

United Way Greater Toronto

Campaign Kick-Off Guide



United Way
Greater Toronto



Toronto Centre for Learning & Development

Running a Campaign Kick-off

Hosting a kick-off for your United Way workplace campaign has many benefits.

Ready, set, go!

A kick-off event clearly marks the start of your United Way effort, creating a sense of urgency and a timeline for colleagues. Campaigns with kick-off events have been proven to raise more dollars in support of our communities!

Inspiration

The kick-off provides employees with an opportunity to hear about the impact of their donations and be inspired, so they can make an informed decision about giving.

Team building

This is a great chance to bring employees together—whether it be in-person, virtual, or a hybrid combination of both - in a common cause of caring. A kick-off event can also help to build morale, which is especially important in this time of many challenges—both globally, and close to home.

Stage setting

It gives you an opportunity to demonstrate the passion your organization, your senior management team, and your colleagues have for the campaign and supporting our communities.

Your United Way staff partner is here to support you and can help you plan and customize your kick-off event. We have tools and resources to support you in hosting your kick-off—whether it be in-person, virtually or a hybrid combination of both.

Key Considerations and Planning

Helpful Hint:

Reference the Kick-Off Planning Schedule for a 5-week timeline that can help you get things rolling.

Event Format

Decide in advance how you'll invite colleagues to attend your campaign kick-off. Will it be held in-person, virtually, or a hybrid combination of both? Consider how employees are currently working, and ensure your event is accessible to everyone.

If online or hybrid, confirm the web conferencing platform that is approved by your workplace and learn about the platform's functionality, so that your United Way staff partner can help you build your kick-off agenda and activities on the platform. If you cannot host your kick-off on your own technology platform, speak to your United Way staff partner.

Senior management support

Support from your Executives is critical to showing that your organization is behind the campaign. Book their time so they can participate in your virtual kick-off or see if there may be existing meetings you can piggyback on. See Appendix B for suggested talking points and presentation content that your senior management team can personalize.

Consider your audience

For best results, we recommend a kick-off event is scheduled for no longer than 30 minutes. If your employee base is large, you may consider hosting a series of kick offs (e.g. by department) throughout the day, or across a few days—this may require you to be flexible in accommodating senior management's schedules. While there is no ideal, you want to strike a balance between being able to reach all employees, and helping people be comfortable enough to ask questions and interact. It may be helpful to also consider how to host your event in such a way that it will be accessible to everyone—whether they are working virtually, in-person, or if your workplace welcomes a combination of both.

Determine the meeting host and other company speakers

It is best if the Employee Campaign Chair (ECC) acts as facilitator to ensure your kick-off sticks to the agenda. If the ECC needs support, your United Way staff partner can act as co-host. Invite your CEO and/or other executive(s) to take part and speak, too, as their leadership can inspire others to give and demonstrate support of United Way and your workplace campaign from the top down.

Make it interactive

Engage your colleagues during the kick-off. Consider interactive activities like polls or quizzes to keep their attention, especially in an online environment. Your United Way staff partner can help you build this element into your kick-off event.

Raise awareness about impact, and inspire giving

United Way works with volunteer speakers who can join your kick-off event, and other campaign activities (including interactive activities such as poverty simulations, online tours, and campaign videos) can help share the impact of donations and inspire people to give. Your United Way staff partner can help you select the best activities for your agenda/group.

Set clear action steps

Let people know how they can donate and/or get involved in the campaign. We recommend sending out the donation link immediately following your kick-off event, so people can take action while they're feeling inspired. Consider also sharing a calendar of upcoming campaign events to get everyone excited and let them know who they can contact if needed.

Speakers:

Need a UW Speaker for your event? Please contact your UW staff partner and submit your booking request at least 10 business days prior to your event.

Recommended agenda

We welcome you to make use of the following template agenda as you plan your event.

