

UNITED WAY MYTH BUSTERS

Sharing the TRUTH about your support of United Way of Midland County!

1. The needs in Midland County are decreasing.

The needs are continuing to rise, especially for those most vulnerable and United Way is prioritizing those groups to ensure we can create stability, hope and a path forward. Many community members are asking for help – some for the very first time. The last 18 months have proven to be some of the most challenging and they have taken a toll on our community. As we continue into 2022, a few emerging and persistent challenges we are focused on include ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), mental health and loneliness, student success, food security and basic needs.

2. The United Way staff chooses where donations are invested.

Actually, a group of over 100 highly-trained volunteers review applications, pose questions, attend presentations and complete evaluations for each program every year. They utilize a best-in-industry rubric and a consensus model to make funding recommendations to the United Way Board of Directors. Lead by the Community Impact Strategy team, this group listens, asks questions and analyzes data to ensure top issues are aligned with the most pressing needs. This team is made up of experts in Youth Success, Health and Household Stability.

3. I can't exclude one of the United Way partner agencies from my donation.

All of our partner agencies provide valuable services to the community. The beauty of donating to United Way is that one person's investment is combined with others to have the biggest impact to meet the most pressing needs in our community. If you feel strongly about a particular impact area, you may designate your contribution to that area, specific member agency, or even exclude an agency from your donation utilizing the designation area to share your requests.

4. United Way didn't help with flood recovery.

United Way has worked alongside our community since the dams broke on May 19, 2020. They co-lead the Long-Term Disaster Recovery team and helped raise over \$5,200,000. They have collectively invested \$4,146,097 to help local families recover and rebuild; including 44 homes in Midland, 69 in Sanford and 13 from other parts of our community. They collected and aggregated flood impact data, worked alongside Dow and local nonprofits to establish eight regional distribution centers, deploying over \$1 million in donated basic needs. In addition, they have collected and distributed an additional \$2 million in material donations and managed over 6,000 volunteers who invested over 31,000 hours to help remove debris, clean up yards, and rebuild homes.

5. United Way wasn't there to support families during the pandemic.

United Way collaborated with the Midland Area Community Foundation to host a single Covid-19 fund and worked together to review applications and invest grants into the community. They also jointly spearheaded the community Covid-19 Taskforce, bringing community leaders together to learn, act and explore innovative ideas. In addition to that collective work, United Way:

- Invested over \$170,000 in mini-grants to nonprofits
- Invested over \$85,000 in childcare for essential workers, serving over 60 ALICE households
- Coordinated over 2,500 volunteers
- Distributed over 200,000 pounds of food

6. My donation makes a bigger impact if I give directly to a non-profit instead of United Way.

The needs in our community are complex, which is why United Way doesn't focus on a single issue. We listen, ask questions, analyze data and align your gift with the most pressing needs. Where else can you make a single donation that will have that kind of impact. We ensure the highest return on your investment and measure success in the way lives are changed. We partner with nonprofits and invest in high-quality programs that demonstrate measurable change every single year. Our best-in-industry allocations process includes outcomes modeling that not only creates the highest level of accountability, but creates an environment for continuous learning and improvement for the people they serve. We are a champion for nonprofits and are committed to building nonprofit capacity, support their programs with volunteers and working together to tackle our biggest challenges.

7. Only a small percentage of my donation actually goes back to the community.

United Way's mission is to unite our community to improve lives and 100% of your donation goes toward making that happen. From a reporting standpoint, United Way's management and fundraising costs are 13%, which is often referred to as overhead. The bigger question is how United Way utilizes your gift to create impact. We invest them in the most pressing needs in the community and use data to drive our decisions. We partner with nonprofits and invest in vetted programs, innovative solutions, volunteerism, nonprofit capacity building, data collection and educating our community. We measure success in the ways that lives are changed, utilizing a best-in-class outcomes measurements system to ensure your investment has the highest return on investment.