

Frequently asked questions

This guide is designed to help you answer frequently asked questions. As a volunteer for United Way, you can expect questions as they are a natural part of the process of asking people to give. Knowing the facts will help prepare you to address people's questions and concerns.

You may also find the following three-step response helpful when dealing with tough questions:

- **Acknowledge:** Begin your answer by acknowledging the question. Statements like "I understand your concern" or "I appreciate you asking about this topic" will show the individual that you are listening. If a mistake or problem existed, admit it. If appropriate, apologize for it. Don't try to hide it or act like it never happened. Never argue.
- **Bridge:** Move forward. If the question is regarding something that happened, tell the individual what has taken place since the incident or issue occurred. What reforms or actions have been put in place?
- **Positive:** Don't dwell on the problem. Move to the positives. What do you want people to know about? To remember? Conclude the response on a positive note, an important fact that should help alleviate the individual's concerns.

Should you encounter a question that you are not able to answer, that's okay. Simply remind the individual that you are a volunteer and you will find out the appropriate response. Get their name and contact information, and tell them either you or their United Way representative will get back to them promptly with the answer(s) to their question(s).

WHAT DOES UNITED WAY DO?

For over 95 years, through hurricanes, economic depressions and now a global pandemic, United Way of Miami-Dade has been an enduring force in changing lives and creating a positive impact in our community. Our community of volunteers and advocates are more committed than ever to working with us to build a stronger Miami. It is through our work in education, financial stability and health that we effect change—transforming vulnerability into empowerment, poverty into opportunity and despair into hope.

HOW LONG HAS UNITED WAY OF MIAMI-DADE BEEN AROUND?

United Way of Miami-Dade has convened people from all walks of life to impact change since 1924. We have helped individuals and families in their time of need, and, most importantly, we have continued to build community by helping people care for one another.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



WHY GIVE TO UNITED WAY?

Giving to United Way is the most powerful way you can make your community—Miami-Dade—stronger and better. By helping tens of thousands of our families and friends reach their full potential, you're helping to build a more educated, prosperous and healthy Miami-Dade. Your gift translates into real and measurable results that change lives and strengthen Miami-Dade.

The need in our city has always been there: Families are hungry. Individuals are struggling. Now many more in our community are financially impacted due to reduced work hours and wages, layoffs and furloughs. They need support to get through this new crisis, and United Way is that organization that can address the complex needs of our community.

HOW IS UNITED WAY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NONPROFITS?

United Way brings together powerful forces within our community to create a more educated, prosperous and healthy Miami. Our unique ability to work across complex issues with hundreds of community partners is unmatched. We bring together government, business, faith groups, nonprofits, labor, policymakers and community members, just like you, to find solutions to some of our biggest challenges. We are not focused on a single issue, but rather on the community as a whole. We help young children get off to a good start in life, we help people in crisis get back on their feet, and we help prevent future problems.

Even before COVID-19, we have been there for individuals and families. We are on the frontlines. Always. Our United Way is addressing the unprecedented short-term needs in our community, but also continuing to address long-term needs via the pillars of education, financial stability and health.

WHAT HAS UNITED WAY OF MIAMI-DADE DONE TO HELP THE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

United Way of Miami-Dade, in partnership with the Miami Herald/el Nuevo Herald and media partner Univision 23 Miami, activated Operation Helping Hands, an emergency response initiative to raise funds and recruit volunteers to help with crisis recovery and relief efforts. A collaborative of local partner funders joined this response effort to establish the **Miami Pandemic Assistance Program**, raising more than \$3.5 million as of June 5, 2020. The Fund supports struggling families with emergency needs including rent/mortgage assistance, food, medication and utilities.

In addition to the Miami Pandemic Response Fund, United Way of Miami-Dade has organized virtual volunteering opportunities, food drives, distributed meals and supplies, and launched the **Small Business Assistance Program** to help small businesses that may not be eligible for other assistance with micro-grants coupled with technical assistance.

For every \$1 you give to the Community Plan, United Way doubles its impact through matching gifts, corporate, in-kind gifts and more. That's money that goes directly to support over 100 innovative programs and initiatives that help children, youth, families, seniors and many others reach their full potential.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



HOW DID THE COUNTY PARTNER WITH UNITED WAY OF MIAMI-DADE TO DISTRIBUTE THE \$20 MILLION DOLLARS IN COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS?

Miami-Dade County partnered with United Way of Miami-Dade to provide hard-working individuals and families with emergency assistance and relief during the coronavirus pandemic. Developed by the County, The **Miami-Dade Pandemic Assistance Program** addressed short-term economic hardship through financial assistance for basic living expenses such as food, utilities, childcare, medical expenses and rental assistance, among other needs. With 5 out of 10 households (54%) in Miami-Dade County living in, or one emergency away from, poverty, the pandemic exacerbated an already difficult situation for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) individuals and families.

