



# Virtual Campaign Kickoff Guide

**As you begin your United Way workplace campaign, a virtual kickoff has many benefits.**

- **Ready, Set, Go!** - A virtual kickoff clearly marks the start of your United Way effort creating a sense of urgency and a timeline for colleagues. Campaigns with kickoff events have proven to raise more dollars in support of our community!
- **Inspiration** - The kickoff shows employees the impact of donations in our community, helping them make an informed decision about giving, and inspiring them!
- **Team Building** - Unite employees around a common community cause and build morale, which can be especially important in maintaining organizational culture in an evolving hybrid work environment.
- **Stage Setting** – Kickoff demonstrates the passion your organization, your senior management, and your colleagues have for the campaign and doing local good in our community.

Your United Way Representative is here to support you and can help to plan and customize your kickoff event. Tools and resources are available to support you in hosting your kickoff virtually.

# HOW TO GET STARTED

## Key Considerations and Planning

### 1. Technology Platform

Confirm the online web conferencing platform approved by your workplace and learn about the platform's functionality. Your United Way Representative can help you build your kickoff agenda and activities on the platform. If you cannot host your kickoff using your own technology platform, speak to your United Way Representative.

### 2. Senior Management Support

Support from your executives is critical to illustrate your organization's commitment to the campaign. Book time in their schedule so they can participate in your virtual kickoff. (See Appendix B for a sample script that your senior management team can personalize.)

### 3. Consider Your Audience

For best results, we recommend a kickoff event that is no longer than 30 minutes. If your employee base is large, you may consider hosting a series of kickoffs held throughout the day, across a few days, or divided by department. Strive to strike a balance between being able to reach all your employees and helping people be comfortable enough to ask questions and interact in the event. (See Appendix A for a sample agenda.)

### 4. Determine the Meeting Host and Other Company Speakers

Ideally, the Employee Campaign Chair (ECC) acts as kickoff facilitator to ensure your event follows an agenda. If needed, your United Way representative can support the ECC as co-host. Invite your CEO or other executives to take part and speak at the event as their leadership can inspire others and demonstrate top-down support of the campaign.

### 5. Make it Interactive

Engage your colleagues during the kickoff. Consider interactive activities such as online polls or quizzes to keep your audience's attention online. Your United Way Representative can help you plan and build this activity.

### 6. Raise Awareness about Impact

United Way speakers, online engagement activities, and campaign videos can help illustrate the impact of donations and inspire people to give. Your United Way representative can help you select the best activities for your agenda.

### 7. Set Clear Action Steps

Let people know how they can donate and how they can get involved in the campaign. Send your donation link immediately following your kickoff event, so people can take action while they're feeling inspired.

## APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED AGENDA

You are welcome to use the following template agenda as you plan your event.

<b>Virtual meeting login in details:</b> [include details here]	
<b>Opening Welcome - 5 mins</b> Time: XXX am/pm CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Value of United Way and Company partnership</li> <li>• Importance of United Way in the community</li> <li>• Encourage all to get involved with campaign activities</li> <li>• Interactive poll or quiz to get people engaged</li> </ul>
<b>United Way Activity: 7-12 minutes</b> May be facilitated by United Way	Activity Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Way and Company quiz</li> <li>• Virtual tour</li> <li>• Group whiteboard sharing (e.g., "What does #DoLocalGood mean to me?")</li> <li>• United Way videos</li> <li>• Guest impact speaker from United Way</li> </ul>
<b>Closing Remarks - 5 mins</b> CEO/ECC CEO/ECC/Sr. Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO/ECC to thank participants and reiterate importance of United Way to the community</li> <li>• Call to action/donate now</li> <li>• Share company fundraising/participation goals</li> <li>• How to give</li> <li>• Instructions on next steps - donation link to come, who to contact with questions, etc.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B:

### SAMPLE SPEAKER SCRIPT

The script outline below can be customized/personalized to meet the needs of the speaker(s) at your virtual kickoff.

#### OPENING REMARKS

- Welcome attendees and thank them for joining the call to the cause.
- My Name is ....
- Before we begin, I would like to welcome two very important guests who are with us this morning (introduce speakers).
- As many of you know, I am a strong believer of United Way's mission to create pathways out of poverty for vulnerable peoples, and I am proud to be a part of <COMPANY'S> United Way Campaign.
- The ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and increases to the cost of living are hurting our community. These issues continue to put our most vulnerable community members at higher risk, and they have also destabilized many more financially, mentally, and emotionally.
- We have seen demand for community services and basic needs skyrocket over the past several years, and this need will continue to climb as these pressures linger.
- What inspires me is that as a community, we have pulled together and done what we can to help.
- But there is still much work to do.
- The issues we have seen in the past few years == food insecurity, financial strain, mental health crises -- are ongoing.
- That is why we partner with United Way. They take a systems-wide approach to deliver a coordinated network of social programs and services addressing a range of needs for vulnerable children, families, and individuals. By bringing together partners and strategies, *together*, we are creating more resilient, connected, and thriving communities where no one is left behind.
- I want to take a moment to recognize and thank each of you for stepping up to support United Way every year. Our collective commitment demonstrates <COMPANY'S> leadership in communities across Canada, raising over X\$ for United Way last year.
- KEY POINT ABOUT LAST YEAR'S CAMPAIGN (*your UW Representative can help provide some information if needed*).
- IF THE SPEAKER HAS A PERSONAL STORY ABOUT UNITED WAY OR SOMETHING THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED, ADD HERE.
- Thank you again for your personal leadership and generous support of United Way.
- Introduce the next section of the event <e.g., audience poll, speaker, UW activity> and turn over to the activity facilitator.

## CLOSING REMARKS

- Thank you, <GUEST SPEAKER>, for joining us today and sharing your story/perspective. United Way plays such an important role in our community.
- Let's help make their vision of a community where everyone has the chance to thrive a reality.
- Our annual United Way campaign starts on <DATE>. We have an amazing team that has worked hard to make this year's campaign even better than last year. Thank you, <CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEERS> for your leadership!
- <By now, a donation link should be in your inbox. I encourage you to make a gift now. Let's demonstrate our appreciation of our campaign committee before we officially launch the campaign on the DATE.> (*Optional if there is a multiple kick off situation and you send out a link early.*)
- Our donations to United Way are part of how we are building a stronger community and creating a legacy to be proud of.
- Thanks everyone.