

# United Way of Whatcom County



## Got Questions? We have answers!

### Why should I give to the United Way Community Impact Fund and not directly to an individual charity?

Three main reasons:

- 1.) 100% of your donation stays local to help Whatcom County individuals and families
- 2.) Programs are vetted and dollars are allocated according to community goals and needs
- 3.) One donation supports over 20 local nonprofits all working together to make a difference

No one agency can fix complicated problems like homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, and addiction. A family in need may be turning to multiple programs for support. Giving to United Way's Community Impact Fund allows you to give to a comprehensive network of vetted programs and agencies all at once, stretching your dollars even further.

United Way donations are raised by our community for our community, and local community members determine how the resulting dollars are invested in our community.

*Did you know? United Way partner agencies go through a thorough vetting process before receiving funding, so you can feel good about knowing your dollars will be well spent.*

### I want to give to your COVID-19 fund or a particular partner agency. Can I do that?

Yes. While most people donate to the Community Impact Fund, you do have the option to designate a portion of your donation to our Emergency Recovery Fund for COVID-19 or particular nonprofit agency.

To give to our COVID fund, simply check the box on our pledge form or online giving page and indicate the amount of your total donation you'd like to give to that fund.

*Pledge form example*

Support our Emergency Recovery Fund	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like	\$ _____ of my donation to go to the Emergency Recovery Fund for COVID-19
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please apply for any matching funds available through All In WA	

*Online example*

- I'd like to direct a portion of my donation to the Emergency Recovery Fund for COVID-19

If you want to restrict your gift to a partner agency or other nonprofit 501(c)(3), you can do so by filling out the information at the bottom of the printed pledge form or checking the box on the online form.

- I'd like to restrict a portion of my gift to a non-profit of my choice  
(\$100 minimum donation)

If you're giving to a specific nonprofit:

- The nonprofit you choose must be a qualified 501(c)(3)
- A minimum donation of \$100 required

One thing to note: Depending on which organization you choose, your donation may not stay local and the agency may not go through our vetting process.

***Did you know?*** 100% of United Way Community Impact Fund donations stay local to support a network of agencies right here in Whatcom County.

### **I live in the county. How does United Way help support my friends and neighbors?**

Great question! There's a reason we're called United Way of Whatcom County. We are dedicated to serving everyone in our community, and are always looking for ways to grow and expand our reach. We are working with a variety of programs that serve areas all over the county. Here is a list of agencies who provide services county-wide.

- WELA's support for early learning
- Essential childcare, exercise and food delivery services through the Whatcom Family YMCA
- Home visits for children with developmental delays from Whatcom Center for Early Learning
- Food storage and distribution to county food banks via the Bellingham Food Bank
- Child abuse prevention and parenting services through Brigid Collins
- Literacy tutoring for adults through the Whatcom Literacy Council
- Prescription Drug Discount program through FamilyWize available at county pharmacies
- Food delivery services for homebound seniors through Meals on Wheels
- GRADS program for pregnant and parenting teens for any Whatcom County student
- Compass Health CORS outreach services for behavioral health are offered county-wide
- Domestic violence and sexual assault prevention services through DVSAS
- Support for homeless families through Interfaith Coalition's Family Promise program
- Futures NW academic assistance for underserved students in all Whatcom County school districts

***Did you know?*** Over 50,000 people in our community benefit from United Way funded agencies each year— and that was before COVID-19. Chances are you know someone who has been helped.

## What about overhead costs? Should I be concerned?

This is very a common question for nonprofits. Why? Because people care deeply about the causes they give to and want to make sure they are making a maximum impact with their dollars. This makes perfect sense. Unfortunately, judging an organization based on their overhead percentage doesn't.

In the for-profit world, overhead is accepted as the cost of doing business, and very few people ask what a company's overhead is when making a purchase. Imagine asking your waitress about overhead before deciding whether or not to "invest" in your lunch. Sounds odd, doesn't it? Now, imagine trying to do your job with no budget for office, staff, technology or other every day expenses. How much could you accomplish?

United Way of Whatcom County's investment in infrastructure (overhead) is approximately 18%. This investment allows us to hire a dedicated, long-term staff (5 employees), maintain an office, comply with audits and other financial oversight, and fund a network of nonprofit agencies doing amazing work here in Whatcom County.

***Did you know?** United Way of Whatcom County has a Platinum rating on [GuideStar](#), one of the top charity watchdog groups.*

## I don't see my favorite organization on the list of funded programs. What happened?

It's possible the organization you're looking for may not have applied for funding this year. Perhaps they found new funding sources or are shifting their programs to different areas of impact.

Decisions about which programs to fund aren't easy. Our Community Impact Panel carefully evaluates each request to determine if and how a particular program fits into our goals, what the long-term outcomes are, and what level of funding we can provide. As a result, the list of programs and agencies we fund will change from year to year, depending on community needs and priorities.

United Way is constantly striving to find, support, and invest in the best long-term solutions to bring people out of poverty and into healthier, more stable situations. We truly believe this benefits not just those we help, but all of us as a community.

***Did you know?** Our group of partner agencies changes as the needs in our community change. The more money we raise, the more great programs we can support!*

## How much of my money stays in Whatcom County?

**All of it!** United Way is the largest nonprofit in America, but each United Way is separate and focuses solely on their community. Only programs operating locally are eligible for funding from United Way of Whatcom County. We believe in creating strong kids, families, and neighborhoods right here at home—where we live, work, and play.

***Did you know?** United Way is a community driven organization. Local business, organizations and volunteers help raise and distribute dollars invested right here in Whatcom County.*