The county selected United Way of Miami-Dade to distribute the \$20 million in federal funds due to its extensive experience in addressing the community's needs.

WHAT IS UNITED WAY'S COMMUNITY PLAN?

Your gift to the **United Way Community Plan** is the most powerful tool you can use to bring lasting change to your friends and neighbors. It's a strategic roadmap that best addresses community needs in the areas of education, financial stability and health – the building blocks for a good quality of life. By contributing to the Community Plan, you are empowering United Way, on your behalf, to:

- invest in quality programs
- advocate for policies that improve lives
- partner with organizations and individuals to create the most effective solutions

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WHO OVERSEES THE OPERATIONS OF UNITED WAY?

United Way of Miami-Dade is governed by a 51-member volunteer board of directors made up of respected community and business leaders, and committed philanthropists. Robert E. Sanchez, chairman and CEO of Ryder System, chairs the board. The board sets policy and strategic direction and is responsible for the overall governance and stewardship of the organization. Professional staff manages day-to-day activities and is led by president and CEO, Maria C. Alonso.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



HOW CAN I BE CONFIDENT THAT MY DONATION IS WELL MANAGED?

We take our role as stewards of your money very seriously. We engage community volunteers to oversee our management and financial systems to ensure that we are operating at the highest levels of professionalism and excellence:

- United Way of Miami-Dade is audited annually by an independent accounting firm and carefully reviewed by volunteers who serve on the United Way finance and administration committee and United Way executive committee and board.
- United Way voluntarily agreed to comply with the requirements of Sarbanes-Oxley legislation (FYI: the American Competitiveness and Corporate Accountability Act of 2002, commonly known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, was passed in response to several corporate scandals and was intended to rebuild public trust in the corporate sector).
- Three independent volunteer groups, the finance and administration committee, the executive committee, and the board of directors, conduct a monthly review of our financial statements and annual review of our audited financial statements. Our IRS 990 form is available online for any interested individuals to review.
- Our United Way was awarded Charity Navigators 4-star rating—its highest—which speaks to the financial, health and governance of our organization.

WHO DECIDES WHICH PROGRAMS UNITED WAY INVESTS IN?

Knowledgeable, trained volunteers and experts from our community carefully screen and select the programs to be funded. Their recommendations are reviewed and approved by our board.

After selection, these programs are rigorously monitored to ensure they produce the intended results. As part of this oversight, staff and volunteers visit the programs, review financial documents, analyze program reports and evaluate outcomes on a regular basis.

I NEVER USE AGENCY SERVICES AND I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE WHO DOES. WHY SHOULD I GIVE?

Everyone deserves opportunities to have a good life: a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health. We all win when a child succeeds in school, when a family becomes financially stable, and when people enjoy good health. When the community benefits, we all benefit.

I ALREADY GIVE TO OTHER CHARITIES. WHY SHOULD I GIVE TO UNITED WAY, TOO?

While most nonprofits focus on a single issue, United Way takes a broader approach. We find the needs in our community and address them by working with over 100 programs and initiatives to promote the education, financial stability and health of every person in our community. We help young children get off to a good start in life, we help people in crisis get back on their feet, we help families pave a path to financial stability and we help prevent future problems. In addition, when you give to United Way, your dollar goes further, because for every \$1 you give, United Way doubles its impact through matching dollars, volunteers and in-kind gifts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



MY SPOUSE GIVES AT WORK. WHY SHOULD I GIVE?

If your spouse supports United Way, that is wonderful! Your gift is just as important because it helps close the gap of unmet service needs in Miami-Dade County. Additionally, couples with combined gifts of \$1,000 or more are recognized, as being part of our Leadership and Endowment Circle.

IS MY UNITED WAY CONTRIBUTION TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

Yes. Your United Way contribution might be tax deductible. To receive a tax deduction, you will need to provide the proper documentation when filing your income tax returns. The IRS requires a receipt for each tax-deductible payment of \$250 or more.

CARES Act – New for 2020

There is a new financial incentive to give generously to qualifying charities, including United Way of Miami-Dade. The new universal tax break for charitable donations was included in the final \$2 trillion COVID-19 stimulus package signed into law in March and will go into effect starting with the 2020 tax year. It is commonly known as the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act).

Here is a summary of the tax benefit break down for those taking standard deductions, and for those taking the itemized deductions:

STANDARD DEDUCTION

For people who do not itemize and take the standard deduction, the CARES Act will allow you to take a tax deduction for contributions made to qualified charitable entities up to \$300 per year starting in 2020—this deduction is “above-the-line,” meaning that that is deducted from the individual taxpayer’s income prior to the calculation of their adjusted gross income. As a reference, the 2020 Standard deduction is \$12,400 for individuals and \$24,800 for married couples filing jointly. For now, this deduction applies for 2020 and beyond.*

ITEMIZED DEDUCTION

For people who itemize their deductions, the CARES Act temporarily waives the 60% of adjusted gross income limit for contributions to qualifying charities in 2020. This means that you can deduct all of your charitable contributions for this tax year to up to 100% of your adjusted gross income.

