

# WORKPLACE WINS: CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING GUIDE



Centre County  
United Way  
[www.ccunitedway.org](http://www.ccunitedway.org)



## WELCOME TO THE MOVEMENT!

Thank you for being part of our mission to create a stronger, more connected Centre County. This guide is your go-to source for creative, fun, and effective fundraising ideas to energize your workplace campaign.

Whether you're planning a big kickoff, a virtual challenge, or a quick office activity, you'll find ideas inside to suit every style – and every team.

Every dollar raised and every moment of engagement makes a difference for our neighbors in need.

So flip through, get inspired, and remember: when we LIVE UNITED, every effort adds up to real impact.

Let's make this campaign unforgettable. ❤️

– Your Centre County United Way Team



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## GETTING STARTED

Tips to help plan your campaign with confidence.

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### PLANNING:

Define a timeline & request materials



**Prep with Purpose:** Connect with CCUW to request campaign materials & support.



**New to campaigns?** Let's chat! Schedule a one-on-one for personalized guidance.



**Set your campaign timeline!** A clear deadline builds momentum and keeps energy high!

2

### THEMES:

Add personality to your campaign



**1970s (or any era):** Dress the part and sell retro swag like tie-dye & headbands.



**Mardi Gras:** Host a jazzy kickoff, float contest, a Cajun potluck – don't forget beads!



**United We Stand:** Go patriotic – picnics, red-white-blue décor, and apple pie tosses.



**The Big Shot:** Use syringe-shaped thermometer to track goals – ideal for healthcare.



**Wild West:** Rock Western wear, track pledges w/ cactus thermometer.



**Raisin' Money:** Use California Raisins to track progress, give raisin boxes w/ pledges.



**Cookie Caper:** Give a cookie w/ each pledge card – "Help us bring in the dough!"



**Hawaiian Theme:** Hand out leis w/ pledges and end with a tropical potluck + limbo fun.



**Beach Bash:** Bring summer vibes indoors w/ beachwear, kabobs, & themed contests.

3

### PRIZES & INCENTIVES:

Encourage involvement

Collect a variety of gifts – either donated, purchased or intangible goods such as vacation days, lunch with the CEO of your company, one year front-row parking, etc. To encourage employees to pledge, every contributor to United Way is entered into the drawing.

#### 🎁 Experience-Based Rewards

- Hotel stay or airline tickets
- Dinner for 2 at a popular restaurant
- Golf outing or lunch w/ boss
- Theatre, concert, or event tix
- Movie passes
- Free babysitting session
- "Call in Well" or "Sleep In" pass
- "Flee @ 3" early leave coupon
- Reserved parking space
- Use of company car for a day

#### 🎁 Gifts & Goods

- Gift certificates (retail, dining, gas)
- Company swag or promotional items
- Gently used or new tech (laptops, tablets)
- Lottery tickets
- Surprise gift baskets (themes: snacks, self-care, coffee)

#### 🔧 Service & Perks



- Car wash by a manager or co-worker
- Car started and windows scraped on snowy days
- Free oil change
- Extra casual/Jeans Day pass
- "Executive Assistant" for a day (manager assists with tasks)

#### 🍕 Food & Treats

- Around-the-world dining pack (gift cards for various cuisines)
- Free meal or dessert from the cafeteria
- Morning coffee delivery for a week
- Team pizza party
- Open soda and snack machines for a day

# Quick Wins

Easy, low-effort ideas to spark participation fast.

- **Spare Change Jars:** Place empty jars near vending machines or gathering places. Ask your co-workers to deposit spare change throughout the year for United Way. This can be a competition between departments to see who collects the most change in a set time frame. 
- **Compliment Grams:** Design notes of congratulations or thanks for co-workers to buy and send to each other.
- **Wall of Fame:** Place photos on the wall recognizing employees who have been contributing to the United Way Campaign for the most consecutive years. This is a great way to recognize your company's Loyal Contributors!
- **Participation Goals:** Set realistic participation goals for workplace giving. Have various awards for reaching each participation goal (pizza party, cookout, casual days, time off, etc.)
- **Guess the Number:** Fill a clear jar with candy and have employees pay for a chance to guess the number of pieces in the jar. The most accurate guess wins the candy.
- **Walking or Wheeling Challenge:** Encourage teams to get moving! Employees log miles walked, wheeled, or biked during the campaign. Prizes can go to the most active individuals or departments – a great way to boost wellness and giving.
- **Casual for a Cause:** Let your co-workers relax by paying a certain amount to wear casual attire to work. Get as casual as possible: jeans, tennis shoes, sports apparel, hats, slippers, etc. Contact CCUW for stickers that say “I Dress This Way for United Way” and distribute to participants. 



