

# Frequently Asked Questions



United Way  
of Whatcom County

## **Will my donation stay local?**

Yes. We only fund program services delivered in Whatcom County.

## **Is my donation tax deductible?**

Yes. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit, which makes your donation 100% tax deductible. Our tax ID is 91-0570788.

## **What is your overhead?**

Our overhead, or investment in our infrastructure, is 16.92%. Don't be fooled by this number, though. This doesn't mean that only \$0.83 of every \$1.00 you contribute gets put into our Community Impact Programs. The news is a lot better than that. We get things like corporate sponsorships, grants, and investment gains that help cover the cost of our overhead. This means we're able to stretch your dollar and put it to work in the community.

Think we shouldn't have any overhead? Think again. We're big fans of Dan Pallotta's TED Talk: "The Way We Think About Charity is Dead Wrong."

Pallotta says, "We've all been taught that charities should spend as little as possible on overhead things, like fundraising, under the theory that, well, the less money you spend on fundraising, the more money there is available for the cause. Well, that's true if it's a depressing world in which this pie cannot be made any bigger. But if it's a logical world in which investment in fundraising actually raises more funds and makes the pie bigger, then we have it precisely backwards, and we should be investing more money, not less, in fundraising, because fundraising is the one thing that has the potential to multiply the amount of money available for the cause that we care about so deeply."

We've been making the pie bigger for over 60 years.

## **Why would I give to United Way? Why the middle-man?**

You probably give to several different causes you believe in. That's great. Keep giving. If one of the causes you believe in happens to be financial stability, we hope you'll give to us, too. We hope you'll believe in the United

Way network and what it means to LIVE UNITED. We believe no single program can solve poverty. We believe it takes a lot of different programs working on a lot of different aspects of this very complex problem. We believe it takes bringing those action-takers together to join forces and up their problem-solving game. We believe in the power of our community coming together to assess which portfolio of programs will have the most significant impact. We believe in accountability and hold our partner programs accountable for making real impact in our community.

If the LIVE UNITED philosophy isn't enough, consider this. Many of the programs we partner with are small. They focus their time on providing direct services to the individuals and families they serve. They don't have a resource development department. We are their resource development department. Without us, you might never even know they existed. Without us, they might not exist.

### **Do you accept donations of tangible goods?**

Not usually. But you can still help. Send your used electronics, collectibles, or other valuables to Mighty Good Things Foundation. They'll sell your stuff. They'll send us the money. We'll invest it in local programs helping individuals and families move from poverty to possibility. Clutter becomes cash. Cash becomes community action.

### **Can you provide me with housing, food, a job, childcare, or other assistance?**

We don't provide direct service, but check out our partner programs (full listing available at [UnitedWayWhatcom.org](http://UnitedWayWhatcom.org)). They might have what you're looking for.

### **I live in the county. What United Way programs are happening in my area?**

Our reach is large. For instance:

- Whatcom Early Learning Alliance Play and Learn groups are held throughout Whatcom County
- Academic Success and Healthy Lifestyle programs take place at all Boys & Girls Clubs
- Early Learning programs through the Whatcom Family YMCA
- Home visits for children with developmental delays from Whatcom Center for Early Learning
- Food storage and distribution at county food banks via the Bellingham Food Bank
- Community Showers Program at all county YMCA locations
- Literacy Tutoring for Adults program through the Whatcom Literacy Council
- FamilyWise Prescription Drug Discount program at pharmacies all over Whatcom County
- Whatcom Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels program for seniors
- Domestic violence and sexual assault prevention services through DVSAS