

OVERCOMING COMMON OBJECTIVES

AKA: Frequently Asked Questions

“Too much of the money raised by the United Way is used for administrative and marketing expenses.”

The United Way campaign is recognized as a proven method of cost-efficient fundraising. The ultimate goal is to maximize the amount of dollars going to community needs. With that in mind, the UWMWV board of directors makes every effort to keep administrative staffing and overhead to a minimum and much of the work is done by volunteers. The UWMWV also seeks out companies in our community who provide in-kind services for marketing and other tasks to keep those costs down as well.

“Isn’t United Way just another charity?”

No. The United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley is a nonprofit organization that invests in strategic programs and partnerships that address critical issues in our community, and have an organizational plan for specific outcomes. We also invest in initiatives that are available to all residents and provide services in our tri-county region.

“I’ve heard that the United Way has a history of mismanaging their funds.”

It is true that the national organization experienced some poor management several years ago. However, our United Way is locally managed and supported. The board of directors, staff, volunteers and funded organizations are all local people who live and work in the tri-county region. The money you give today is invested strategically for the best possible outcomes for individuals and families in our communities.

“Doesn’t the United Way enable people to remain dependent on social and human services rather than showing them how to stand/support themselves?”

No. The UWMWV does not provide social or human services. Organizations providing those critical services in our community come to us for financial and/or volunteer assistance in providing programs and collaborations that will result in successful outcomes. Our partners and nonprofit providers work to assist their clients in the process toward becoming independent individuals with a worthwhile place in our community.

“Who does the United Way give our donation to?”

Organizations apply for UWMWV funding in much the same way they make applications to any foundation when seeking financial support. A panel of volunteers recruited from the tri-county region reviews submitted applications and listens to each organization’s verbal presentation before making recommendations to the board of directors. The board then reviews all requests and finalizes the process of funding. Approximately 84 percent

of the funds received from donors are distributed in our community. (Administrative expenses for the UWMWV are approx. 16 percent, or 16 cents of every dollar.)

“The United Way does not share the funds with everyone. Only the ones they like.”

It may seem like that at first glance. The UWMWV does not fund every organization in the community. The primary reason is that some organizations don't request a partnership with us. Secondary to that, we are only able to support organizations to the extent of our funding capacity. Organizations requesting funds must demonstrate need, positive outcomes, appropriate stewardship of funds received in the past and community support. Most organizations that meet the requirements set forth in the Community Impact model receive funding when available.

“I prefer to give directly to my charity of choice.”

Giving is always a good thing. Your direct gift is one of the legs on a three legged stool. Direct giving helps to fund all aspects of the organization you support. Those funds often go into a “general account” to pay the bills and help cover the cost of support services offered. The UWMWV funds are requested by the organization to provide the services that direct gift donations do not cover. So, when you give to the UWMWV, you are giving to your favorite organization twice. Your gift is well leveraged in the community.

“I have attended United Way programs in the past which have been pretty lavish!”

The UWMWV does not spend contributor's money on such events. Nor does it include these occasions in the “overhead” of the agency. Events are self-supported by the attendees and/or contributions from the corporations in the community that choose to provide such support for their own reasons/benefit.

“Taxes are already over the top to provide social services...”

Government dollars are not growing for “people problems.” In fact, many agencies are having trouble obtaining previously contracted reimbursements for those in need. Many, in fact most, people who are helped by government agencies also require the services of private sector nonprofit organizations.

“I can barely pay my own way; there just isn't enough to pay someone else's too!”

We are all struggling with daily economic woes and the cost of living; it does not get easier with time. However, if you and I are feeling the “pinch”, how much more are those who do not have even close to what we enjoy! And when your wallet feels light, you can give through volunteering and advocacy.

“I really have a disagreement with some of the organizations you have listed as those you provide funding to.”

We respect your right and your opinion. If you prefer, you can direct your gift to other agencies, or stipulate that you do not choose to support the organization(s) you have issues with. However, in doing so, those funds will be handled exactly as you have specified and will not be considered part of the “campaign” in that they will not be available to assist the specific requests of the agencies you support.

“My spouse is in charge of “giving” and she donates for both of us.”

Each household has their own style. We encourage everyone to do what they can because we all have personal values and concerns. In many cases, employers will match donations given by employees, and in those cases, we really hope that the employee will make the stretch to do whatever they feel they can so as to “leverage” their dollars to the community.

“How do we know salaries at the United Way aren’t really high like many businesses, driving our costs up?”

Salaries at the UWMWV are in keeping with salaries in the community to the extent that we need to be able to attract professionals that can do the jobs they are required to do. The governing board looks at these issues very closely in the effort to keep the overhead as low as possible. We can assure you that the administrative staff is not over paid with costly perks.

“I really resent being pressured to make donations to the United Way.”

We are here to present the opportunity, not to pressure you or create resentment in any way. Our experience has been that so many people in our community do not understand the purpose or function of the UWMWV. Others have misinformation that is way out of line with the reality of what we do. We are here first to educate and second to encourage if you feel participation makes sense to you.

“The United Way supports abortions.”

Although we support a variety of programs which touch the lives of pregnant women, none of the funds are used to provide abortions. We do support services such as counseling and foster care.

“We have a company policy against soliciting our employees”

We understand your reluctance to open the door to a plethora of organizations asking for the opportunity to solicit your staff. The United Way was established to address this exact concern. The UWMWV runs one annual campaign. That campaign funds many organizations in the communities in which your employees live. Our desire is not so much to solicit as it is to educate and offer an opportunity to “give” in a way that is affordable and easy via payroll deduction of smaller amounts than would normally seem reasonable.

“I don’t live in this community and I would prefer to give to my own community.”

You may do so. Simply make that direction on your payroll deduction form and your gift will go directly to the community in which you live.

“I tried to get help from the United Way and couldn’t. I was referred elsewhere.”

The United Way Mid-Willamette Valley does not provide services directly to those in need. We are a fundraising organization and community support and advocacy entity. When individuals come to us seeking support, we refer them to Mid-Valley 211 or an organization that can most closely meet their needs.

“Who decides who (which agencies) get the money donated?”

Funds are allocated to the various partner organizations through the Community Impact process. A team of volunteers representing all segments of our community determine how dollars will be distributed to programs and partnerships. The UWMWV staff members do not make funding decisions. The evaluation process includes site visits to program facilities, in-depth reviews of written funding proposals and interviews with service provider staff and volunteers.

“We’re a small company”

No company is too small. No donation is too small. We have companies from 1 – 1000+ employees that give annually to the United Way.

“We give to other charities”

Thank you for giving! Did you know that by giving through the UWMWV you can give once instead of multiple times, use payroll deduction to make giving budget friendly, designate your gift if that is important to you?

“We’re too busy”

Our givers ARE busy people. That’s why we do all the work for you! Your company can feel good that they have participated in the community they live in and helped to provide the services their neighbors need. We can tailor a company campaign to fit your time schedule. We have all the materials ready and resources available to make it happen – all we need is five-ten minutes to present information to your employees.

“Just send me the material”

I would happy to bring the materials to you so that we can chat for a few moments with you. What time would be good for you? (Our materials can be better demonstrated than dropped off.)

“I’ll discuss it with the employees”

Excellent. If I could join you, I will bring the materials along with me and I would be happy to answer any questions that arise on the spot, making your time more available for other important tasks on your desk.

“We’re in transition right now”

That’s always an interesting time! This might be a good opportunity to do some team building among your employees. We have some excellent tools and suggestions to assist you in that effort.