



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **UNITED WAY BACKGROUND**

#### ***When was the United Way formed?***

The origin of federated fundraising for community services in North America dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first United Way was created in Denver, Colorado in 1887.

In Prince George, The Prince George & District United Appeal began in 1969. In 1986 the name changed to Prince George & District United Way and again changed in 1994 to Prince George United Way. In 2009, the name was changed once again to better reflect the vast area in which we provide services and the many communities in which we operate.

#### ***What is the geographical service area encompassed by the United Way of Northern British Columbia?***

Our region encompasses all of northern BC – from McLeese Lake in the south to the Yukon border in the north and from the Queen Charlotte Islands in the west to the Alberta border in the east. This service region encompasses 22 communities and regional districts, and approximately 80 First Nations communities. The region has approximately 300,000 residents.

#### ***Is the United Way of Northern British Columbia a “branch” of the national organization?***

No. United Way is an international movement linked by a similar purpose and a common goal. Each United Way is an autonomous, locally governed organization.

#### ***Are there United Ways across Canada?***

There are 125 United Ways & Centraides across Canada that raise more than \$440 million each year for more than 7,000 local charities and an additional 10,000 donor directed charities.

In British Columbia, 15 United Ways exist that raise approximately \$45 million each year.



The United Way's planned approach is a constant cycle of effort to ensure critical needs are identified, cooperative strategies are developed, and donations are invested in a way to have the greatest impact on the community.

To support our campaign in your workplace please call Prince George (250) 561-1040 • Fort St. John (250) 263-9266 [www.unitedwaynbc.ca](http://www.unitedwaynbc.ca)

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## **GIVING TO UNITED WAY**

### ***Why should I give to the United Way?***

United Way is a leader in understanding the critical social issues in our communities and region and working with community partners to find solutions to address those issues. By investing in United Way, you are ensuring that your donation will do the most good for the most people. United Way's goal is to improve the quality of life by advancing the common good; when we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all. We all benefit when a child succeeds, when families are financially stable, seniors are involved in community activities, and when people are healthy.

Your support helps the community and region in which you live, work, raise your families, and perhaps will retire. Unexpected crisis or changed circumstances can strike anyone at anytime. It may not be you, but it could be someone you know or care about. Your donation ensures that help will be there when it is needed. With *one in three* people benefiting directly from supported programs, projects and partnerships, no other giving opportunity in northern BC lets you help so many people in your community through a single donation.

### ***Why should I give at all? Aren't my tax dollars enough?***

Crucial service gaps exist through lack of sufficient government funded programs. In a caring society we continue to be responsible for those who cannot always care for themselves. Not one of us, our family or friends will get through this life without using one or more of the services that are provided for by the funding raised through your United Way.

You should give to ensure a better future for your community and your children.

### ***Why should I support the Maximum Possible Impact Fund?***

The United Way ensures against duplication of services. All agencies of the United Way must be fiscally responsible to receive funding. Services provided are those that are crucial and needed in our communities. As stewards of your gift the United Way Community Investment Committees and Board make objective, informed decisions in directing your gift to the areas of most need that will have the most impact in community priorities.

### ***Can I designate my contribution(s)?***

United Way acknowledges that some donors may wish to designate part or all of their contributions to a specific area of interest or registered Canadian charity. The United Way will provide this service for a nominal \$12 fee per designation. Alternatively, you are welcome to leave the designation open, defaulting to the Maximum Possible Impact fund (noted above), thereby allowing the United Way to determine the most deserving projects and programs to support through its extensive needs assessment and investment process.

### ***Will my designation to a member agency affect the allocated funding decisions of the Board?***

Donors' choice is considered an inviolate right and Board policy protects the rights of the donor. All designations flow directly through the United Way to the agency and are in addition to investments recommended by Community Investment Committees. Designations reports are strictly confidential and are not available to the Board prior to the Community Investment Committees' investment process. Grants made through the Community Investment Committees are provided for the delivery of a program while designated funding may be used at the discretion of the agency.



