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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is United Way of the Columbia-Willamette?

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette is a local, nonprofit organization that works to advance the common good by focusing on the basic things we all need for a good life: education, income, and health. Our goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. United Way has been helping people in the four-county metro area since 1920. We work with community leaders and service providers to identify and prioritize the needs, leverage contributions, and achieve measurable results. Our grant-funding model identifies partners and projects that promote collaborations, efficiency, innovation, and results. By working together, united, we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.

### What makes United Way different from other charities?

No other single organization meets the broad range of needs addressed by United Way. United Way goes beyond fundraising by researching the needs of the community and bringing the right resources and people together to solve tough local issues. We work with business, government, and partner agencies to develop regional health and human service policies and strategies. We fund programs that are meeting people's emergency needs and we're working on innovative solutions for lasting change. United Way monitors the performance of grant-funded projects and reports results to donors. We also recruit and train volunteers for nonprofit agencies and provide volunteer resources in the area of management and technical assistance, training and board leadership.

### Why give to the United Way Campaign?

- **It makes a difference.** United Way is the most efficient, effective and accountable way to make a positive difference in the lives we touch. And, 100% of your gift goes to help children, individuals, and families right here in the Portland/Vancouver metro area. You are making an investment that benefits the entire community, not just one program, issue, or population and this leads to a stronger, more sustainable place to live and work. We all win when a child succeeds in school, when families are financially stable, and when people have good health. United Way can also connect you with opportunities to volunteer and advocate for change in our community.
- **It's a smart investment.** We are experts at managing donor investments and bringing the right people, ideas, and resources together to solve the most pressing needs of our community, and finding innovative solutions for lasting change. United Way leverages your contribution by combining it with others and strategically investing in results-driven program and initiatives to maximize the impact we have in the community.
- **It's easy and convenient.** With payroll deduction, you decide once a year how much you want to give to support your community and the donation comes right out of your paycheck. Spreading your giving throughout the year makes it easier to give significantly and still stay within your own budget. You may also give online through our site or make a direct donation.

### What if I don't think I can afford to give?

By using United Way's payroll deduction plan, you can invest even a small amount each pay period, and see it add up to a significant gift by year's end. Your investment combined with thousands of others will have real, measurable impact in the community. A contribution of just \$5 a month can change lives!

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## Can I give in other ways besides payroll deduction?

United Way offers several other convenient ways to give:

- Online at [www.unitedway-pdx.org](http://www.unitedway-pdx.org)
- Cash or check
- Credit or debit card including Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover. Make a one-time gift, or contribute monthly.
- Donate stock, securities or real estate. Thanks to tremendous tax advantages, donating appreciated securities has become very popular, provided you have held the securities for at least one year. When you donate appreciated securities to United Way you pay no capital gains taxes and 100% of the stock is tax deductible. Consult your broker and United Way for further tax-saving information.

## Why shouldn't I designate my gift directly to a specific nonprofit or community partner?

You can always designate a gift to any 501(c) (3) through United Way. However, United Way addresses more than one issue and helps children, individuals, and families that are most in need. We work with more than 100 collaborating partners and identify and prioritize the most pressing needs in our community. Our grant funding model allows us to track results and we report on how your dollars are invested. This is only possible when you give to the Community Impact Fund. United Way also multiplies the effect of your contribution because we are able to help agencies leverage more public and private dollars. Donating to United Way is the most effective way to see lasting changes and build the strength of our community.

## What is United Way's operating cost?

Thanks to Cornerstone Partners, who cover our operating expenses, every dollar you give goes to fund critical programs in our community. However, we think it's important for you to know that we work hard to keep costs as low as possible. In the last fiscal year (ending June 30, 2008), United Way's operating cost was 16.0% percent. Of this, 9.8% was for fundraising and 6.2% for administrative costs, including pledge processing. Charity Navigator, the nation's largest evaluator of charities, gives United Way of the Columbia-Willamette their top four-star rating for exceeding industry standards.

## What guides United Way of the Columbia-Willamette's investment of donor dollars?

United Way uses a grant funding model that strategically invest in partners and projects that demonstrate collaboration, efficient and effective use of resources, and measurable results. We conduct research to identify and prioritize the needs of the community. About 75 well-trained volunteers and expert United Way staff work together to determine funding priorities and to identify the best ways to solve issues in the four counties we serve. Our priority is funding programs that help children and youth reach their potential, help families and individuals become financially stable, and provides access to health care.

## Does United Way condone pressure to give?

No. United Way is based on the concept of voluntary giving and we believe that no one should ever be pressured into giving. In our experience, the best and most responsive giving comes voluntarily from a person's understanding of the needs and a desire to make a difference. If you feel pressured, we want to know about it. Please contact Carolee Lee, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at 503.226.9287 or email [caroleel@unitedway-pdx.org](mailto:caroleel@unitedway-pdx.org).