

How Your Sioux Empire United Way Works

Our Mission: To lead, sustain, and nurture a unified, effective response to community needs.

Your Sioux Empire United Way.

Sioux Empire United Way brings people and resources together to meet our community's needs. We identify the most critical needs in our community and then bring the people and resources together to develop the best solution. We unite the community's resources by conducting an annual fund drive, and then allocate those funds to best fulfill our community needs.

Meeting the Needs of the Sioux Empire.

In 1929 when this organization was founded, its purpose was primarily to combine the annual fundraising appeals of several human services agencies into a single campaign. We still carry on this strong tradition of fundraising in the community. Of the dollars we raise, 90% goes directly to local programs, another reason why people feel good about giving to Sioux Empire United Way.

In addition, we have become a community solutions provider by identifying unmet needs in our community and allocating resources for those needs. Examples include our daycare initiative in the 80's, after-school programs in the 90's, and childhood literacy in the 2000's.

Sioux Empire United Way Benefits Everyone.

Whether they realize it or not, almost everyone in the Sioux Empire benefits! By allocating funds to 86 programs administered by 39 United Way funded agencies, we estimate that 1 in 3 individuals are helped each year. You, your family, your friends, or your neighbors may not need these services today, but it is comforting to know that if you need help it will be there!

How We Monitor Local Needs.

Our staff and board have relationships with local community leaders in government, education, business, healthcare and more, who are concerned and knowledgeable about human service needs in our community. We also conduct local community needs research and utilize focus groups, surveys, and studies done by local agencies and universities, etc., to help determine gaps in service.

How We Help Improve the Quality of Life in the Sioux Empire.

Gifts made through Sioux Empire United Way make a difference in the lives of people right here at home because money that is raised locally stays local. Gifts to us are used by 39 local agencies to combat many of the toughest problems facing thousands of people living and working in the Sioux Empire. By funding our agencies and programs, providing start-up grants to new programs, and developing community initiatives, Sioux Empire United Way is providing the resources necessary to make sure that the services are there to support anyone in our community who needs help.

Where the Money Goes.

Your generosity makes it possible to support over 89 human service programs designed to improve lives across the Sioux Empire. We focus our efforts on the following areas of impact so that we can concentrate our efforts where it matters most: After School, Basic Needs, Childcare, Counseling, Disabilities, Diversity, Emergency Services, Health & Healing, Seniors, Success by 6, Youth Development, and Youth Outreach.



How Your United Way Works

Sioux Empire United Way Donors.

You can feel very proud that your community ranks second in the nation for per capita giving to United Way. Everyone does their share to help reach the United Way goal. From children in school who give through “Coins for Kids,” to small and large businesses and their employees, to our government employees and retirees, each year we are able to meet our goals and provide for those in need.

Your United Way also benefits greatly from the generosity of volunteers. Nearly 1,000 people volunteer each year, the majority of those help raise and allocate the money. Because of this incredible volunteer workforce, our United Way consistently has one of the lowest overheads of any United Way in the nation.

Our Daily Operations.

Sioux Empire United Way is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who help set policy and direction for the organization. The organization's daily operations are managed by a staff of 10. The staff work with a volunteer workforce of over 1,000 local people. Over the course of a calendar year, staff and volunteers focus on the following:

- Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers
- Reviewing agency and grant applications for funding
- Making funding recommendations and setting a campaign goal
- Developing campaign strategies and materials—pledge cards, report forms
- Researching, developing and piloting new initiatives and programs
- Assisting companies and volunteers with UW campaign rallies and events
- Communicating with donors and volunteers through mailings, newsletters, e-mails

How We Keep Overhead Costs Low.

Our aim is to invest as much money as possible into the agencies we work so hard to support. We do this by utilizing volunteers (like you!), seeking donations for goods & services when possible, partnering with our business community, and maintaining efficient office operations. Sioux Empire United Way overhead continues to be less than 10%. This means that more than 90% of every dollar you give goes where it is needed most—to services helping people in the Sioux Empire. We are very proud of that. We have one of the lowest administrative costs of any United Way that raises over \$1 million dollars.

How We Achieve Accountability.

Donations made to our United Way are carefully administered and accounted for. Volunteer auditors review all campaign pledges. Our Board of Directors has a sub-committee dedicated to monitoring our organization's accountability standards providing numerous checks and balances. Our financial statements are audited annually.

Agencies who receive funding from Sioux Empire United Way are also required to have a financial audit of their internal records conducted annually to ensure accountability. Community volunteers are trained to carefully review each organization's finances when they decide funding levels.

Glad You Asked!

Why should I give to Sioux Empire United Way?

United Way is the most effective way to direct your charitable donations to caring and well-run community programs. Volunteers carefully invest your gift in programs that have proven records of providing life transforming services in a cost-effective manner.

How does United Way invest my gift?