To learn more please consult your financial advisor or visit the government’s CARES Act website at:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3548/text?q=product+actualizaci%C3%B3n>

**Note that the contribution must be either by cash, credit card, check, Venmo or workplace payroll deduction. Donations of goods or services are not eligible. You can’t claim this deduction if you itemize deductions on your 2020 tax return (i.e., you must claim the standard deduction). This is provided for informational purposes only. Please consult your accountant or financial planner.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP, WHO SHOULD THEY CONTACT?

The best way to get help is to contact JCS Switchboard 2-1-1 of Miami, a United Way partner, which operates our community's only 24-hour free information/crisis/referral/phone counseling hotline.

Please encourage your friends and colleagues to call 2-1-1 or (305) 358-HELP (4357) when they need assistance. Trained phone counselors who speak English, Spanish and Creole are ready to listen and to guide callers to the right services within our community.

Need help during these unprecedented times? Visit the COVID-19 Resource Center at unitedwaymiami.org/coronavirusresources/ for more information and resources that are available to help Miami-Dade community members during this economic and public health crisis.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Be an advocate and champion for your community. Whether you're speaking out or posting on social media to improve education, financial stability and health, reaching out to members of Congress, volunteering virtually or wearing a United Way shirt to show your support, you can help create a more educated, prosperous and healthy Miami-Dade.

Giving your time through volunteerism is another important way you can help your community. For more information on how to become an advocate or a volunteer, visit volunteermiami.org.

ARE UNITED WAYS RELATED?

There are approximately 1,800 community-based United Ways across the world and each is separately incorporated and independently governed by local volunteers.

United Way Worldwide, the national service and training center for local United Ways, has no governing power over local United Ways. However, all United Ways are required to follow a set of membership requirements to ensure accountability and transparency. In addition, United Way Worldwide has a set of Standards of Excellence to help local United Ways enhance their effectiveness by implementing best practices. United Way of Miami-Dade pays one percent of its annual campaign revenue to United Way Worldwide in membership fees.

I'M A MEMBER OF THE ALICE POPULATION, WHY SHOULD I GIVE?

Even before COVID-19, members of the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population comprised 37% of Miami-Dade's working households, while 17% of households were already in poverty; both struggling to make ends meet. To address the needs of this vast underserved community, it takes all of us doing our part—however big or small—to build a community in which all our children can learn and thrive, all families can be financially secure and all people have good health. Working together, we can achieve far more than any of us on our own.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



DOES UNITED WAY FUND THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, SOUTH FLORIDA COUNCIL?

In 2003, United Way ended its funding relationship with Boy Scouts of America (BSA), South Florida Council, because the national office of the BSA prohibited its South Florida council from implementing an agreed upon sensitivity training that would equip its adult leaders with the skills and knowledge to respond appropriately to a boy who might be questioning his sexuality. At the time, BSA did not allow gay youth or adult leaders to participate.

In 2014, BSA changed its policy to allow gay youth to participate, and in July 2015, the organization removed the national restriction on gay adult leaders and employees. However, BSA allows local troops to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own.

BSA, South Florida Council, continues to be eligible to receive designated dollars, as are all 501(c)(3) health and human service agencies in Florida.

DOES UNITED WAY FUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD?

All United Ways are independent and autonomous organizations and make local funding decisions with the input of local leaders and community stakeholders.

Out of 1,129 local United Ways in the United States, only a small number (less than 3 percent) provide direct support to Planned Parenthood to support its health programs. None support abortion services.

Planned Parenthood offers a wide range of women's health services and the majority of its funding goes towards preventive health care, birth control, prenatal care, sex education, STD treatment, cancer screenings and other services.

United Way of Miami-Dade provides no direct support Planned Parenthood. However, Planned Parenthood is eligible to receive donor-designated dollars, as are all 501(c)(3) health and human service agencies. There are contributors who choose to direct their United Way donation to Planned Parenthood, and we honor and respect their right to designate their giving.

HOW IS THE COUNTY PARTNERING WITH UNITED WAY OF MIAMI-DADE TO DISTRIBUTE THE \$20 MILLION DOLLARS IN COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS?

Miami-Dade County is partnering with United Way of Miami-Dade to continue providing hard-working individuals and families with emergency assistance and relief during the coronavirus pandemic. Developed by the County, The **Miami-Dade Pandemic Assistance Program** will address short-term economic hardship through financial assistance for basic living expenses such as food, utilities, childcare, medical expenses and rental assistance, among other needs. With 5 out of 10 households (54%) in Miami-Dade County living in, or one emergency away from, poverty, the pandemic has exacerbated an already difficult situation for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) individuals and families.

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