



Capital Area United Way

## Capital Area United Way Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Capital Area United Way (CAUW)?

- Capital Area United Way is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) agency that mobilizes the caring power of neighbors, businesses, and community partners to lead transformational change in our local communities. From strengthening local resilience to advancing health, youth opportunity, and financial security, we are working towards a future where everyone can reach their full potential.
- Our Mission: To improve lives by leveraging partnerships in our community to advance the common good through education, economic mobility, and healthy living.
- Our Vision: A community where everyone is empowered to achieve their full potential.

### Who runs Capital Area United Way?

- All United Ways are locally run and governed in each community. Our staff works with knowledgeable, well-trained volunteers who represent our 10-Parish area.
- A volunteer Board of Directors sets policy and strategic direction.
- Various volunteer committees oversee financial practices and provide counsel on operational issues. Community partners and volunteers also play a key role in reviewing grant applications.
- The Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of Capital Area United Way is Charlene Guarisco Montelaro, Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, retired, Community Volunteer (*2024-2025 list of members can be found at end of document*).
- The Chairperson of the Resource Development Cabinet is Calvin Hart, Nucor Steel Louisiana, LLC.
- The Community Impact Cabinet Chairperson is Jan Ross with the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation.
- The Treasurer and Chairperson of the Finance Committee is Winship Songy, Delta Land Services.
- The Marketing & Communications Committee Co-Chairs are Eric Thomas, Community Volunteer, and Glynnna Mayers, Dow Chemical Louisiana Operations.
- The President & CEO of the Capital Area United Way is George Bell and Executive Vice President is Amey Shortess Crousillac.

### When was Capital Area United Way founded?

Capital Area United Way has been supporting health & human service programs in the Baton Rouge area since 1925. The name has changed over the years. What started out as the Civilian Defense Fund, finally became Capital Area United Way in 1955. It was that year that we received the IRS' ruling or determination letter recognizing the organization's exempt tax status in June. In September 2025, CAUW will be celebrating 100 years in the community.

### How can I be a part of the Centennial Celebration?

In September 2025, Capital Area United Way will celebrate 100 years and have created **100 Voices United** to gather stories of what Capital Area United Way means to our community. We invite individuals to share a short video with us to utilize in our celebration throughout the next year. Historical facts of the impactful work from the past century will be showcased over various media platforms. Help us with by thinking of specific stories or examples to share; use a camera or smartphone to record your video in a quiet, well-lit

environment for no more than two minutes; watch your video to ensure audio and visual quality is good or re-record; and submit by clicking [www.cauw.org/100Voices](http://www.cauw.org/100Voices). Help us create 100 Voices United together.

### **What does Capital Area United Way do?**

Capital Area United Way mobilizes volunteers, donors, and community organizations to create lasting change in the areas of Education, Economic Mobility, Healthy Living, and Basic Needs – the fundamental building blocks for a good quality of life.

Together, our work addresses the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population in the following areas:

Education: Quality Early Childcare and Afterschool/Enrichment

Economic Mobility: Increased Employment Opportunities, Financial Education

Health: Behavioral Health and Physical Wellness, Crisis Services

Basic Needs: Safe, Reliable Transportation, Safe, Affordable and Quality Housing, Food Insecurity, Emergency Financial Support and Shelter (i.e. utility and/or rent/mortgage assistance)

### **What is United Way Worldwide and how is our local United Way related to it?**

United Way Worldwide (UWW) is a private, non-profit organization that supports and leads a network of around 1,800 local United Way chapters in 40 countries and territories. UWW and its affiliates focus on providing income support, healthcare, and education for low-income individuals. The mission is to improve lives by mobilizing communities around the world to advance the common good. Capital Area United Way is operated purely in service of the 10-Parish area.

Use of the United Way logo is based on United Way Membership Requirements regarding governance and financial accountability. Membership in United Way and use of the United Way brand is overseen by the United Way Worldwide umbrella organization. United Way Worldwide is not a top-down organization that has ownership of local United Ways. Instead, each local United Way is run independently and incorporated separately as a 501(c)(3) organization. Each affiliate is led by local staff and volunteers and has their own board of directors, independent of United Way Worldwide or a parent organization.

Capital Area United Way pays membership dues to United Way Worldwide for licensing rights to the United Way brand and must meet criteria to maintain their membership status (including independent review boards, audits, and restrictions on marketing tactics). The membership dues to United Way Worldwide are a portion of the total funds raised by each local United Way. U.S. affiliates pay a membership fee of 1% of their total funds raised to United Way Worldwide.

