

Our Founding: United Way of Central Oklahoma was founded in 1923 as the “Community Chest,” running an annual campaign for social services needs known as The Community Fund campaign. Through the years, the names of the campaign and organization have changed to keep its mission relevant to central Oklahoma by convening resources, incubating new programs and initiatives and funding 58 United Way Partner Agencies.

Our Mission: To improve the health, safety, education and economic well-being of individual families in need in central Oklahoma by connecting community resources with responsive and accountable health and human services agencies.

Our Vision: To be the leading organization building a stronger, healthier and more compassionate community.

Our Core Values: United Way of Central Oklahoma values health, education, financial stability and quality of life. We believe these core elements are critical to our success as individuals, as families and as a community. In order to achieve our vision of a stronger, healthier and more compassionate community, we are working to provide access to these essentials to all people in central Oklahoma through five Focus Areas.

Our Five Focus Areas:

- **Strong Families:** Individuals and families have resources to achieve financial stability as well as access to counseling, debt management, education, job training and housing.
- **Successful Kids:** Infants, children and youth are nurtured and given the opportunity to succeed in school, develop life skills and become productive citizens.
- **Healthy Citizens:** Central Oklahomans have access to physical and mental health care and adopt healthy lifestyles. Important health research is funded.
- **Independent Living:** Older adults and the disabled are engaged in the community with access to independent living, job skills, volunteer positions and dynamic relationships while their primary care givers receive respite and support.
- **Community Preparedness:** Our community is prepared to respond to individual and community emergencies.

Our Facts:

For 95 years, United Way of Central Oklahoma has been the community safety net for health and human services in central Oklahoma; a leading organization building a stronger, healthier and more compassionate community. Currently, we fund 120 strategic and impactful programs administered by 58 Partner Agencies that make a lasting difference.

Through the annual Community Investment process, United Way of Central Oklahoma convenes more than 200 donor volunteers to review and evaluate requests for program funding from United Way's Partner Agencies serving central Oklahoma and new agencies seeking partnership. These volunteers help determine the most efficient ways to invest dollars raised in the United Way fundraising campaigns into our community. The 2017 United Way of Central Oklahoma campaign raised more than \$16.6 million to meet the health and human services needs in central Oklahoma.

Since the beginning of United Way of Central Oklahoma, five of the originally funded agencies remain Partner Agencies today: American Red Cross, Boy Scouts, The Salvation Army, Sunbeam Family Services and YMCA.

Many of those helped through United Way of Central Oklahoma's annual campaign need services provided from more than one United Way Partner Agency. A donation to our annual campaign is the most efficient way to support this network of social services providers to meet those needs in our community.

United Way of Central Oklahoma is a recipient of the four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the ninth consecutive year. According to CharityNavigator.org, a four-star charity is one that exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause. Based on financial performance metrics, accountability and transparency, United Way of Central Oklahoma is one of several nonprofits in Oklahoma with outstanding performance.

Our administrative costs remain fairly consistent from year to year but the amount of pledges and donations we raise each year does vary. It's that variable of "monies raised" that causes our percentage of administrative expenses to change from year to year. This is why we have chosen to state our percentage of administrative expense as an average percentage instead of an actual percentage. Over a three year period, United Way of Central Oklahoma's administrative expenses average approximately 12 percent.

United Way of Central Oklahoma holds the unique distinction of one of the few in the United States to house a research department to help determine strategic initiatives addressing our community's most pressing needs, supporting positive, sustainable change in social services. We assess the needs through census and program data, HeartLine 2-1-1 data and community forums and regularly share this research in our publication called Vital Signs. Additionally, we help convene leaders across central Oklahoma to discuss important issues affecting our community.

United Way of Central Oklahoma believes sharing our message with the community is important. It's a message of hope and an invitation to "Live United" for the common good. To help us broadcast our message, we rely on dedicated volunteers to secure donated media time and space throughout our communities.

United Way of Central Oklahoma established a Board Serve Program in 2013 to help improve nonprofit boards by recruiting, training and matching board members with nonprofit agencies in the central Oklahoma area. Through Board Serve, members learn from experts in nonprofit board governance, leadership skills, nonprofit law, fundraising and many more skills needed to serve on a nonprofit board. Board Serve Central Oklahoma matches the trained business professional and the nonprofit agency to help strengthen the nonprofit organizations within our community.

In 2014, United Way of Central Oklahoma received the inaugural Beacon Oklahoma Strong Award from The Journal Record for its efforts in helping victims of the May 2013 devastating tornadoes.

United Way of Central Oklahoma was awarded the 2016 Charles Shusterman Award for Excellence, the highest honor given by the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits. The ONE Awards Selection Commission recognizes nonprofits throughout the state for superior leadership and exceptional service to their constituents and communities.

United Way's Stockings of Joy holiday program launched in 2016. A similar project was managed by a Partner Agency that was no longer able to continue the project, so United Way stepped up and filled a gap need that touches the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. To date, more than 11,000 stockings filled with small toys, candy and hygiene products have been distributed to needy individuals.

In 2017, The United Way of Central Oklahoma was awarded the Torch Award for Ethics from the Better Business Bureau of Central Oklahoma. The award honors organizations that generate a high level of trust among employees, customers and communities.