

United Way 101

What is United Way of Southwest Minnesota?

United Way of Southwest Minnesota (hereafter UWSWMN) is a 100% autonomous, local non-profit organization that focuses on human service needs of people living in our service area. UWSWMN is much more than a fund-raising organization. We work to create lasting changes in people's lives. We work with dozens of partners and internal programs to deliver results. Our service area is Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Yellow Medicine and portions of Cottonwood, Lac qui Parle, Nobles, and Redwood counties of Southwest Minnesota.

Who runs United Way of Southwest Minnesota?

Our Board of Directors is comprised of up to twenty-four local volunteers. These volunteers are responsible for setting policies, budgeting and overseeing the direction of UWSWMN. Professional staff manages day-to-day activities. Michelle Warne of Marshall is the 2017-18 Board Chair.

What is the difference between United Way of Southwest Minnesota and United Way Worldwide?

United Way Worldwide (UWW) is the leadership and support organization for the nearly 1800 local United Ways in 40 countries and territories around the globe. UWW's work is supported by the 1% membership fee paid by local United Ways. **Local donors support work in this area through UWSWMN, which is a separately incorporated non-profit that is governed by its own Board of Directors. There are no fund-raising quotas and all resources are under local control and decision-making.** The membership fee to UWW is recouped by our community many times over in training, services and access to national corporate and employee giving campaigns.

How do I know that my contribution is wisely spent?

When you give to UWSWMN, you entrust your hard-earned dollars to a local organization that takes this trust very seriously. We are committed to the highest standard of fund responsibility, transparency and stewardship. UWSWMN's volunteers oversee grants to all local programs and closely monitor agency services while holding them accountable for integrity in their programming and business operations.

Just as important, UWSWMN's own operating expenses and records are audited by an independent accounting firm and carefully scrutinized by a volunteer finance committee to protect this trust. Local administration costs are only 5.64% and fund raising costs are 10.36% which means the most money possible goes into services for people in this area. In 2015, we were awarded the Charities Review Council "Meets All Standards" Seal which provides donors with a visible and reassuring sign that UWSWMN is an organization that is accountable and can be trusted with their donation. For additional information on this, go to smartgivers.org.



Does United Way of Southwest Minnesota fund abortions? Does United Way of Southwest Minnesota fund PETA?

No. All donations given to this organization are under local control and decision making. For a complete list of grants, UWSWMN funding priorities and supported programs, please visit our webpage UnitedWaySWMN.org.

How do organizations apply for grants?

We have several grant opportunities. Small Grant applications are awarded two times each year, with deadlines of August 31 and January 31 of each fiscal year. Community Impact Grants applications are available around February 1 of each year, with a deadline of April 1. All grant applications are reviewed by volunteers, who make funding recommendations to our local Board of Directors.

How much should I give?

That is an individual choice. The best thing about UWSWMN is that everyone has the opportunity to join together to improve the quality of life in southwest Minnesota. Payroll deductions allow for a person to make affordable donations throughout the year that will end up becoming a significant donation. We also have the option to give through ongoing credit card donations and/or being invoiced on a monthly or quarterly basis.

How can I get more involved?

UWSWMN needs and appreciates volunteer participation, as do many of our community partners. For a listing of volunteer opportunities available throughout our service area, please access our webpage and click the Volunteer tab on our homepage. We are proud to sponsor the GetConnected web-based volunteer platform for everyone in our service area to use.

How do I learn more about Imagination Library?

Contact us at 507-929-2273 or go to our website www.unitedwayswmn.org. Children ages birth to 5 years of age who live in our service area are eligible to be enrolled in this literacy, school-readiness program through our sponsorship. They will receive a free, age-appropriate book each month at home.

*Uniting people and resources to improve lives
and strengthen communities in Southwest Minnesota.*

United Way
of Southwest Minnesota