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### ***How do I know the money gets to where it is needed most?***

The United Way is a leader and trusted community partner. Our thorough, volunteer-led program review and evaluation, and community consultation and research, ensure that your gift goes where it is needed most and where it will have the most impact.

All agencies and programs applying for United Way investments must demonstrate the need for such a service, the agency's capacity to respond, and how the program collaborates with and complements existing community services.

### ***Will my money stay in my community?***

Money raised in your community/region goes to work in your community/region. Designated moneys are also directed towards the local chapters and branches of the chosen charity.

Your donation/pledge assists individuals living in Northern British Columbia - your friends, neighbours and colleagues. Limited dollars are invested to assist the most people possible either regionally or locally.

## **UNITED WAY INVESTMENTS**

### ***Who decides where my donation will be invested?***

People like you, community volunteers from your community that make up a Community Investment Committee (CIC). CIC Members are persons with an interest in making a difference in the lives of people who face social and health challenges. Working with our community partners, the CIC makes recommendations to disburse funds to agency programs and services that have impact in the community. Building community capacity through the use of human resources is also a focus of CIC's. CIC's currently exist in Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers and Fort St. John.

### ***Why a Community Investment Committee?***

People living in a community know their community, the services being offered, issues needing to be addressed and where United Way can have impact. Community members care about making their community a better place to live for people of all ages and abilities and can use their collective knowledge to create unique solutions to their own issues. United Way can assist in the facilitation of this collaborative process.

### ***What programs does United Way support in my community?***

United Way supports programs and services helping individuals throughout northern BC. For more information on specific impacts in your community, please check our website: [www.unitedwaynbc.ca](http://www.unitedwaynbc.ca)

### ***Can any agency apply for United Way funding?***

Any registered not-for-profit charity seeking a program/service investment that fits the target populations served by United Way and its overall objective of improving lives and building community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action may apply.



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## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

### ***How much does United Way of Northern British Columbia spend on fundraising and administration costs?***

United Way prides itself on its excellent record as a low-overhead organization. Operating costs average 9.7% (8.2% for campaign and 1.5% for administration). Other Canadian charities spend on average 26% on administration and operating costs.

### ***Why does the campaign goal keep going up?***

The need for and the cost of human services in the region are increasing at a greater rate than inflation due to an aging population, changes in family structure, continued high rates of poverty, reduced economy and cuts to government and government funding. United Way tries to meet these costs through its annual campaign.

### ***What else does United Way do other than act as a funder?***

United Way works in collaboration with a broad range of community partners to understand the issues within our communities and region and to ensure that programs and services are available to address these issues. We do this in two ways: 1) we look to addressing immediate issues and 2) we work with partners to address the root causes of issues to alleviate, eliminate, or prevent issues over the long term.

United Way assists in building not-for-profit capacity through delivery of partner services (see website for list). United Way also works to build the profile of businesses by offering volunteer/community building opportunities. Facilitation and coordination are key in the work we do.

### ***Does United Way use volunteers?***

Our campaign relies on the help of over 500 volunteers, without whom the campaign would not be possible. Other events and programs rely on over 300 volunteers to be successful. Volunteers help by raising money in the workplace, deciding how funds are distributed, sitting on a variety of advisory committees, participating on the Campaign Cabinet, helping out with special events, working as office volunteers, or serving as members of the Board of Directors.

The generous contributions of so many volunteers allow United Way to keep its paid staff and its operating costs to an absolute minimum.

### ***Does United Way solicit donations of Goods and Services?***

Wherever possible, United Way requests donations of goods and services in order to minimize operating costs. Donations during the last year have included:

- Free advertising space and air time from numerous newspapers, radio & TV stations
- Web site provided by ABC Communications
- Donations of product by various in-kind supporters for special events and other United Way activities

### ***Why do some agencies have their own fundraising activities even though they receive funds from the United Way?***

United Way funds are used by agencies to cover operating expenses, programs or services. United Way is not able to fund all the needs of organizations. All agencies are expected to diversify their funding sources.



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