

IN-PERSON FUNDRAISING IDEAS

How to Creatively Spark Involvement

2026

We want to assist you in making your workplace campaign as successful as possible. **Innovation and fun increase awareness among your colleagues about United Way's work.** These ideas are designed for in-person participants. They encourage employees to participate, which helps you secure more financial contributions. **Pick one, two, or several in-person events to enhance your workplace campaign.** Unite your teams and raise money to help our community all at the same time. That's a WIN-WIN-WIN!

Consider asking your workplace to match all funds generated by these events and donate to United Way.

Two sections in this document *require* our Finance Team's involvement: Split the Pot and Ticket Sales. Someone from your workplace must contact our Finance Team and coordinate with them to plan, run, and conclude the activities in these sections. Why? **They qualify as charitable gaming.** Our Finance Team will provide you with their [Charitable Gaming handout](#), will help set you up to use our charitable gaming permit, and will troubleshoot aspects of the activities as they arise. **They need a minimum notice of two weeks.** You can reach them at finance@ak.org.

C-SUITE AND MANAGEMENT

Ideas in this section require workplace leadership. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees enjoy leadership getting involved.**

A-Dollar-an-Inch Contest

Have leadership wear ties and participate in an all-day competition with the goal of ending the day with the shortest tie. Employees who donate a predetermined amount cut an inch off a leader's shortest, ugliest, etc. tie. Consider awards for shortest, ugliest, etc.

C-Suite Car Wash

Employees donate a predetermined amount to have their cars washed by leadership. Charge more for services like cleaning interiors or polishing rims.

Executive Receptionist

Put together a board with headshots of leadership. Place an envelope below each photo for "votes." Employees purchase "votes" for a predetermined amount and put their votes in the envelope of the leader they want to see be the "receptionist." The leader who receives the most "votes" must serve as company receptionist for a set time.

Leadership Prison

Transform an office into a jail cell. “Arrest” leadership and allow them to make telephone calls to their staff members to “bail” them out.

Valet Parking

Have executives and managers park employees’ cars and retrieve them at the end of the day. Consider awards for giving levels.

DEPARTMENTS AND TEAMS

Ideas in this section encourage department or team participation. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees build camaraderie.**

Coin Wars

Have departments find large, empty bottles. Invite employees to drop coins into them. Designate quarters as “sabotage” and encourage departments to put them in other departments’ bottles. At the end of the workplace campaign, count all the coins except the quarters. The department with the most money wins a prize. Donate all coins.

Scavenger Hunts

Encourage employees to form teams of four to find unusual items around your workplace or nearby areas. Assign points to items and request each group donate. For a fun twist, encourage them to “plant” items for others to “discover.” Give teams one hour to find items to accumulate as many points as possible. The entire team must be present when time’s up. If someone arrives late, assess a penalty of two points per minute from their point total. Teams with the most points receive a prize.

Ticket Giveaways

Tickets for movies, theater productions, amusement centers, and other attractions incentivize pledging. Encourage employees to pledge \$2 per week for 52 weeks and give tickets to every employee who does.

Workplace Olympics

Encourage employees to form teams and donate to participate in Workplace Olympics. Teams receive prizes. Activities could include:

- Throwing paper balls into wastebaskets.
- Balancing Styrofoam cups on a service tray while navigating an obstacle course.
- Making a paper airplane and flying it the furthest.
- Chaining together as many paper clips or staples as possible.
- Folding and stuffing letters into envelopes.

DRESS UP (OR DOWN)

Ideas in this section allow employees to wear something fun. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees get some good laughs.**

Casual Day

Sell “casual day” badges, entitling employees to dress casually on a predetermined day. Be sure to define what “casual” means for your workplace. Consider offering themes, like a “jeans day” or a “sports-team themed day,” and making this event exclusive to employees who pledge. Depending on the nature of your workplace, you may want to post a flier that explains the reason for the casual attire to your visitors and customers.

Crazy Hat Day

Select a day that employees can wear a crazy hat—or crazy hair, shoes, etc. They donate and receive a stamp or sticker. Consider awards for originality, creativity, etc.

Halloween Theme

Have a costume contest, complete with pumpkin carving. Participants donate to submit a carved pumpkin and receive a stamp or sticker. They also get to vote for winners. Consider awards for the most traditional, most original, scariest, funniest, etc.