### **How are dollars raised allocated in the community?**

When you give to Capital Area United Way, you are allowing community volunteers, representing all segments of the community, to determine how to invest the money in the issues and areas that need it most. This allows you to help the most people and do the best for our entire community.

## **What is the difference between an undesignated and designated gift?**

An undesignated gift takes advantage of Capital Area United Way's research-based grant selection that gets the money to the issues and areas where the ALICE population's needs are current and most present. You can also direct your gift to any of our Community Impact Initiatives in Education, Economic Mobility, Health, and Basic Needs.

A designated gift restricts your gift to a specific 501(c) 3 non-profit health and human service agency by indicating this on the pledge card.

Designated gifts must be a minimum of \$250 and will be subject to a nominal processing fee. In the event the designation received is less than \$250, the funds will be invested to create the GREATEST IMPACT in our community based on Capital Area United Way's current funding priorities.

Capital Area United Way forwards donor designations on behalf of the donor to approved non-profits. These non-profits use the funds at their discretion and the funds are not subject to CAUW monitoring and programmatic results. These designations are paid out separately from, and in addition to, the funding opportunities through the grant funding.

## **I do not benefit, so why should I give?**

You, a family member, friend, or coworker may have already used the services of Capital Area United Way through a partner agency without realizing it. We all win when children succeed in school, when families are financially stable, when people have access to basic needs and healthy living. When you support Capital Area United Way, you help to make lasting change for all in our community. A full list of grantees can be found on our website at <https://www.cauw.org/partners>

## **What is Bank On Baton Rouge?**

Bank On Baton Rouge is a collaborative, voluntary initiative that brings together financial institutions, community organizations, and federal and state regulatory agencies to help the low to moderate income population, the unbanked and underbanked, and the youth of Baton Rouge open starter or second chance bank accounts and enter the financial mainstream, where they can begin saving, build a credit history, and invest for the future. It is also the goal of the coalition to provide financial literacy education and community resources to assist ALICE households to build a stronger foundation. BOBR has been in the Baton Rouge area for 12 years (with Mid City Redevelopment Alliance and Capital Area United Way working as administrators).

## **What is United Way 211/CAUW?**

United Way 211/CAUW is your convenient community connection to information and resources; Basic Needs Services (Food, Clothing, Shelter), Child Care Services, Consumer Help, Volunteer Opportunities, Crisis Intervention, Health Care. You can dial 211 on any landline or mobile phone 24/7! You can also text your zip code to 898-211 M-F 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. to receive personalized assistance. For more information you can go [www.cauw.org/211](http://www.cauw.org/211) **United Way 211/CAUW serves 11 parishes including Assumption.**

## **I know someone who needs help or assistance - how can I get this information to them about what is available?**

The quickest way to find out what is available is to call United Way 211/CAUW. With just one phone call to 211 by cell or landline phone, anyone who needs help can speak with a caring, highly trained person who will listen, assess their needs, offer emotional support, and get them connected to the services that could meet their needs. Call specialists have access to a vast array of community and social service resources. You can also go to the 211 Community Resource Directory on the Capital Area United Way website at [www.cauw.org/211](http://www.cauw.org/211).

## **What are Care Coordination Services?**

Care coordination is a service offered by United Way 211/CAUW that provides support for individuals and families needing assistance navigating services to help meet their critical needs. Our care coordinators work closely with clients to understand their unique challenges and circumstances, connect them with appropriate resources, and act as a bridge to service providers. They also follow up with clients to monitor progress and address obstacles that may arise during the process.

## **I have some time, and I would like to get involved in the community as a volunteer, but I do not know where to start. Can Capital Area United Way help?**

Yes! Capital Area United Way has volunteer opportunities available year-round. You can see all these opportunities by visiting [www.cauw.org/volunteer](http://www.cauw.org/volunteer).

## **Does Capital Area United Way fund abortion?**

NO, Capital Area United Way funds have never been used to support abortion services. Nor any other United Way.

