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# Fact Sheet

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## **What is the United Way of Seneca County?**

The United Way of Seneca County is you, your friends, and your neighbors. We partner with community investors like you to support programs that focus on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life- a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

## **What is the history of the United Way Movement?**

United Way traces its history to 1887 in Denver when a priest, two ministers and a rabbi planned the first united Campaign for ten health and welfare agencies raising \$21,000. But the organizations as we know them today were developed in the twenties, thirties, and forties, when business and labor leaders together sought to reduce the number of charitable appeals being made to them by conducting a single efficient funding-raising drive.

Today there are over 1,400 independent and autonomous United Ways in the United States supporting and serving more than 47,000 agencies. Approximately 32 million people, one out of every three people employed in the United States, contribute to United Ways each year.

## **What is the History of the United Way of Seneca County?**

The Seneca County United Fund originated in 1958. Its purpose was to solicit, collect and disburse monies for charitable, philanthropic, benevolent and community purposes. It was succeeded by the United Way of Seneca County, in 1972. Its purpose was to continue the improvement and development of health, character, and well-being of the residents of this county. The name was officially changed to United Way to promote identification with the National United Way movement.

## **How is the United Way governed?**

The United Way of Seneca County is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. These volunteers come from all segments of the community. They serve on committees that plan and implement the campaign and that study needs and objectives in order to allocate in a fair and efficient manner.

This process of “citizen review” allows volunteers to help solve community problems, meet community needs, and plan for future community requirements.

## **How long does the campaign last?**

The campaign officially begins in September with a kick-off reception and continues through mid-November. The results of the campaign are officially announced and volunteers thanked at the *Thank You Reception* in December.

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## **Why are United Ways closely associated with workplace giving?**

Business and labor leaders pioneered the United Way concept when a growing number of service organizations began increasing their individual fund-raising activities seeking separate support from employers for work-place campaigns.

To minimize fund-raising costs and volunteer time devoted to fund-raising, and to reduce the number of times employees and employers were contacted and asked for a contribution, many of these organizations were brought together under the United Way umbrella forming one efficiently run campaign. Many businesses provide employees with the option of making payroll deduction contributions through the United Way on behalf of these organizations, which makes giving at the workplace even easier and more cost effective.

## **Do United Ways allow coercion in their campaigns?**

United Ways are totally opposed to any type of coercion. Fund-raising success is dependent on how much potential donors know and understand the organization seeking support. Coercion only creates animosity, hinders communication, understanding and generally leads to less support.

The Board of Governors of the United Way of America and the boards of many local United Ways have adopted formal policy statements opposing coercion in fund-raising campaigns. United Way of America's written policy against coercion says, in part: "Giving is a personal matter. Whether individuals wish to give and how much they choose to give is a personal choice. No action which is coercive is acceptable, including promises or threats to personal economic status."

## **How much of the money raised goes to the agencies?**

Because the United Way relies on volunteers, operating costs stay low so more money can be spent on needed services. In 2007, the United Way withheld approximately 5% of the total campaign to help fund its operations.

These fund-raising and administrative costs are much lower than if each organization, supported by United Way, were to raise money completely on its own.

It is important to note that funds raised by United Way are used to support a part of each partner agency's programs.

## **What area is served by the United Way of Seneca County?**

The United Way of Seneca County serves a population of approximately 33,000 with the area of responsibility extending north to Tyre and Junius and south of Lodi and Covert.