



**St. Croix and
Red Cedar Valleys**

Frequently Asked Questions

United Way St. Croix and Red Cedar Valleys Merger

Why are the two United Ways merging?

After several months of discussion and reflection, the two organizations decided to merge. The overarching reason was to more efficiently and effectively help people in need in our service area, especially ALICE. ALICE is an acronym for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. Sometimes thought of as the working poor, ALICE is hardworking and often works a side job, too, but ALICE is not thriving financially. When combined with the 11 percent of Wisconsin households living at or below the Federal Poverty Level, more than one in three households in Western Wisconsin are struggling financially. By joining as one organization, ALICE will be more efficiently and consistently helped throughout the six-county service area of Burnett, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix counties.

Why did Dunn County United Way not merge with the Chippewa Valley United Way?

Upon close examination, Dunn and Pepin Counties look and feel a lot more like Burnett, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix counties, rather than Eau Claire and Chippewa.

Will the organization merge with any other United Ways in the near future, including United Way of Washington County East?

It is normal for all United Ways to explore ways to operate more efficiently and effectively, and that includes merging with other United Ways that share borders. However, there are no current plans for additional mergers at this time, though that will always remain a possibility.

What is the combined organizations' new name?

The combined boards selected "United Way St. Croix and Red Cedar Valleys" as its new name, reflecting the similarities of our shared geographic areas and honoring both organizations' prior United Way identities.

What's the organization's website address, and when will it be available?

The organization's new website address will be www.uwvalleys.org as of July 1, 2024.

What will the board's representation look like in the merged organization?

The board's size will be 16-24 people and be diverse enough to accurately reflect and represent our six-county service area, including a minimum number of people from each county.

How can I get involved?

The merged organization is seeking help to support our area nonprofits in several areas: (1) businesses, individuals, and organizations to participate in United Way's annual campaign in support of our area nonprofits; (2) volunteers to serve on the United Way board of directors; (3) and volunteers to participate in our annual Day of Caring held in the fall. For more information, visit www.uwvalleys.org.

What services does United Way provide, and will they be different in Dunn and Pepin County?

United Way's annual and workplace campaigns raise financial resources to support targeted nonprofit partners to help people, primarily ALICE, in three key areas: health, education, and financial stability. United Way's own services to the community include 211, Success by 6, Mental



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Health First Aid Training, and the John Coughlin Hope Fund. All of these services will be the same throughout United Way's six-county service area.

If I want to give a gift to UW but prefer it to go only to one area of concern, like early childhood education, is that possible?

Yes, donors may request that their gifts go to support a particular program or service of United Way, and they may also designate their gifts to other local or area 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

How can I restrict a gift?

Simply communicate your intentions to United Way when you make your gift. For example, if you write a check, in the memo field add "211 services," or "Success by 6," or "hunger services," etc. If you donate online or through a workplace campaign or respond to a mail appeal, you will have similar opportunities to note your intentions.

Where can I find your EIN for my records?

It is 39-1372545. This and other related information is on our website page: [Financial Accountability](#).

I may be interested in joining your board or campaign cabinet. How do I do that?

Please reach out to the Executive Director, who will get this important and helpful conversation started.

I live in a different county but I work in a county you do serve. Should I be giving to both United Way organizations, or just where I live?

This decision is solely yours. Giving to both a United Way in your home community and in the community you work is common, and both gifts make a meaningful difference in those communities.

I don't have any money to spare but I would like to help. What volunteer opportunities are there and how do I let someone know I am interested?

Volunteer opportunities abound! United Way helps coordinate days of service with area nonprofits and other partners, and we also have a variety of United Way-focused volunteer opportunities, including: helping at a fundraising event, in the office with mailings, sharing social media posts about ALICE or other topics of interest, delivering diapers to area pantries, and much more. Simply reach out to United Way or any other nonprofit whose mission and services appeal to you.

I'd like to spread my gift out. How do I set up a recurring gift?

There are several ways to do this, but the easiest is to click on the "Donate" link on United Way's website. You will see an option to set up recurring gifts, weekly, monthly, or annually.

Why are there so many United Ways? Local, state, national, worldwide?

The United Way network operates on multiple levels to address community needs effectively. *Local United Way Organizations* are the most common and visible units within the United Way network. They operate at the community or county level, focusing on addressing local needs and



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issues. Each local United Way is autonomous, governed by its own board of directors and staffed by local professionals who understand the unique challenges and opportunities within their community.

Regional United Way Organizations, like United Way St. Croix and Red Cedar Valleys, are formed to coordinate efforts in a larger geographic area, share resources, and tackle issues that transcend individual communities. This merger continues a multi-decade trend of United Ways across the country consolidating to gain efficiencies and align services to better meet community needs.

Statewide United Ways, like United Way Wisconsin, work to align the efforts of individual United Way organizations throughout the state, coordinate services and initiatives with other nearby states (including ALICE), support and lead the state's 211 system, support public policy initiatives, and provide expertise on training, fundraising, marketing, and program development.

United Way Worldwide serves as an umbrella organization for the entire network. It provides support and resources to local, state, and national United Ways around the world, facilitates collaboration and networking among affiliates, and promotes best practices in community development and philanthropy.

The rationale behind this multi-level structure is to ensure that United Way can effectively address community needs at various scales while still maintaining a grassroots approach. Local organizations are best positioned to understand and respond to the specific needs of their communities, while regional, national, and global entities provide support, coordination, and resources to amplify impact and address larger systemic issues. United Way is unique. No other nonprofit is working at the local, regional, state, national and international levels to fight for people's well-being, especially ALICE.

Will my existing donation be routed to the new organization, or do I need to do anything?

Donations to United Way St. Croix and Red Cedar Valleys will be used as donors direct. Designated gifts will go to the local nonprofit of the donor's choice. If a campaign gift is undesignated, it will be used to support the community impact grants process, which allocates dollars to targeted nonprofit partners, based on objectively identified community needs and priorities.