Pajama Day

Invite employees to donate to wear their pajamas to work. Participants receive a stamp or sticker. They also get to vote for winners. Consider awards for the ugliest, weirdest, etc.

FOOD-RELATED

Ideas in this section gather employees around food. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees break to eat something delicious.**

Bake Sale OR Baking Contest

 (Consider combining it with bake-less fundraising on pg. 4.)

Encourage employees to bake desserts to sell. You can incentivize it by having a “Top Chef” competition between floors or departments or hosting a contest to see who makes the best chocolate chip cookies, pie, etc.

Brown Bag Lunch

Encourage employees to bring their lunch to work on a set day and donate the money that they would have spent had they gone out. Consider holding the brown bag lunch as a group event and have a speaker or show a short movie.

Chili Cook-Off

Ask employees to cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a contest. Invite employees to donate \$5 to sample chili dishes for lunch. Each employee who donates for lunch can cast one vote for their favorite chili—and the one with the most votes wins.

Classy Brown Bag Lunch

Ask specialists to donate their time in one of the following categories. Then, require a donation for attendance at a series of brown bag lunch classes where participants:

- Learn a new skill, i.e., flower arranging, pottery painting.
- Relieve stress, i.e., yoga, time management.
- Improve their health, i.e., exercise tips, heart-healthy cooking.

Employee Cookbook

Collect recipes from employees and compile them into sections in a cookbook. Sell it for a reasonable donation. This event has done so well that some workplaces haven't been able to provide enough cookbooks—so plan for an enthusiastic response!

Summer Picnic

Host a summer picnic with a grilled lunch for employees. Raise money by hosting games with prizes, e.g., an egg relay, tricycle races, water balloon toss, tug-of-war. Obtain prizes from vendors, restaurants, etc.

GENERAL CONTESTS

Ideas in this section have common activities and games. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees have many ways to show support.**

Competitions

Elevator race, pie-eating, tricycle race, video game marathon, etc.

Sports

3-on-3 basketball, croquet, fun run, hallway bowling, softball, walkathon, etc.

Trivia

Spelling bee, board game marathon, quiz show, etc.

OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT

Ideas in this section allow employees to opt-in or out. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees avoid or earn tasks or results.**

Bake-Less Fundraising (Consider combining it with the bake sale or baking contest on pg. 3.) Send an email or digital communication to employees, using copy like this...

You are invited to NOT bake a dessert. You do NOT have to find the recipe. You do NOT have to shop for the ingredients. You do NOT have to mix. You do NOT have to cook. You do NOT have to cut. You do NOT have to wrap. You do NOT have to wash dishes. You do NOT have to clean your kitchen. You do NOT have to deliver a baked product. You do NOT have to stand in the heat, cold, or rain to sell it. You CAN write a check for \$10 to United Way and stay home and enjoy doing something for yourself or with your family!

Compliment-o-Gram

Make special forms and sell them to employees who want to give a compliment or say thanks to another employee. Charge \$1 per compliment and \$2 if anonymous.

Reserved Parking

Auction off prime parking spots. Highest bidders use them for a predetermined range.

"Take a Day Off" for United Way

Allow employees to "buy" paid time off by making a pledge roughly equal to a day's wages (about 0.5% of annual income). Consider using a placeholder value, e.g. \$250.

Ugly Lamp Month

Find an ugly lamp and allow employees to move it around the office during a set length of time. To move it to someone's workspace or keep it from their workspace, they donate. Wherever the lamp is when the length of time ends, it stays for one month.

YCJCY1D

Place signs around your workplace that are printed with "YCJCY1D" and a note directing questions to the ECC via email. When employees ask what it means, tell them that for a \$1 pledge per pay period they can find out. After they pledge, give them a card and tell them they cannot tell anyone else. The card says, "Your curiosity just cost you one dollar."

PARTIES

Ideas in this section center around festivities. **Participating doesn't have a cost, but activities do.** Those proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign.

Tailgate Party

Out of trucks in the parking lot, provide hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts, soft drinks, and other goodies, "tailgate" style. Organize a tag football game and ask participants to donate to play. Observers can wager on the outcome.

