help most through United Way's LIVE UNITED Fund.

8. Is my gift tax deductible?

United Way of Lane County is a nonprofit 501(c)3 eligible to receive tax deductible gifts. Discuss the tax deductibility of your contribution with a tax professional. Retain a copy of your gift or pledge form for your tax records.

9. How can I get help for someone I know?

You can dial 211 toll free to speak with a resource specialist or visit 211info.org to search for thousands of services or you can text your zip code to 898211 for quick resources. It's a free, confidential, multi-lingual service.

10. What's United Way of Lane County's relationship with the Boy Scouts?

In 2001, the Boy Scouts of America adopted a national policy regarding the exclusion of gay or atheist individuals from being scouts or serving as scout leaders. At that time, some United Ways discontinued funding to the Boy Scouts because their local councils were following this national policy.

United Way of Lane County's Board of Directors, a long-time partner and supporter of the Oregon Trail Council of the Boy Scouts, chose to take a more thoughtful approach and spent a year studying the issue with the help of a specially assigned Task Force. Ultimately, United Way determined that our local Boy Scout Council does not practice discrimination and abides by the City of Eugene's Human Rights Ordinance. Therefore, the Boy Scouts of America in Lane County meet United Way's standards for diversity and inclusion.

This means that the Boy Scouts can continue to apply for United Way funding through its Community Investment Process, and United Way will continue to accept and distribute donor designated gifts to the Boy Scouts. In United Way's past community investment cycle, the Boy Scouts submitted a request for support which wasn't funded due to the significant reduction in resources available.

11. How much of my gift is used for overhead?

Fifteen cents of every dollar raised and collected by our United Way is used for fundraising and administration costs. Fundraising expenses include staff time, production of all printed materials, direct mail costs, workplace campaign expenses, volunteer training and more. This cost is well below the national recommendation of 35% from the Better Business Bureau. It is our commitment that all gifts to United Way are invested wisely and efficiently.

12. What does United Way fund at Planned Parenthood?

One of United Way's priorities is to invest in programs that increase the financial stability of individuals and families. The expense of an unplanned teen pregnancy is an exorbitant cost to the child and parents. To that end, United Way funds programs that increase job skills and financial literacy, promote healthy lifestyle choices and wise family planning and more.

United Way's funding to Planned Parenthood's family planning and health education programs assist us with important prevention efforts. Current program funding supports sex education for youth and parents, teen reproductive health, and expansion of a low income neighborhood health clinic. United Way grants to Planned Parenthood are for education or health services unrelated to medical or surgical procedures. United Way does not fund abortions.

Special note to United Way donors:

United Way donors have the unique opportunity to exclude this or any other United Way partner agency from receiving any part of their overall gift. In this way, donors may support United Way's countywide human service network with the assurance that their gift will result in extra funding for the other agencies in the network while reducing the amount to the agency (ies) they choose to exclude.