

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our FAQs address common questions about our organization, work and impact of our mission. Whether you're curious about where your donation goes, how we select funded partners (also known as partner agencies) or how to get involved, you'll find clear and informative answers here. It's a great way to learn more about us and how you can support United Way of Greater Nashville. Together, we can transform our community and create brighter futures for everyone!

United Way of Greater Nashville **unites the community and mobilizes resources so that every child, individual and family thrives.** As a community-based organization, our region includes Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Hickman, Houston, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart and Williamson counties.

### Are all United Ways the same?

Local United Ways (LUWs) are all different, but we all seek to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. Each United Way tailors their mission to the needs of their community.



### Do you provide direct services?

Yes, we have programs that work directly with individuals and families in our community. These programs include:

- Imagination Library of Middle Tennessee: delivers an age-appropriate, high-quality book each month to children from birth to age five.
- Read, Baby Read!: volunteers read to infants and toddlers to nurture early brain development through literacy.
- Nashville Financial Empowerment Center: provides free one-on-one professional financial counseling to residents in the Greater Nashville region.
- Raise Your Hand tutoring program: provides small group, high-impact tutoring to first- through eighth-grade students who are struggling with reading and math.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax prep program: provides free tax preparation for low-income and at-risk taxpayers.
- Williamson and Robertson Prevention Coalitions: works to prevent substance abuse to support a healthy, drug-free community.

### What are your areas of work?

Our mission falls into four impact areas ...

- (1) Health: build strong, healthy communities
- (2) Education: offer equal opportunities for kids
- (3) Financial stability: break poverty cycles
- (4) Basic needs: help individuals and families meet essential needs

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our digital channels!

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### **How many partner agencies do you fund?**

As of July 1, 2023, we fund 159 nonprofit agencies.

### **Where does my donation go? How much helps funded agencies?**

Ninety-one cents from every dollar that you give goes into our Community Investment Fund, which helps our programs thrive and supports the critical needs of the communities we serve. The remaining nine cents helps with general expenses and essential fundraising and marketing activities.

### **How do you choose the agencies that you fund and how do you ensure funded agencies are making an impact?**

Local nonprofit organizations can apply for Community Investment Funding from United Way. Volunteers (people just like you!) review our grant applications, conduct nonprofit interviews and make investment recommendations to our board of directors. After board approval, we distribute the funds to our partners.

This vetting process evaluates an agency's capacity, effectiveness and alignment with our mission. Agencies must demonstrate a commitment to delivering impactful programs and services that address critical needs and produce measurable outcomes. Our Community Impact team engages our funded partners and provides program support, training and resources for partners. These efforts help our partners achieve positive outcomes and lasting impact throughout our community.

### **Where can I find information on the funded agencies you support?**

Visit our website to browse our funded partners. There, you can filter based on county and/or impact area. Get started at [unitedwaygreaternashville.org/funded-partners](https://unitedwaygreaternashville.org/funded-partners).

### **How can I get more involved in the community?**

There are many ways to give back and give hope! You can take action by volunteering with Hands On, which offers all sorts of volunteer opportunities every week. We also have ongoing volunteer opportunities if you want to connect more closely to our neighbors in need. You can also advocate for change by joining one of our affinity groups, which welcome new members every day.

Visit our website to learn more and get started ...  
[unitedwaygreaternashville.org/volunteer-opportunities](https://unitedwaygreaternashville.org/volunteer-opportunities)

### **Why do we need United Way; why can't I just donate to local nonprofits?**

Making a gift to United Way is the most effective way to help our whole community. Across our region, we face extraordinary challenges: lack of affordable housing and quality health care; food insecurity, declining mental health; low childhood literacy rates; insufficient child care; and households struggling to make ends meet. Not only are these challenges complex, they are systemic and structural. There are a wide range of organizations across Greater Nashville that bring their approaches, ways of thinking and practices to solve these issues. We recognize that, to foster systems change, we have to transform the way people and organizations relate to one another and those they serve. We are committed to improving systems by building and strengthening collaborative infrastructures, building

diverse stakeholder commitment and sparking collective action among our donors. For over 100 years, we've worked collaboratively as a hub for pooling resources and addressing community needs. We want every individual to reach their potential and for families to have the support they need to thrive. We are here to make our neighbors' struggles, our struggles. Their victories, our victories. We are here as the hand-raisers, the game-changers, the problem-solvers. When it comes to funding, transparency and accountability are important to us; we ensure that your donation is utilized effectively for the good of our community.

