



**United Way  
of Central Illinois**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q: What is United Way?**

**A:** United Way's mission: *Improving lives by uniting our community to address the basic needs, education, financial stability and health of every person.*

United Way is the largest private funder of health and human service programs in the country. Locally we invest in programs providing services vital to the immediate BASIC NEEDS of the most vulnerable members of our community; while making long term investments in EDUCATION, FINANCIAL STABILITY AND HEALTH - the building blocks for a good quality of life.

United Way's program funding is made possible through funds raised during an annual community campaign from businesses, employee groups and individuals.

Each United Way is local and independent, choosing its funding criteria and priorities to fit the local community. Local United Ways come together through their affiliation with the national trade organization, United Way Worldwide (UWW).

### **Q: How much of my contribution goes directly to funding services?**

**A:** United Way's audited administrative and fundraising expenses are 17.43%. These costs associated with the Community Fund are underwritten by are underwritten by the United Way Endowment and generous support from Ameren, BUNN, The Horace Mann Companies, Illinois National Bank, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and one company wishing to remain anonymous.

*United Way is currently rate 4-stars by Charity Navigator based upon the organization's financial management and transparency.*

### **Q: How much of my donation stays local?**

**A:** United Way of Central Illinois is a locally operated, independent nonprofit. Gifts to United Way only funds local programs and organizations.

**Q: Why does United Way promote its Community Fund over directed gifts?**

**A:** United Way believes its Community Fund brings added value to donor's contributions because of the time and effort provided by Vision Council volunteers who consider the community's greatest needs and evaluate program applications to ensure the best programs receive the critical funding they need. A gift to the Community Fund is also the best way to ensure funding is available to each of United Way's issue areas.

**Q: How are United Way funding decisions made and by whom?**

**A:** All programs are reviewed and evaluated by community members serving as Vision Council volunteers. The volunteers consider each program application against variables that include – the administration of the program or service, its goals and effectiveness, finances, and the priorities established in our community. Each panel looks at programs providing services aligned with Basic Needs, Education, Financial Stability and Health and makes appropriate funding recommendations to the United Way Board of Directors. The United Way Board of Directors has the final authority to determine program funding.

**Q: Why does United Way have paid staff?**

**A:** No organization as big as this United Way, in terms of the money for which it is responsible and the number of volunteers involved can operate efficiently without qualified staff support. United Way's seven staff members manage the day-to-day operations and provide support to approximately 500 volunteers, 30 health and human service organizations and over 200 companies running campaigns.

**Q: Can I direct my gift to a specific nonprofit or a United Way in another community? ?**

**A:** Yes. While United Way's primary focus is the Community Fund, donors may direct all or a portion of their contribution to any 501(c)(3) qualified organization.

**Q: What does United Way charge for directing a gift?**

**A:** Yes. While United Way's primary focus is the Community Fund, donors may direct all or a portion of their contribution to any 501(c)(3) qualified organization. United Way does not recover an administrative or fundraising charge for these gifts.

**Q: Why are Employee Campaigns important?**

**A:** More than 2/3 of all United Way support comes from individuals giving through employee campaigns. Every gift, no matter what size, makes an impact on services in our community when it's pooled with the contributions of others.