

BIOGRAPHY

BRIAN A. GALLAGHER

President and CEO, United Way of America

Brian Gallagher became President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America in 2002 and immediately took on the challenge of leading the transformation of the organization to focus on community impact – improving lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. Today, United Way identifies root causes of the most serious problems in communities and brings together people and resources to tackle the issues that matter most. This represents a dynamic shift from the United Way recognized for decades as the nation’s premier fund raiser and distributor.



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A career veteran of the United Way system, Gallagher believes that the true measure of success for United Way and other philanthropic organizations is bottom-line results: the lives that are changed and the communities that are shaped. To that end, he has championed United Way’s focus on two key national initiatives: 2-1-1 and Success by 6. United Way is calling for the national implementation of 2-1-1, the three-digit telephone number that connects people with important health and community services and volunteer opportunities. Success by 6 is an early childhood learning initiative that helps parents and caregivers prepare young children from birth to age 6 for school and for life and galvanizes communities to influence the physical, mental and emotional needs of children at the most critical stage of their brain development.

Gallagher has raised the bar on the accountability, governance and transparency standards adopted as a requirement of membership for the 1,400 local United Ways across the country. Through his work as a board member of Independent Sector, a coalition that encourages the nonprofit sector to meet the highest standards of ethical practice, value, and effectiveness, he is spearheading a collective effort with his peers to drive more trust and confidence in the nonprofit sector. Additionally, he has streamlined and strengthened the United Way national board of trustees, which in 2004 elected its first African-American board chair. He has also implemented the largest electronic pledging, processing and distribution system in the sector, with more than 640,000 individual transactions totaling over \$390 million in charitable contributions.

Gallagher began his career with United Way in 1981 as a management trainee, later working in various positions in United Ways around the country including Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Reading, Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; and Atlanta, Georgia. He most recently served as president of United Way of Central Ohio (UWCO) in Columbus, where he had first-hand experience with community impact, creating a very successful Family Housing Collaborative, which works simultaneously to obtain low cost housing while providing day care and job training so that the cycle of homelessness is broken.

Gallagher was born in Chicago and grew up in Hobart, Indiana. He received his bachelor’s degree in social work from Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, in 1981 and earned a master’s degree in business administration from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992. In May 2003 Gallagher received an honorary Doctor of Humanities from his alma mater, Ball State University.

Gallagher and his wife, Ramona, have two daughters, Katie and Maggie.

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