

Heart of Illinois United Way



CAMPAIGN THEMES AND SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS

Celebrate the important qualities of home

Have everyone write a “home is _____” card and place all on a large house shaped cutout. Bring in speakers to discuss issues of “home” such as homelessness, family counseling, basic need provisions, vocations and education support. Have a kickoff potluck where everyone brings in home-cooked foods or collect “home-type” things to donate to partner agencies such as cleaning supplies, food, pans, clothing, dishes, etc.

Sports: Go for the gold, Pitch-in & give, Teaming up for tomorrow

Compete in Office Olympics including events such as wastebasket free throws, paper airplane flying contests or office chair races. Have employees bring food from their team country for an international lunch. Host a tail-gate kickoff in your parking lot with sports-related contests and invite your employees to wear their favorite team shirts.

Hold a beach bash

Each person turning in a pledge card gets a lei. Hold a Hawaiian potluck where employees wear their leis and dress in Hawaiian shirts. Have a limbo contest. Use a palm tree as your campaign thermometer.

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).

100 Ways to Give Back...helping celebrate United Way’s 100-year anniversary

Create a list of 100 ways (or more) 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 1) Be kind – hold a door open for someone; 2) Connect with others – write an encouraging note and leave it for someone in your neighborhood to find; 3) Show appreciation – give a shoutout to a local business about one of their employees who made a difference to you; 4) Volunteer – register to help with the Neighborhood House Food Pantry. Reach out to the United Way staff if you would like a comprehensive list of suggestions.

Wizard of Oz: There’s no place like home...for doing good.

Set the stage for your co-workers to follow the yellow brick road...leading to help fund United Way programs that advance health, education and financial stability. Borrow decorations and costumes from the United Way and start the fun! Serve Wizard of Oz themed treats at your kick-off and engage everyone in a Wizard of Oz and United Way trivia game.

Discuss tornado safety with an agency speaker and highlight the United Way’s book designed to help those that have been impacted by a natural disaster. Build a yellow brick road on a wall in a high traffic area that will be a visual demonstration of your progress for the campaign. Hold an Oz thank you event whereby the Wizard or Dorothy (your CEO) serves up ice cream for everyone!

Western round-up ... for United Way

Celebrate the wild West and round up support for needed United Way programs. Borrow western decorations from the United Way and start the hoe-down! Kickoff with BBQ potluck, hold a bandana day, make a wagon trail on a central wall that leads to your goal. Serve trail mix along the way.

PLAN A SPECIAL EVENT OR TWO

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 jean or casual shoe day. Ask United Way staff or your Ambassador for stickers.
- Departmental miniature golf hole contests or a golf scramble
- Basketball shootout or a football throwing contest
- Talent show/karaoke
- Guess the baby contest
- Casino event: “Bet on the United Way”
- Ugliest tie contest or crazy hat day
- Balloon pop – place paper inside balloons with prize info; 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
- Skip a lunch day – with employees donating what they would have spent on lunch
- 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 (United Way staff love to judge!)
- White elephant or bake sales, silent auctions – even online!
- 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 donation site. →
- Salsa or chili cook off
- Popcorn sales
- Executive dunk tank
- Make a video contest
- Departmental penny wars
- Tailgate party
- Parking spot auction
- United Way bingo
- Jar filled with candy guessing game
- Poster contest
- Brown bag-it lunch with agency panel guests discussing topic picked by employees
- Invite local talent/co-worker to teach a new skill such as flower arranging, yoga or cooking – charge \$5 to attend.
- 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!
- Lunch box auction – have participating employees pack a special lunch. Encourage creativity. Auction off right before lunch.
- Put on a talent show during a potluck lunch. Contestants pay \$5 to enter and observers pay \$1 to attend. Have a panel of judges.
- Pie in the face – employees pay \$5 to throw a whipped cream pie in the exec of choice.
- Ugly lamp – have employees decorate a lamp and make it as ugly as possible. Employees have to pay \$5 to have it removed from their desk and be able to put it on another co-worker’s desk.
- 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 CEO about providing incentives and check with your United Way staff or Ambassador about United Way merchandise.

Incentive examples:

- United Way merchandise
- Sporting event tickets
- Movie passes
- Gift certificates
- Gas cards
- Pizza party
- Trophies
- Gift baskets
- Spa certificates

Incentives you won't have to purchase:

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