

United Way of Southwestern Indiana - Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is UWSWI's mission?

A. To unite resources to understand and address priority community issues.

Q. What does United Way do?

A. We focus resources on improving critical community issues so all can thrive. We accomplish that through **awarding grants** to non-profits programs that demonstrate impact, **mobilizing volunteers** to support our social service network, serving as a **fiscal sponsor** for groups and organizations, **amplifying the work** of diverse grassroots initiatives, offering **programs** that enhance school readiness and financial empowerment, and **advocating** for policies that ensure equity.

Q. How does UWSWI raise money?

A. We create a Campaign Cabinet of volunteers, including some of our Board of Directors members, who ask for donations from individuals, trusts/family foundations, and employees that participate in a workplace campaign. We secure sponsorships for a few annual events, and we seek grants from a variety of funders.

Q. What is your funding model?

A. UWSWI focuses on a single issue, addressing many of the root causes. All the money raised supports upward mobility for individuals in poverty or ALICE families having difficulty making ends meet due to a variety of barriers.

Q. Why should I give to UWSWI when I already give to the organizations you are currently funding. What's the benefit of giving to UWSWI?

A. First, thank you for supporting our local nonprofits. Direct gifts are essential to helping organizations carry out their missions. That said, when you donate to United Way you're supporting the larger system of support for people in need. Impoverished and ALICE families rarely need just one resource – they often have a complex set of challenges that need holistic solutions. Because we have a broad view of the community, we can **strategically invest** in proven programs, encourage collaboration among organizations, and help fill gaps when they arise. Your gift helps create coordinated solutions, reducing duplication of effort and maximizing impact. Not to mention, when you give to UWSWI, your donation joins with thousands of others to create **a larger, more lasting impact**.

Q. Can people designate money to a specific nonprofit organization?

A. No. But if donors have a passion for a certain area – such as mental health care, kids, strengthening social supports, or helping individuals get jobs - donors can choose to direct their dollars to one (or more) of our Pathways. Or they can support our United Way programs (Imagination Library, K-Camp, VITA, and Amplify!).

Q. What counties does UWSWI serve?

A. United Way of Southwestern Indiana serves Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties in Indiana. We can only raise money in these counties, and we can only fund organizations based in, or who primarily serve the population of, these counties.

Q. Does UWSWI send the money they raise to a national headquarters?

A. No. The money raised in our community stays in our community – it is not sent to a national or global headquarters.

Q. What are Pathway Grants?

A. Our Pathway grants are an issue-based, competitive grant process to fund impactful programs that support basic elements of becoming upwardly mobile. There are 4 pathway grant categories:

- Empowering Employment – Empowering individuals with the resources they need to secure and maintain employment
- Thriving Next Gen – Equipping children and youth with skills needed to thrive both socially and academically
- Mental Health – Advocating for and improving mental health care access and awareness
- Social Stability & Growth – Strengthening relationships that serve as a safety net and alliances that expand opportunities for growth

Q. How often do you award Pathway Grants?

A. Two of the four Pathway Grants are awarded each year as part of a two-year cycle. In 2026, we are awarding grants for Mental Health & Growth and Thriving Next Gen. In 2027, we will award grants for Social Stability & Growth and Empowering Employment.

Q. How much money have you awarded to Pathway Grant recipients?

A. In 2025 and 2026, we will award more than \$4 million to local non-profit organizations.

Q. Do you have any outcomes or stats from the Pathway Grant recipients?

A. Yes. Here are some impact results from 2025:

- \$2.2 million awarded through Pathway grants to 11 local nonprofits
- 72,767 books mailed to local kids through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- 100% of eligible students passed IREAD and made gains in math outcomes
- 392 people were assisted in obtaining employment
- This year, 938 tax returns were filed, recovering more than \$1,035,121 in overpaid taxes
- 81% of K-Campers improved their school readiness
- 87% of mental health program participants met their therapeutic goals

Q. Does UWSWI run programs too?

A. Yes. UWSWI provides five community programs that fill service gaps in our area:

Kindergarten Readiness Camp - Improve literacy, kindergarten readiness and social-emotional skills for children with limited preschool experience

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library - Monthly book gifting program for children ages 0-5 at no cost to parents, serving Vanderburgh and Spencer counties

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) - Free tax prep/e-filing for individuals and families with limited income

Amplify - Connect grassroots initiatives to essential resources and support with small investments

Community Loan Center – small dollar, emergency loans intended to divert people from predatory check-cashing or payday loan programs. *These are provided through specific employer partnerships and funded through an estate gift*