

You CAN Change THE STORY.



United Way
of Northwest Louisiana

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why should I invest in United Way of Northwest Louisiana?

A. We bring the expertise and strategic focus to create profound and positive change in our community. The strong relationships we share with business, government, nonprofits, talented volunteers and generous donors put us in a unique position. We bring people together to create innovative solutions to the toughest problems facing our community.

We measure progress made in the community because we are focused on solid, tangible results that create lasting change. We are meeting basic needs, getting children ready for school, decreasing the obesity rate, increasing family financial stability, fostering volunteerism, and improving the quality of life for Northwest Louisiana.

When you invest your time or financial resources with United Way of Northwest Louisiana, you change our community for the better in fundamental, lasting ways.

Q. I pay taxes. Why should I give to United Way of Northwest Louisiana?

A. State and Federal taxes support some social services, primarily through public assistance programs, but taxes can't do it all. With all the State and Federal cuts in funding, many more people are in need of assistance than can be helped by the government. United Way supports programs that are focused on increasing the economic self-sufficiency of families and individuals in our community. The result? With the strategic goals we have set, fewer people will require public assistance.

Q. Where does the money go?

A. Your contributions are invested in local health and human service programs that are proven to make our community stronger and a better place to live for everyone. For a complete and up-to-date list of programs that your contributions support, go to www.unitedwaynwla.org.

Q. What guides United Way of Northwest Louisiana's investment of donor dollars?

A. We conduct research to assess the strengths and needs of our community. Knowledgeable, well-trained volunteers and expert United Way of NWLA staff and Board of Directors work together to identify the most pressing issues as well as review and score applications.

Q. Why should I choose United Way Community Impact Fund?

A. The Community Impact Fund is like a "war chest" built to address the issues that our community says matter most. It is the only giving option that allows you to join with tens of thousands of others to focus our resources where we can have the greatest impact. Trained volunteers review programs that align with our four strategic goals and invest your contributions, so you know your money is working to improve our future.

Q. Can I give to a specific agency?

A. Yes. United Way of NWLA offers two options for designating your gift. You may specify that all or a portion of your gift go directly to any 501 (c)(3) organization or you can choose to designate all or a portion of your gift to one of our strategic focus areas: Education, Income, Health and Basic Needs. *Organizations that are not one of our program partners and receive regular funding from United Way have not been reviewed with our stringent criteria by United Way volunteers and due diligence should be encouraged to each employee.*

Q. What is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization?

A. 501(c)(3) is the tax status code for nonprofit charitable organizations. Donations to these organizations are tax deductible. Donors may direct their gift to any 501(c)(3) organization through United Way of Northwest Louisiana.

We do not accept directed pledges to organizations without this status.

Q. How should I ask for money in this tough economy?

A. Even though times are challenging, those of us who still have the ability to give can make a tremendously positive difference. Some of the most generous givers are those who themselves have struggled and needed a helping hand. Everyone should be given an opportunity to express caring through charitable giving and enjoy the emotional reward that comes from knowing he or she has helped our community become stronger and healthier. Making a gift – whatever the amount –through payroll deduction is an easy and powerful way to make a tremendous impact for so many who desperately need our help.

Q. When should our United Way campaign take place?

A. Most campaign take place between early September and late October, but they can happen any time of the year when a company's employee base is largest.

Q. When does payroll deduction start?

A. Payroll deduction usually runs from January 1 - December 31, following the campaign year. Some companies use their fiscal year as their schedule for payroll deduction. United Way does not set your payroll schedule; it is your company's decision. Contact your human resources department or United Way office at 318-677-2504 with any questions.

Q. I am limited on time to devote to a campaign. How can I work it into my busy schedule?

A. Utilize your United Way staff person. He or she is here to help every step of the way. Let him or her know your limitations and come up with a plan together to make it easier for you. Another way to ease the strain is to recruit a committee. Assign tasks and assume a management role. Most importantly, start planning early. The earlier you start, the less you will rush at the last minute.

Q. Our work environment is not conducive to holding an employee meeting. How can I involve our employees in the campaign experience?

