

History of the United Way of Mat-Su

In 1887, a Denver priest, two ministers and a rabbi recognized the need for cooperative action to address their city's welfare problems. The Rev. Myron W. Reed, Msgr. William J. O'Ryan, Dean H. Martyn Hart and Rabbi William S. Friedman put their heads together to plan the first united campaign for ten health and welfare agencies. They created an organization to serve as an agent to collect funds for local charities, as well as to coordinate relief services, counsel and refer clients to cooperating agencies, and make emergency assistance grants in cases which could not be referred.



That year, Denver raised \$21,700 and created a movement that would spread throughout the country to become the United Way. Over 100 years later, United Way is still focused on mobilizing the caring power of communities and making a difference in people's lives.



United Way of Mat-Su was formed in 1987 as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation; incorporated on December 28, 1987, and formally elected directors and officers and adopted bylaws during February and March 1988. United Way of Mat-Su is an autonomous and independent agency.

United Way of Mat-Su activities are overseen by a Board of Directors comprised of dedicated community leaders. The directors are elected annually to specified terms by the Board of United Way of Mat-Su. Working together these individuals develop policies for their own operations and for the operations of United Way of Mat-Su as a whole. The Board is active in promoting philanthropy and maintains fiduciary responsibility for the organization.

United Way of Mat-Su's primary purpose is to facilitate positive community impact and to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community. Community mobilization includes creating the opportunities for a good life for all by focusing on long-term, positive results and advancing the common good through education, income and health in the Mat-Su Borough.