

United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes

MYTH BUSTING UNITED WAY

● **MYTH: My donation doesn't stay here in my community.**

FACT: 100% of your donation stays local and supports the causes, organizations, and communities you are passionate about. Every United Way is a stand-alone entity locally governed with missions that are locally identified and directed; we are one of the most local national charities in terms of governing body and operations. We do pay United Way Worldwide around a 1% annual fee out of our operating budget, which in turn provides our staff support and training, branding and marketing resources, group rates on technology and services, and more—all resources that help us better support the needs in our communities.

● **Myth: I don't have a lot to give so I can't make much impact.**

FACT: Our average donor is \$2 a week. That \$2 a week gives a local child one week of after-school learning and provides two older adults with round-trip transportation to get safely to medical appointments, grocery shopping, social events, and more. There is power in individual action and collective giving. Your gift, combined with others, significantly impacts our community. You are creating a better, stronger region—one ride, one meal, and one day of after-school programming at a time.

● **Myth: Most of my donation is going to overhead and operating expenses so I should just give to agencies directly.**

FACT: United Way has an 8% fee for overhead and operating expenses. Charity Navigator awards the highest score for fundraising costs if they are 10% or less, and the BBB Wise Giving Alliance indicates that a charity should spend no more than 35% of related contributions on fundraising. That 8% fee supports our work of collective giving, convening regional partners, crisis response coordination, and developing and expanding services available to our community, including Volunteer United, our Leadership Development Programs, and non-profit resources.

● **Myth: United Way programs just provide handouts and are a band-aid solution to our community's problems.**

FACT: United Way is addressing community impact at scale. We are uniquely positioned to understand community needs, identify disparities, and improve lives through direct service, collaborations, volunteerism, and advocacy. We are dedicated to identifying the greatest needs in the community and investing Community Impact Fund dollars in evidence-based and preventative programs. All United Way partner programs and initiatives are monitored, measured, and evaluated regularly.

● **Myth: United Way only helps people in the city of Rochester.**

FACT: We invest in a network of partner programs that help people all across our entire 6-county region. Learn more about the programs we invest in at unitedwayrocflx.org/our-work.

● **Myth: At XYZ company we're forced to give to United Way.**

FACT: We would never want anyone to feel forced to support something they don't believe in. United Way does not encourage companies to coerce employees to give. We work with companies to help them offer United Way as a simple, convenient way for their employees to invest in our community.

● **Myth: United Way doesn't provide any volunteer opportunities.**

FACT: Our Volunteer United platform supports nonprofits and mobilizes volunteers to assist with urgent community needs. Over 14,000 volunteers are matched with meaningful opportunities to help local nonprofits annually. The portal is continually updated and offers virtual and in-person volunteer opportunities that match volunteers' time and talents. Visit unitedwayrocfly.org/volunteer for more information.

● **Myth: Nobody gives through their workplace anymore. The United Way model doesn't work.**

FACT: We're 500 companies and more than 700 campaign champions strong! We are fortunate to have the support of so many companies and employees in our 6-county region and feel honored they connect with us for their philanthropic giving. In addition, the ways in which we engage with organizations continues to evolve beyond the traditional workplace campaign. From the ALICE experience and kit building to cause marketing, we are meeting organizations where they are and finding new, inspiring ways to engage your teams and invest in community. Learn more about all our corporate partnership opportunities at unitedwayrocfly.org/get-involved/corporate-partnership.

● **Myth: United Way doesn't need the support because they received a sizable gift from Mackenzie Scott in 2020**

FACT: United Way was fortunate to receive a one-time \$20 million gift from Mackenzie Scott in 2020. This gift was meant as a transformational investment, not a programmatic investment and not a replacement for or a contribution to our annual campaign. United Way convened a Board of Directors taskforce that monitors the investment of this gift. A majority of this gift has been invested back into the community through crisis response grants, Equity Fund grants, Bridge Support funding and standing up the new 2025 single-year and proactive grants. The remainder of the gift has been invested in United Way to support infrastructure long deferred and critical for leveraging funds and supporting our nonprofit community well into the future, including technology in community meeting rooms, data warehouse, and a new website for ROC the Day.

