

**Heart of Illinois  
United Way**



## **CAMPAIGN THEMES AND SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS**

### ***Team Up with United Way...United We All Win***

Host a kickoff in your parking lot with sports-related activities set up for your employees (wastebasket free throws, paper airplane flying contest, office chair races, marshmallow driving range, tricycle races) and invite your employees to wear their favorite team colors.

### ***Make it Personal: "Why I Give"***

Tie a personal touch to the campaign by encouraging employees to make a list of the top 5 or 10 reasons why they give (whether that be a dollar contribution or simply volunteering their time).

### ***Set a goal for 100% participation and tie in 100 ways of being kind and helping the community***

Create a list of 100 ways for employees to give back to the community. Engage employees by encouraging participation and have them track how many tasks they complete. Examples could include the following: 1) Being kind – hold a door open for someone; 2) Connecting with others – write an encouraging note and leave it for someone in your neighborhood to find; 3) Showing appreciation – tell someone why you appreciate them; 4) Volunteering your time and talents – visit <https://volunteer.hoiunitedway.org/need/> for a full list of current needs of the Heart of Illinois United Way's partner agencies. Reach out to the United Way staff if you would like a comprehensive list of suggestions.

### ***Celebrate the important qualities of home***

Have employees make a list of qualities that represent "home" to them. Send a request to the Heart of Illinois United Way for setting up speakers to discuss issues of "home" such as homelessness, family counseling, basic need provisions, and education support. Ask employees to collect "home-type" things to donate to partner agencies such as cleaning supplies, food, pans, clothing, dishes, etc.

### ***Ice cream informational trail***

Make a request for partner agency reps to attend. Start the informational trail with a Heart of Illinois United Way informational table and receive a scoop of ice cream. Continue down the line visiting with other partner agencies gathering information to receive various toppings (different topping at each partner agency station).

## ENGAGE EMPLOYEES WITH SPECIAL EVENTS

A successful campaign is fun and engaging! Special events make a great addition to the workplace campaign and help create a cohesive and enthusiastic atmosphere. Use this opportunity to further educate your employees about the United Way and to have FUN! Remember, when planning special events, please stress that the support for the event is in addition to the individual campaign pledge. For this reason, many organizations plan special events throughout the year in order to enhance their campaign and give the United Way a year-round presence.

- Casual day – donate \$5 to wear jeans on Friday or contribute \$25 to wear jeans every day of campaign week
- Virtual scratch off tickets (create online/provide to the first 10 people that return their contribution form for a prize)
- Food trucks on-site (selling lunch, desserts, snowcones, coffee, etc.) and arrange to have percentage of sales from the food trucks donated to your United Way campaign
- Offer a virtual lunch & learn for your employees to learn more about United Way
- Picture match game – have employees submit a picture from their childhood and invite employees to match them. Charge employees \$1 to vote and give a fun prize to the individual with the most correct answers.
- Departmental miniature golf hole contests or a golf scramble
- Ugliest tie contest or crazy hat day
- Balloon pop – place paper inside balloons with prize information; employees pay to buy and pop balloon
- Pumpkin carving contest – charge \$5 to enter and \$1 to vote
- Theme basket silent auction with departments creating baskets
- Spirit week – favorite team apparel day, denim day, casual shoe day, mismatch day
- Bags tournament
- Children’s art show and sale (employee children paint and donate)
- Company and/or United Way trivia contest
- Costume competition according to your theme
- Departmental or cubicle decorating contest
- Pancake breakfast served up by your management staff
- Provide cookie with QR code printed on the icing so employees can scan the code and be taken directly to an online donation site
- Salsa or chili cook off
- Popcorn sales
- Executive dunk tank
- Departmental coin wars – set up large empty water bottles for each department in a central location. Employees drop spare change in the bottle with coins being positive and paper money being negative. Department with the highest total at the end of the week wins. All cash collected is donated to your United Way campaign.
- Parking spot auction
- United Way bingo
- Jar filled with candy guessing game
- Poster contest
- Cubs/Cards or Bears/Packers competition – sell paper baseballs/footballs with team name on them for \$1 and hang them on a wall in high-traffic area and see which team wins. If someone wants another team – they pay \$2.
- Employee cookbook – collect recipes and compile into a cookbook. Employees’ children create artwork for the book, including the cover. Try to have it bound pro bono – and you set the price!
- Set-up a taco bar and invite your co-workers to “tacabout” United Way with a special speaker.



## OFFER PRIZES AND INCENTIVES

Prizes and incentives are great tools to help increase your participation and they add a lot of fun! Ask local merchants for donations or purchase prizes with your campaign budget. Talk with your leadership team about providing incentives.

Incentive examples:

- Gas cards
- Gift baskets
- Gift certificates
- Grocery gift cards
- Movie passes
- Pizza party
- Spa certificates
- Sporting event tickets

Incentives you won't have to purchase:

- \$5 casual day (jeans, shorts, tennis shoes, etc.)
- Call in "well" day
- Job trade – let your boss do your job for a day
- Long lunch pass
- Lunch with your CEO or leadership team
- Paid day off
- Party catered by one department for another
- Premier parking spot
- Sleep-in or leave early pass