[**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**](https://www.uwayscc.org/frequently-asked-questions)

**Q. Where Does My Gift Go?**

All money raised in Chautauqua County stays in our County, funding agencies to work together in the areas of academic success, health and independence, work readiness and self-sufficiency.

**Q. How much of our gifts stay in Chautauqua County?**

100% of your gift stays here in Chautauqua County

**Q. What if I want to keep my pledge the same as last year?**

We encourage all donors who give via the workplace to update their pledge form every year. This ensures that, if you designate your gift, we can properly forward your donation to an agency of your choice and that any contact information we have on file is correct. Also, by updating your information we can properly thank you for your contribution!

**Q. Are all United Ways the same?**

Every United Way is local, with its own independent Board of Directors. The problems we are trying to solve are specific to Chautauqua County, and the money we raise in here, stays here. We are connected to United Way Worldwide and pay a small membership fee so that we can use the branding and have access to a world wide network other United Ways that are leading the non-profit sector in systems change. However, we use the distribution from our endowment to pay these membership fees so that all donor dollars stay locally in our community.

**Q. When Does Payroll Deduction Start?**

Payroll deduction usually runs from January 1 – December 31. However, United Way does not set your payroll schedule; it is your company’s decision for when your pledge begins to come out of your paycheck.

**Q. Are Donations to United Way tax deductible?**

Yes. The United Ways of Chautauqua County send tax receipts to all donors who made a payment of at least $250 in the prior calendar year, through any method other than payroll deduction and securities. For donors who paid less than $250 through any method other than payroll deduction in the prior calendar year, a receipt will be issued upon the request of the donor.

**Q. Can employees designate their donation?**

As a service to donors, we make it possible to specify a health and human service agency in Chautauqua County when you make your donation.

**Q. How much is used for overhead costs?**

The United Ways of Chautauqua County, like every not-for-profit and for-profit organization, has functional expenses associated with its operations. For our fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 these expenses amounted to 17% of our revenues. Each year this varies, depending on our revenue and expenses, but for the last 10 years, it has been an average of 15%.

**Q: How is United Way Accountable?**

The United Ways of Chautauqua County’s operating budget is audited each year by an independent accounting firm and is carefully scrutinized by the Finance Committee every month of United Way’s Board of Directors. For seven consecutive years we have earned the coveted 4 star rating from Charity Navigator for demonstrating strong financial health and a commitment to accountability and transparency.

**[MERGER-RELATED QUESTIONS](https://www.uwayscc.org/frequently-asked-questions)**

**Q: Why did the two United Ways of Chautauqua County Merge?**

We believe a merger would enhance County-wide impact and provide an alignment of financial and personnel resources to advance the capabilities of partnering organizations to improve the lives of all residents within Chautauqua County.

**Q: How will this affect the campaign this year?** We are planning ONE fundraising campaign in 2024, with two co-chairs (one from the Northern part of the county and one from the Southern part of the county). We will have volunteers and cabinet members active in both parts of the county.

**Q: Can I make sure my donation gets directed only to the Northern or Southern part of the county?** Yes. Donors can designate their United Way gift to a specific agency or to a geographical location in the county.

**Q: Will you be tracking separately revenue and expenses separately according to Southern and Northern operations?** Yes. In both the short-term and long-term, we will be able to provide reports that show the P&L for both ends of the county as needed. Both our accounting and donor database software allow us to easily provide these.

**Q: How many agencies supported by both United Ways operate county-wide?** How many operate at only one end of the county? Between both United Ways, we support 34 agencies – 20 provide county-wide services, 10 operate only in the southern part of the county, and 4 operate only in the northern part of the county.

**Q: What feedback have you received from agencies funded by United Way about the merger?** The feedback overall has been largely positive, especially from the agencies that operate county-wide. This will provide a streamlined funding application and reporting process for them. We have also heard positive expectations around increased impact and ability to assist in mobilizing/convening/building capacity from agencies in the Northern part of the county. There have been some concerns about reduced funding in agencies that operate at only one end of the county, but we will not be reducing any agency’s funding.

**Q: How will you decide how funding is allocated?** We will continue the process that has been effective in making funding decisions for many years by both United Ways – the use of community volunteers to make decisions about the money raised by the community. This involves several allocations panels and volunteers (typically around 50-60). We intend to have a panel specifically devoted to making decisions about Northern Chautauqua County with allocations volunteers who live and work in Northern Chautauqua County.

**Q: Will there still be a physical location and staff-person in the Northern part of Chautauqua County?** Yes.

We have a full-time Community Relations Coordinator for Northern Chautauqua County (Dan Siracuse) located at our office

**Q: What percentage of board members will come from Northern Chautauqua County?** A minimum of 25% of board members will be from Northern Chautauqua County, as well as serve on the Executive Committee.

**Q: What kinds of cost savings will be realized if a merger happens?** We will realize several efficiencies in merging, especially in administration. Our anticipation is that more donor dollars will be able to go to community impact.

**Q: Are donor dollars being used to cover expenses associated with the merger?** No. We generously received a grant from the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation Strategic Alliances Fund that will cover all costs, including filing fees with NYS and other administrative expenses.