## **Does Capital Area United Way fund Planned Parenthood?**

Planned Parenthood is not a [partner agency](#) of Capital Area United Way. Donors' investments to CAUW support a network of nonprofits, initiatives, and programs that align with CAUW's strategic focus areas identified by the following to help children and families succeed, to guide and serve Veterans and their families, to advocate for overall mental health, and to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

## **What does it cost to run Capital Area United Way?**

The three-year average based on financials, the administrative and fundraising cost is reported as 17.6% per our annual audit. CAUW falls below industry benchmarks for administrative and fundraising costs. Candid and Charity Navigator do not box in nonprofits with overhead standards, but some watchdogs advocate for 25-30%.

## **Is Capital Area United Way financially stable?**

Yes! No doubt, our fellow UW chapters across the country are feeling mounting pressures of downward trends in workplace fundraising. Our capital area is no different, AND at the same time, we have seen a substantial number of fundraising campaigns in the marketplace emerge over the last few years. Considering CAUW's major impact to disaster relief, we are proud to have simultaneously faced these external industry challenges with efficient internal operations, a streamlined staffing structure, heavier volunteer staffing, and creative ways to raise and allocate dollars for the good of our ALICE population.

Meanwhile, our leadership at the top has stabilized operations over the last eight years, marking the longest CEO tenure in recent CAUW history.

## **Is my contribution tax deductible?**

YES, Capital Area United Way advises you to consult your tax professional for additional information and clarification about charitable giving each year.

## **What are Affinity Groups?**

Affinity Groups are special memberships bestowed to donors who give at a Leadership level (\$1000 and above). With the two groups that CAUW provides – Women United and African American Leadership Council – members can network with like-minded individuals around the region and can attend exclusive events, socials and other opportunities.

- A member of Women United is one who LIVES UNITED – they give, volunteer, and advocate with women in full accordance with strengthening other women and families in our 10-Parish area.
- The African American Leadership Council (AALC) is comprised of members committed to cultivating a stronger and equitable community through volunteerism, philanthropy and community impact.

## **Does Capital Area United Way pressure people to give?**

NO, giving is a personal decision. Capital Area United Way has a strong policy against coercion. Whether a person gives to Capital Area United Way and how much the person chooses to give is up to the individual. Capital Area United Way does not support the use of threats or coercion of any kind. An individual or group can also visit [www.cauw.org/volunteer](http://www.cauw.org/volunteer) for more information and opportunities to give their time and talent.

## **What if I cannot afford to give to Capital Area United Way?**

Every gift to Capital Area United Way, no matter its size, makes a difference in our community. Many people find that giving through pre-tax payroll deduction allows them to contribute at a level that fits their budget. One of the advantages of giving to United Way is being part of a community effort that combines giving to multiply the impact.

## What parishes does the Capital Area United Way serve?

Capital Area United Way is a regional organization, serving 10 Parishes that include:  
*Ascension, Iberville, East Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Point Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana*



# 2024-2025 Board of Directors

## Executive Members

### **Charlene Guarisco Montelaro**

Board Chair  
Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, retired  
Community Volunteer

### **Cheri M. Ausberry, MBA**

Board Chair-Elect  
Entergy Louisiana

### **Glenda Minor**

Secretary  
Silket Advisory Services

### **Winship Songy**

Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair  
Delta Land Services, LLC.

### **Calvin Hart**

Resource Development Chair  
Nucor Steel Louisiana, LLC.

### **Jan Ross**

Community Impact Chair  
Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation

### **Aldo Russo, M.D.**

Community Impact Chair-Elect  
Ochsner Health System

### **Eric Thomas**

Communications & Marketing Co-Chair  
Community Volunteer

### **Glynn Mayers**

Communications & Marketing Co-Chair  
Dow Chemical Louisiana Operations

### **Dave Luecke**

Past Board Chair &  
Governance Committee Chair  
ExxonMobil Baton Rouge Area

### **George Bell**

President & CEO  
Capital Area United Way

## Members at Large

### **Virginia Bell**

St. Helena Development Foundation, Inc. (SHED)

### **Eric Dexter**

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

### **John Everett**

First Horizon Bank

### **Scott Huffstetler**

Kean Miller, LLP.

### **Dave Kniepp**

Volunteers of America, South Central LA

### **Joanie Montelaro**

b1BANK

### **Jayson Newell**

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

### **Dai Nguyen**

Shell

### **Paula Shepherd**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana

### **Dennis Shields, President-Chancellor**

Southern University System

### **Karen Smith**

Turner Industries

### **Nick Speyrer**

Emergent Method

### **Chuck Spicer**

Our Lady of The Lake Health

### **Jolen Stein**

BASF

### **Clay Young**

Clay Young Enterprises, LLC.