



## Glad you Asked!

### **Why give to United Way of Central Minnesota?**

United Way is the most effective way to direct your charitable donations to address community needs. To create lasting solutions we identify the root cause of the problem and then work together to solve the problem for our community. By bringing area non-profits, government, business and volunteers together we see results that matter right here in Central Minnesota.

### **United Way is just another charity. What makes it different from other non-profits?**

United Way is more than “another charity.” United Way is focused on helping the whole person. United Way helps us come together as one community to identify and impact the issues that effect all of us. Most charities have a single cause for which they are seeking support.

### **How does United Way establish its focus on community issues?**

United Way continually assesses and evaluates the changing needs of Central Minnesota. Local volunteers utilize feedback from area surveys and focus groups to identify the core services in which there will always be a need; basic needs, education, income and health. These services address the bases of food, clothing, and shelter and also support the need for key prevention and development programs. In addition, United Way brings together community experts to identify and address special issues through partnerships and initiatives.

### **Does United Way only help the poor?**

United Way works to benefit the entire community. No one knows when a tragedy will strike and when help will be needed. First of all, meeting a person’s basic needs is key in building a strong foundation. Then United Way focuses on prevention and development programs that help to ensure people are back on their feet and have the skills they need to reach their goals. We partner with programs that are working on eliminating the problems facing our entire community.

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### What does United Way do besides raise and allocate funds?

United Way of Central Minnesota is a leader in addressing human service issues in our community. Our local United Way:

- Hosts and facilitates United Way Volunteer Central, connecting volunteers across the area with opportunities through an easy-to-use website and individual referrals.
- Connects hundreds of youth, adults, families, and groups who want to volunteer with local opportunities year round.
- Provides access to resources through United Way 2-1-1. United Way 2-1-1 is an easy to use phone number that connects people with information on community resources for human service needs, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Coordinates a local board that distributes federal dollars to emergency food and shelter programs.
- Creates a more welcoming community through training programs focused on diversity and strengthening human service organizations.
- Facilitates the United Way at Work program, which meets needs in the workplace by connecting employees with active education and volunteer initiatives.
- Helps people maintain a healthy lifestyle through access to health education, support services and primary care.
- Addresses basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter and assists people of all ages and abilities gain the skills needed to reach greater independence.
- Meets the needs of Central Minnesota's children of all ages through access to a healthy, safe environment and provides skill-building to fully develop their potential.
- Creates stronger families through access to parenting education, counseling and crisis care.
- Promotes early childhood development through Success By 6. Success By 6 builds community support for children during the formative years that influence their entire lives from birth to age six.



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### Why should I give to the Community Investment Fund?

It takes a wide variety of caring organizations, working together, to successfully address complex community needs. United Way brings people and organizations together to make sure that a full range of services is available to make lasting changes in people's lives. Giving through United Way reduces costly and time consuming fundraising efforts so more time can be spent helping others. You may not have the time or resources available to research where your charitable dollars would be best spent. Our volunteers are knowledgeable about the most pressing problems facing our community, and have identified ways to make measurable changes to solve those problems.

### How does United Way invest my gift?

Each year, more than 60 trained volunteers work with our staff to carefully review the management and effectiveness of the programs we partner with and use this information to determine funding levels. This information is focused on results. The four key factors in these results include:

- Program accountability
- Demonstrated lasting change in people's lives
- Efficiently and effectively run programs
- Programs that are responsive to changing community needs

### How much of my contribution goes to the people who really need help?

United Way of Central Minnesota takes the business of managing your donation very seriously and performance exceeds Charities Review Council guidelines. Only 11% of funds are used for resource development and only 7.3% are used for administrative costs. Low overhead ensures that the majority of your money goes to people in need; 81.7% of dollars received is used to help people in our community.

### Will my hometown benefit?

Wherever you live in Central Minnesota, you can be certain that people from your community are benefiting from United Way. Your family, friends and neighbors are utilizing United Way services and partner programs, and working together to address the root causes of issues to strengthen the 30 communities that make up United Way of Central Minnesota's service area.



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### **Why do programs want to affiliate with United Way?**

A partnership with United Way means that the program has met strict accountability standards and financial management guidelines - while showing measurable results. While agencies receive endowments, grants, etc., United Way dollars provide for fundamental programs addressing identified community issues. United Way dollars may also generate additional revenue through grants from local, state and federal governments.

### **Why doesn't my favorite agency receive United Way funding?**

United Way works with programs that address critical community needs. Priorities are established based on assessments of community needs and strengths. Every program that applies must meet a set of basic standards established by our volunteers and be able to show how they are impacting key issues. Any human service program interested in receiving United Way funding should contact United Way for information on funding availability and current priorities.

### **I feel frustrated when asked to give to a program that works with United Way after I have already given to United Way.**

United Way contributions fund only services and programs that directly impact people – not buildings or equipment. United Way cannot meet all the financial needs of area non-profits. The average percentage of a program's budget funded is 25%. Due to a potential decrease or loss in government funding, agencies more than ever have to rely on other funding sources.

### **Will United Way allow me to give directly to my favorite agency?**

Yes. United Way honors designations made to local partners and any 501(c)3 organization. Please take a moment to consider the powerful impact of your gift when surrounding an issue with support from more than one program.



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### **Can gifts be made with exception?**

You do have the option of making a gift with exception. Donors may designate their money away from any program or issue they don't wish to support. If a program partnering with United Way does not meet your personal giving standards, please utilize this option by noting the gift with exception on your pledge card.

### **What if I can't afford to give?**

Giving a small amount each pay period through payroll deduction can create a measurable difference in someone's life. Even a small contribution will help someone who might otherwise not receive help.

### **My spouse gives for both of us, why should I support United Way?**

The success of our community's plan to help people and create lasting results depends on the generous support of each person. United Way has a responsibility to our community and your investment makes it possible for each of us to be powerful catalyst for community change.

### **Don't my taxes take care of the less fortunate?**

Taxes do support some health and human services, primarily through public assistance programs. But tax dollars can't do it all. United Way supports strategies to increase economic self-sufficiency of families and individuals in the community. The result... fewer people need long term public assistance.

### **What if I already give to other organizations?**

There are many organizations that we personally support: our alma maters, churches, schools, environmental organizations and personal charities of choice. At United Way, we respect those commitments yet ask that you consider investing in our whole community to address local needs and issues.

### **Does United Way condone pressure to give?**

Giving time or money is a personal matter and completely voluntary. Local employers endorse United Way because it is highly accountable to contributors and is one of the best ways to meet community needs; but everyone's gift should be voluntary.



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### **Are United Way of Central Minnesota and United Way of America affiliated?**

United Way of Central Minnesota is a locally managed, not-for-profit organization. 99% of each dollar contributed stays to address community needs in Central Minnesota. United Way of Central Minnesota pays a fee to United Way Worldwide in exchange for services provided to our area including: federal emergency food and shelter funding, research data, donations of needed items to local non-profit agencies such as computer software and paint, logo rights and national advertising. The benefits to our community far outweigh the cost of the services provided.

### **Do United Way Board members receive compensation from United Way of Central Minnesota?**

No. United Way of Central Minnesota is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors responsible for establishing the strategic direction of the organization to effectively impact critical community needs. United Way of Central Minnesota works with more than 500 volunteers in all aspects of the organization. Volunteer involvement keeps administrative costs low, ensuring that your investment strengthens the community by improving people's lives.

### **Does United Way support abortion?**

United Way contributions are not used to provide abortions. Services are provided to educate and support pregnant women through our partners, such as adoption services and counseling.

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