Talent Show

Think *American Idol*, *The Voice*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *America's Got Talent*...then create your own workplace version. Consider charging employees to participate and charge admission to the show, complete with popcorn for sale.

White Elephant

Ask employees to bring, at least, one wrapped item—something unwanted, though still usable (but not necessarily useful), from their home. Everyone who brings an item gets a ticket. Sell tickets for extra items. When a ticket is called, its owner chooses an item.

Workplace Carnival

Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with a bake sale, 50-cent hot dogs and bubble blowing. Have a hula hoop contest and hoop-shoot. Request donations to participate. Have a dunk tank with leadership. Don't forget a pie-throwing booth.

PAY-TO-PLAY

Ideas in this section entice employees to join in a game. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees have fun supporting great causes.**

Miniature Golf

Create a two-hole course in a conference room and let employees compete. Have them submit an entry form, make a donation, and bring a putter (or humorous equivalent) to the event. Consider variations, e.g. create it in the parking lot, use child-size clubs.

Mini-Indy 500

Rent or borrow remote-controlled cars and set up an “Indy 500” racecourse. Use office supplies to make the track interesting. Racers donate, and spectators place bets.

ITEM SALES

Ideas in this section engage employees to donate and purchase items. All proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees take things home.**

Book Sale

Invite employees to donate books—or even CDs, DVDs, and videos. Price paperbacks at \$1, hardbacks at \$2, and CDs/DVDs/videos up to \$5.

Clothes Swap

Have employees donate clothes they've never worn with price tags on and sell them.

Craft Sale

Ask employees to donate handmade items, giving them a chance to share hobbies.

Garage Sale

Set parameters for items and ask employees to donate toward the garage sale.

Silent Auction

Request donations from employees, vendors, restaurants, etc. Display them online or in a prominent location and set a time for bidding to close. Share the highest bids for each item. Then open it back up for one more hour to let others try to outbid the highest bids.

SPLIT THE POT

Ideas in this section raise the stakes. Half of the proceeds go to supporting United Way and the workplace campaign. **Employees get the other half...plus, bragging rights.**

For this section, every activity—should you host one—requires our involvement. **Our Finance Team must know about all charitable gaming before any activity occurs.** They work with you to ensure regulations are followed. They must have at least two weeks' notice before a charitable gaming activity begins. To learn more or begin working with them on an activity, email them at finance@ak.org.

Baby Picture Contest

Have employees provide a baby photo of themselves and post them where everyone can see. Encourage all employees to guess who is who—and each guess requests a donation. The employee with the most correct guesses takes home half of the earnings.

Funniest Employee Videos

Set up a “YouTube.” Ask employees to donate to submit funny videos and to vote. The employee chosen as the funniest takes home half of the earnings.

Guessing Game Fundraising

Give employees an opportunity to guess the number of items in a big, glass jar and ask them to donate to guess. Consider filling it with candy, pennies, etc. The employee who guesses the right number (or closest) takes home half of the earnings.

Pet Matching Game

Have employees provide a photo of their pets and post them where everyone can see. Encourage all employees to guess whose pet is whose—and each guess requests a donation. The employee with the most correct guesses takes home half of the earnings.

Sports Square Sale

Like the “squares” sold for the Super Bowl, create a “squares” grid specific to an upcoming football or basketball game. Sell them from \$1 to \$5 per square. Split earnings between those with winning squares and United Way.

TICKET SALES

Ideas in this section incentivize participation with drawings. Proceeds may be split between employees, United Way, and the workplace campaign. **Employees stand to gain something.**

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50-50 Raffle

Purchase tickets and designate ticket sellers. Price tickets at \$1 each with an incentive for multiple purchases such as 3 tickets for \$2, 5 tickets for \$4, etc. Place ticket stubs in container and draw one. The chosen employee takes home half of the earnings.

Basket Raffle

Ask departments to sponsor and fill a basket based on a theme, i.e. spa, chocolate, cooking, home improvement, entertainment, sports, night out, pet-oriented, kids-oriented, etc. Sell tickets, i.e., \$1 per ticket or \$5 for 6 tickets. Employees submit tickets for the basket they would like to win. If chosen, they take it home.

Turkey Giveaway

Use Thanksgiving as inspiration for a special workplace campaign event. Raffle off a turkey or gift card to a grocery store for use with Thanksgiving dinner.