

United Way of Gaston County

Frequently Asked Questions



- 1. Why do we need United Way?** United Way promotes true community impact by finding solutions and supporting the emerging needs of our community. Through the community-wide campaign, companies and organizations are asked to invest in our community by supporting agencies that address the pressing issues. Our partner agencies have limited staff, time and resources to devote to fundraising, so this process allows them to spend more time actually helping the people of Gaston County.
- 2. Are United Way contributions tax-deductible?** Yes. However, there may be certain limitations. Donors should consult with their financial advisor for details.
- 3. How can I give if my company does not hold an employee workplace campaign?** You can give by calling 704-864-4554 or make an on-line gift through the website www.unitedwaygaston.org.
- 4. If I need help, who can I call?** Simply call 2-1-1 or 704-864-4554 for answers.
- 5. How much of my gift goes directly to helping people?** 85 cents out of every donor dollar pledged goes directly to helping people in our community.
- 6. Why do I see "United Way Agencies" doing their own fundraising?** Your United Way does not fund agencies, it funds programs. In this way, United Way can ensure that donors' gifts are going directly to important services that help people, not capital projects or overhead costs. Individual agencies must do separate fundraising to cover those expenses. Receiving funding from United Way can increase the credibility of agencies, making it easier for them to receive foundation, state, and federal grants.
- 7. What are our Impact Areas?** Helping Children and Youth Succeed, Promoting Health and Wellness, Improving Employability and Providing for the Elderly.
- 8. What is LIVE UNITED?** LIVE UNITED is a national marketing initiative calling all citizens to advance the common good. By all of us working together, we can create lasting change for people in our community. You can live united by giving, advocating and volunteering.
- 9. Will the money I give to United Way go outside the community?** No. The money raised in Gaston County stays in Gaston County unless the donor requests that it be sent to another United Way. Your local United Way does pay annual dues to United Way of America, the national association for United Ways, and also to United Way of North Carolina, the state association. Those dues, which amount to about one cent of every dollar pledged are used to help underwrite the costs of the United Way/NFL television spots, help defray the costs of marketing materials that our local United Way uses, and support training for United Way staff.
- 10. Are there safeguards to make sure my donation goes where it's supposed to?** Yes. Each year an outside accounting firm conducts an independent audit of the United Way's finances. The Board of Directors is made up of a cross-section of community

representatives who oversee finances. Also, United Way financials are posted on our website.

11. **How can I know for sure that my contribution to United Way is being used for the purpose intended, and isn't being mishandled, etc.?** We have a process to help ensure donor dollars are being used by programs for their intended purpose. Agencies complete a proposal packet, containing information about their services, participants served, effectiveness, and costs. Information is provided for the prior year, current year, and the upcoming year. Agencies whose budget is \$100,000 or more are required to submit an audit and IRS Form 990.

While no system can provide total assurance that mismanagement of donor dollars has taken place, we feel that we are doing everything that is possible to ensure the integrity of the process.

12. **Is our United Way a part of United Way of Central Carolinas (Mecklenburg County)?** NO. Although United Way is a national brand, there are more than 1,300 local, independent United Ways that work in their individual communities. United Way of Gaston County has its own local volunteer board of directors that make all policy decisions in our county.
13. **How much of each contribution is spent on administrative costs?** Only 15 cents out of every dollar pledged covers administrative costs. The Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Council of Better Business Bureaus sets the maximum permissible rate for overhead costs at non-profit organizations at 50 percent. The National Charities Information Bureau sets the rate at 40 percent. Our staff consists of six full-time employees.
14. **How does United Way pay for its events?** Sponsorships from both companies and individuals cover the major portion of event costs.
15. **Can I designate my contributions to specific agencies or to a United Way in another county?** Yes. The United Way of Gaston County honors designations, but only to local United Way agencies and to United Ways and their agencies in other communities. United Way staff spends a considerable amount of time to research designee agencies and forward contributions to them.

Contact information for additional inquires:

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