

UNITED WAY OF AMERICA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
November 2005

Overview

United Way harnesses the power of women's philanthropy for greater good in local communities. Its women's leadership program is a key strategy to help communities improve people's lives by advancing community impact agendas and leveraging resources to effect measurable social change. By connecting to local community problems and combining the power of the purse with hands-on involvement, women engaged with United Way will help more people across America. At the same time, community agendas will be more inclusive as a result of women's increased participation.

The strategic plan that United Way of America's (UWA's) National Women's Leadership Council adopted in August 2005 leverages the power of women in the following ways:

Women as community investors.

Financial resources are essential to solving community problems. Collectively, 86 United Way women's leadership groups across the country raised \$63.1 million in 2004. As a movement, United Way Women's leadership program will raise at least \$100 million collectively and annually by 2008. This money will alleviate some of the most pressing challenges that confront America's communities, including the limited number of quality day care slots for young children and the lack of opportunity women in poverty have to achieve self-sufficiency.

As investors in community change, women not only bring their own financial resources to United Way, they encourage their friends and colleagues to do so as well. United Way's strategies for increasing the number of women who identify themselves as community investors include launching more women's leadership programs among the nearly 1,400 United Ways across the country, strengthening programs currently in existence, and building women's networks among UWA's national corporate partners.

Women as advocates.

While the financial contributions of individuals are the essence of United Way's ability to create community change, they alone are not sufficient to solve the most entrenched problems. United Way is partnering with institutions including federal, state, and local governments to garner a portfolio of assets to strengthen communities.

As good storytellers and passionate advocates, women have the ability to garner the attention of policy makers who can raise awareness of critical community needs and appropriate resources to solve those problems. United Way's women's leadership programs have forged partnerships with policy makers by:

- Promoting the Earned Income and Child Care Tax Credit in San Antonio, Texas, enabling over \$210 million to be reinvested into the local economy.
- Working with Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack to advocate for better training of day care workers in Des Moines, Iowa.
- Partnering with the City of Atlanta, Georgia, to provide safe places for homeless women and their children.

Women as philanthropic leaders.

While women are becoming more visible among the executive ranks of charitable organizations, they remain the minority in one of the centers of power in philanthropy: volunteer boards of directors. United Way positions women as philanthropic leaders by engaging them in Women's Leadership Councils where they address community issues with their time and money.

For more information, please contact Diane Grzyb-Soper, United Way of America's Director of Strategic Markets, at diane.grzyb@uwa.unitedway.org or (800) 892-2757, Ext. 853.