Kick-of location details: [include in-person event address/room number and/or web conference details here]	
Pre-event (XX:XX – XX:XX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival of event host/speakers (10-15 minutes in advance) • Arrival of attendees
Opening (5 minutes) (XX:XX – XX:XX) Time: XXX am/pm CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & housekeeping • Value of partnership between United Way & Company • Importance of United Way now • Encourage all to get involved with campaign activities • Interactive poll or quiz to get people engaged • Introduction of United Way contact/awareness activity
United Way awareness activity (7-12 minutes) (XX:XX – XX:XX) Facilitated by United Way United Way contact: (enter contact name)	Activity examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way Interactive activity (e.g. poverty simulation, virtual neighbourhood tour, trivia, etc.) • United Way & Company quiz • Group whiteboard sharing (e.g. "Why I care about community.", "Which issue resonates with me?", "Why I give.") • United Way video(s) • Guest speaker from United Way
Closing remarks (5 minutes) (XX:XX – XX:XX) CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders	Thank participants, reiterate the importance of United Way, and invite them to take action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to action/donate now • Share company fundraising/participation goals • How to give • Instructions on next steps – donation link to come, upcoming events, who to contact with questions, etc.

Key points for speakers

The below can be customized/personalized to meet the needs of the speaker(s) at your virtual kick-off.

Opening remarks

Introduction

- Welcome attendees, and thank them for joining us today
- My name is.....
- Before we begin, I would like to welcome two very important guests who are with us this morning (introduce UW and UW Speaker).
- As many of you know, I am a strong believer of United Way's work, and I am proud to be a part of <COMPANY'S> United Way Campaign.
- In this post-pandemic period, many of our friends and neighbours are struggling to cope with the staggering effects of inflation and the increasing cost of living.
- Urgent needs, such as affordable housing, food and mental health supports, have reached critical levels, requiring immediate attention and action.
- United Way tackles issues linked to poverty, including housing and homelessness, settlement, mental health, gender-based violence, food insecurity, seniors care and more across Peel, Toronto and York Region.
- When we support United Way, we are helping address the challenges of today while building a better tomorrow for everyone.
- With your support, United Way **funds** a robust network of agencies, **partners** across sectors, conducts groundbreaking **research**, and leads on **advocacy**.
- This multi-faceted approach is unique to United Way, and their capacity across the GTA, expertise and experience in the sector enable them to undertake these four areas of work simultaneously across the region.
- With the support of thousands across our region, United Way serves **2 million** people a year, keeping them housed, fed, connected, engaged, and safe – through a network of 300 agencies.
- And that is the work we will continue to do through the 2023 Community Campaign. We just need you to make it happen.
- I want to take a moment to recognize and thank each and every one of you in this room for stepping up to support United Way every year. Our collective commitment demonstrates <COMPANY'S> leadership in the communities we live and work, where we raise our families, this place we call home.
- <INSERT KEY POINT ABOUT LAST YEAR'S WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN> (your UW Staff Partner can help provide some information if needed)

- <SHARE SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL INSPIRATION FOR GIVING, ANY PERSONAL CONNECTION TO UNITED WAY, OR SOMETHING YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED>
- Thank you again for your personal leadership and generous support of United Way.
- <Introduce the next section of the event <eg. audience poll, speaker, UW activity> and turn over to the activity facilitator>

Closing remarks

- Thank you, <GUEST SPEAKER>, for joining us today and speaking.
- As we mentioned at the beginning, United Way donations make such a difference across our region.
- United Way plays such an important role in our community, tackling the challenges and interconnected issues related to poverty – housing, food, mental health.
- Together we are working to ensure we are meeting urgent, basic needs and building the kind of neighbourhoods we want to live and work in – where people can access services, where people feel like they belong, and where everyone has the opportunities to thrive.
- 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. Thank you, <CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEERS> for your leadership in the campaign.
- <By now, a donation link should be in your inbox. I encourage you to make a gift now. Let's demonstrate our commitment to our staff before we officially launch the campaign on the DATE.> **Optional if there is a multiple kick off situation and you send out link early.**
- Our firm's donations to United Way are part of how we are building a stronger, brighter tomorrow. United we can end poverty.
- Thanks everyone.

Sample Kick-Off Planning Schedule