A. Bring the campaign to them. Ideas include using e-mails, voice mails and letters from the CEO/President to get the word out. Bring balloons with United Way messages to attach to their desks. Have a rotating shift gathering. Designate one room as the "United Way Room" and have participants play games on their breaks and turn in pledge forms for prizes. Use your company's intranet to provide information and results of your company's giving.

Q. What is Leadership Giving and how will it impact my campaign?

A. Leadership Giving is a recognition program to encourage employees to make high-impact gifts of \$1,000 or more. Strategies include a customized "ask" to employees to give at a higher level and specific personalized recognition within the company and United Way of Northwest Louisiana. It can also be motivating for you and your colleagues to see the number of Leadership Givers and establish goals around it. Companies will often honor employees who give at the Leadership level by having an event to thank them. Special "thank yous" or certificates are best practices for this.

Q. How does United Way Worldwide organization dictate your goals?

A. They do not. Each of the 1,200 United Ways is autonomous and managed by a local volunteer Board of Directors. In Northwest Louisiana, volunteers from all walks of life are involved in and oversee every detail of United Way operations, from fundraising to investments to financial management. Our local 31 member Board of Directors is committed to accountability and proper oversight of all organizational functions.

Q. How can my company gain more recognition for its support of United Way of Northwest Louisiana?

A. Corporate sponsorships of United Way events offer a wonderful way for organizations to receive extensive exposure. You can also choose to participate as a Pacesetter Company. Pacesetters raise a significant amount of money during a short eight to ten week period. Being a Pacesetter has many advantages including increased United Way support, increased community recognition, and campaign completion when the majority of the campaigns begin.

Q. Can our company become more involved with United Way of NWLA year-round?

A. We offer an array of ways to become more involved year-round.

- Subscribe to our news alerts.
- Email our office at connie@unitedwaynwla.org. Join our Facebook community, Like us and regularly post comments. Consider writing a blog to post on unitedwaynwla.org.
- Tweet about your campaign news and other United Way related topics. www.twitter.com/unitedwaynwla.
- Host free, monthly Lunch and Learn sessions at your company. We'll bring experts into your workplace for fun and engaging information sessions on a variety of topics.
- Interested employees can join together to find rewarding volunteer opportunities on our website: unitedwaynwla.org/volunteer.
- Assemble a team and participate in a Day of Caring project
- Host a food or supply drive and collect essential items to donate to one of United Way programs.
- Talk to your United Way staff member about other ways to get involved.

Q. How much does it cost if I direct my gift to an agency or another United Way?

A. At this time, United Way of NWLA has elected not to charge a fee to designate a gift to an agency or another United Way. We suggest a designated gift be at least \$100 though.

Q. Are there fees for using my credit card?

A. No. United Way of NWLA has elected not to charge an additional fee to the credit card user for gifts or donations. If a gift is made via credit card, United Way of NWLA deducts the credit card fee (average of 3% depending on type of card used for the deduction) from the amount of the gift.

Q. Why should I give if no one in my family has ever been helped by United Way?

A. Supporting United Way today ensures that help will be available if you or your family ever need it in the future. Chances are, you or someone you know has benefitted directly from a United Way program. Each year, these programs touch the lives of nearly one-in-five residents in Northwest Louisiana.

Q. Does United Way of NWLA pressure people to give?

A. No. Under no circumstance should an employee feel threatened or coerced into contributing. Giving is a personal matter. United Way of NWLA believes that every employee should receive an adequate explanation concerning the importance of United Way and/or issues in the community before considering to make a contribution.

Q. I already give money to a church or another charity. Why should I give to United Way?

A. Supporting religious beliefs or another charity is important and reflects personal convictions and your desire to help others. Consider giving to United Way as a way to enhance your charitable portfolio. The benefits derived from United Way gifts are vitally important to the entire community.

Q. I don't want to give because when I or someone I knew needed help, United Way didn't help at all.

A. United Way is not set up to provide direct services to individuals. We refer people to specific nonprofit programs that can meet their needs. The agencies themselves determine eligibility and amount of aid given to those in need, usually in terms of government guidelines or established policies that prevent people from taking advantage of the system. United Way raises money for the programs and services that can help the most people possible.