Each year, over 100 trained volunteers work with our knowledgeable staff to carefully review the management and effectiveness of the agencies funded and use this information to determine funding levels. This information gathered from the review process is focused on results. The four key factors in these results include: program accountability, demonstrated change in people's lives, efficiently and effectively run programs, and programs that are responsive to a changing community.

What does Sioux Empire United Way do besides raise and allocate funds?

United Way creates initiatives to meet identified needs within the Sioux Empire. The following are examples of programs that have been a part of the United Way initiative process:

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (2001): Age-appropriate books are sent to children ages birth to five. Every month 10,000+ books are sent to children in Minnehaha, Lincoln, Turner and McCook Counties.

Workers on Wheels (2005): Helps seniors remain independent in their homes by providing minor home repair, lawn and outside home repair, as well as transportation to and from medical appointments.

BackPack Program (2011): The BackPack program provides at-risk children with nutritious, easy-to-prepare foods for the weekends. The food is packaged and distributed in bags that children can easily fit into their backpacks and carry home.

USucceed (2012): Long-term mentors are provided to at-risk high school students. Participants set a goal to graduate high school and focus on money management, college and career exploration, social relationships, and daily living.

Ready to Start (2015): A 5 week program for children who may not have had access to pre-k services, or who may have demonstrated a need for additional services prior to the first day of school.

Delta Dental of South Dakota Mobile Dental Program (2017): Provides free oral health services to children who lack access to dental care because of cost, transportation or lack of insurance.

PATH (2018): Provides mental health services directly to students in need at their school. By taking the services directly to the students, barriers such as lack of financial resources, lack of transportation, parent work schedules, stigma, etc. are eliminated.

How do new programs become a part of United Way?

United Way sets aside 2% of the overall campaign dollars specifically for grants. These grants support new ideas and are made available to any non-profit agency in Minnehaha, Lincoln, Turner and McCook counties. Grant applicants need to show community need, their ability to leverage other community resources, collaboration with other organizations, the potential for success in meeting identified objectives and likely overall impact of the project. United Way volunteers review these programs and make funding decisions. Programs can apply for grants up to three years.

Does United Way only help the poor?

United Way works to benefit the entire community. Examples of broad-based services include: providing beds for children who may not otherwise have one, domestic violence prevention and counseling, and family crisis and stability programs. No one knows when a tragedy will strike and when help will be needed. Each of us benefits from living in a peaceful, healthy community.



Glad You Asked!

Does my gift qualify for a charitable deduction?

Sioux Empire United Way recognizes that the recently passed tax reform does include some updates to the charitable deduction. Gifts to Sioux Empire United Way do still qualify for charitable deductions for itemized tax returns. The changes to itemized tax returns and charitable deductions do not change the fact that our community continues to face a variety of needs. We are confident that local givers will continue to recognize that United Way's 86 funded programs are necessary in meeting our community's health and human service needs.

United Way funded programs ensure that basic human needs such as shelter and food as well as long-term impacts such as mental health services and youth development programs are provided across our community. Our donors ensure that when someone in our community needs help, that help is available.

Why am I not able to designate my United Way gift?

Each year 100 local volunteers dedicate over 1,500 hours to closely review all of the programs that receive funding from United Way. They visit the programs, look over program and financial details, and specifically determine what United Way should provide in funds. Some programs funded by United Way are well known, while others are not. If we allowed designations then some of the lesser known agencies may not get the funding they need. We've found that by giving one gift the entire community benefits!

What if I can't afford to give?

By giving a small amount each pay period through payroll deduction, most people can afford to donate. A gift of \$1/week provides 60 students with oatmeal for breakfast for a weekend or 20 hours of transportation to doctor appointments for the elderly.

What if a funded agency asks me to give, too?

United Way contributions fund only services and programs, not buildings or equipment. Still, United Way cannot meet all the financial needs of funded agencies. Due to a potential decrease or loss in government funding, agencies often rely on other funding sources as well as United Way.

I donate to my church.

United Way partners with many church-affiliated programs such as Community Outreach. In a lot of ways, churches and United Way make a unique partnership where the overall goal is the same: To help local families, to help our community and to change lives for the better.

Does United Way condone pressure to give?

Giving time or money is a personal matter and completely voluntary. Local employers endorse the United Way campaign because it is highly accountable to contributors and is one of the best ways to meet community needs, but everyone's gift should be voluntary.

My spouse gives, should I give too?

We each have a community responsibility, and United Way makes it possible for each of us to be powerful investors in community change. Consider combining your gift with your spouse to become a Heart Club member. Any combined gift of \$500 or more will be recognized at each spouse's company.

Does Sioux Empire United Way support Planned Parenthood?

Sioux Empire United Way DOES NOT support Planned Parenthood or any agencies that endorse or make referrals on abortion. There are 1,200 United Ways in the nation, all of which are separate entities. In other communities, United Ways may choose to support Planned Parenthood, but donations to Sioux Empire United Way do not provide funding for Planned Parenthood.