### **What does United Way do in my community?**

This answer does not capture all that we do, but ultimately, we center the needs of people. We go beyond the city limits, actively supporting and transforming nine counties, with the help of our many funded partners. Our commitment to the unique needs of these counties creates an ecosystem of support, illustrating the power of local collaboration for widespread impact in Middle Tennessee.

- We work with a network of nonprofit organizations that provide essential services to our community. We are a connector, facilitator and supporter of our funded partners and our (overall) nonprofit community.
- We partner with more than 200 corporations, nonprofits and government agencies to raise millions of dollars that are invested back into our community through our funded partners.
- We have team members that manage literacy and financial stability programs that help thousands of children and families.
- Our Days of Action improve the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors by providing essential resources like food and school supplies.
- We manage hundreds of volunteer opportunities that allow volunteers to make a deeper connection in our community and help our neighbors in need.
- Last, but not least, when disaster strikes, we rely on our strong public-private partnerships to raise funds, deploy volunteers and support organizations that help our neighbors manage disaster.

### **Where should someone go for help? Does United Way provide direct financial assistance to individuals and families?**

Whenever our neighbors need help, we encourage them to contact United Way's 211 helpline, a 24/7, 365-day information and referral service. You can reach the helpline by dialing 211 or texting your zip code to 898-211. Helpline specialists connect individuals and families to a wide range of resources and support systems in the Middle Tennessee area. While United Way doesn't directly provide financial assistance, we partner with organizations that provide utilities assistance, housing support, food assistance and more.

Visit [unitedwaygreaternashville.org/211-helpline](https://unitedwaygreaternashville.org/211-helpline) to search the 211 website for resources and access real-time data.

### **When I donate to United Way, can I give my donation to a specific nonprofit or other areas?**

Some donors choose to direct or "designate" all or part of their gift to one or more specific agencies (anywhere in the United States). We process these donor-directed gifts as a service to our donors and ensure that each agency receiving designated gifts is a 501(c)(3) organization. A minimum gift of \$50

is required to designate an agency. Space is provided on our pledge form (paper and digital) to write in designated agencies and amounts. Currently, we charge a service fee of only 10 percent to cover the costs of fundraising, collecting, processing and distributing donor-designated gifts. The Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance recommends that responsible charities spend no more than 35 percent of income on administrative and fundraising costs.

You can also donate to an area of work within United Way of Greater Nashville or allocate your donation to a specific county within our nine-county footprint.

This flexibility ensures that your generosity aligns with your values while amplifying the collective impact of United Way.

### **What is a partner agency (also known as funded partner)?**

A partner agency is a 501(c)(3) organization that receives funding from United Way of Greater Nashville. Our funded partners collaborate with United Way to address critical community needs in the areas of health, education, financial stability and basic needs. By working together with partner agencies, we maximize our collective impact and improve the quality of life for individuals and families in our region.

### **What is a corporate partner?**

A corporate partner is a business or organization that collaborates with us to raise money for our Community Investment Fund, supports our community initiatives and amplifies charitable giving in our region. These partnerships typically involve financial contributions (e.g., workplace giving campaigns, corporate donations, matching funds, grants and special events), employee volunteerism and other forms of support that align with our work. Our corporate partners leverage their resources, expertise and networks to create positive change and make a meaningful impact in our community.

### **How does a company become a corporate partner and what are the benefits?**

Doing good is good for business. When employees are involved in a company's charitable efforts, they're more productive, engaged and invested. Partnering with United Way increases employee engagement and satisfaction in many ways, such as connecting employees with their community and convening nonprofit and community partners around local needs. Our goal is to help our partners develop and execute people-centered, compassionate corporate social responsibility and community investment programs. Contact Courtney Barlar to explore how your workplace can do good with United Way.

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### **What if I can only afford to give a small amount?**

All donations support programs and services that address critical issues in our community. We appreciate the generosity of all our donors, no matter the amount.

**How are campaign funds distributed?**

Our Community Investment Fund (i.e., campaign funds, individual donations) is strategically distributed to partner agencies based on community needs, funding priorities and program effectiveness. This allocation process ensures that donor dollars are wisely invested to maximize impact and address issues facing our community.

**How does United Way's mergers with United Way of the Greater Clarksville Region and Hands On affect my donation?**

We can do more together! Our recent mergers expanded support for local nonprofits, especially those serving underrepresented communities. We've expanded volunteerism throughout Middle Tennessee by bringing more volunteer support to organizations across our nine-county region. The mergers strengthened our fundraising capacity by leveraging our skills and various functions such as finance, development, communications and more. Your donation helps us continually coordinate efforts, maximize resources and address efficiently community-wide issues.