## Workplace Challenges.

Team-building fun that gets everyone involved – and laughing.

- **Buy Out the Boss:** Set a fundraising goal and if your team hits it, your boss agrees to a fun “penalty” – dressing up, singing karaoke, working from the roof, or another crowd-pleaser. It’s motivation with just the right touch of mischief.
- **Pie Toss:** For a fee, employees nominate one another to receive a pie in the face. The top four with the most votes receive a pie in their face at a company event.
- **Kiss the Pig:** Voting with their money, employees vote which executive staff will have to kiss a pig.
- **Costume War:** Choose an executive to wear a costume for the day by placing money jars outside the office doors of willing participants.
- **Executive Lawn Service:** Managers or executives donate time to do yard work at the homes of employees who bid for their services.
- **Up on the Roof:** Solicit supervisors, managers, directors and CEOs to participate. Employees raise a set amount of money for the boss to spend a lunch period or night on the roof in a tent. Plan a cookout, so everyone can watch the boss on the roof.
- **Fuzzy Slippers/High Heels:** Find a large pair of high heels or slippers and let employees pay to choose a co-worker to wear the shoes.
- **Avant-Garde Attire:** Employees dress in their most dramatic garb to ignite creativity for the day. Have a small entry fee and award the most creative outfit a prize.
- **Extra Day Vacation:** Auction off a day or a half day of vacation.
- **Executive Dunk Tank:** Employees pay per ball for a chance to dunk their boss or pay a higher fee to walk up and press the “dunk” button. Participants pay extra to add a bag of ice to the dunk tank water.
- **Dollar-an-Inch Contest:** Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Don't forget the ladies, they can wear ties too! Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive's tie each time they donate. Give out prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

**Need a Boost? We've Got You.**

**Spotted the info icon? That means CCUW has supporting resources or materials available to help bring this idea to life. Just reach out – we're here to make it easy and impactful.**





# Food-Based Fun

Bring people together with bites, brews, and big impact

## Sit-Down Spreads & Lunch Events

*Hearty meals and gatherings that bring everyone to the table.*

- **Potluck:** Post a sign-up sheet for employees to bring entrees, salads, and desserts to ensure a variety of good food. Decorate the room with a theme for a nice touch.
- **Soup Line:** Employees sign up to bring their favorite soup or bread. Set up at lunch time and charge participants fees for a bottomless bowl to try one or all! (Bring your own reusable bowl.)
- **Spaghetti Lunch:** Host a spaghetti lunch and charge by the bowl.
- **Luncheon Buffet:** Have people bring in their favorite dishes for a luncheon buffet and charge a plate fee.
- **Tailgate Party:** Hold a pay-per-plate cookout during lunch. Cook brats, burgers, and hot dogs with condiments. Have chips, pretzels, soda and other tailgate items. You may also want to set up a volleyball net, Frisbee and some music to set the mood.

## Pop-Ups, Carts & Quick Bites

*On-the-go treats that are easy to sell around the office.*

- **Ice Cream Cart:** On a hot day, visit employee cubicles and offices selling popsicles, ice cream sandwiches and other cold snacks.
- **Warm Beverages:** To help offset the chilly winter weather, why not host a specialty warm beverage day with flavored hot chocolates and coffees in addition to fun toppings. Each toasty mug is \$1 to be donated to United Way.
- **Peanuts, Get Your Peanuts!** Decorate a push cart with a sports theme. Stock the cart with individual bags of salted peanuts, chips, hot dogs, soda, and all necessary condiments (ketchup, mustard, relish, onion, etc.) Visit cubicles and sell items. This is a great way to kickoff a sports season.
- **Order Up!:** Take orders from your co-workers for take out from their favorite restaurant. Pick up the food and charge a delivery fee benefiting United Way.
- **Green Thumbs (Herb Cart):** Herb gardens are easy to establish and the perfect start to any garden. Buy seeds, plant the herbs and sell them to colleagues for a minimal fee.

## Bakes, Bids & Sweets with a Twist

*Delicious fundraising with a sprinkle of creativity or competition.*

- **Bake Sale:** Co-workers buy employee-donated baked goods.
- **State Fair Pie Tasting:** Invite employees to bake a prize winning pie and let co-workers pay a fee to taste and vote for their favorite.
- **Donut Eating Contest:** Employees raise money for United Way by sponsoring contenders on a per-donut-eaten basis. The winner is determined by either eating the most donuts in a set time frame or being the first to finish a designated number.
- **Lunch Box Auction:** Employees create gourmet lunches to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Give prizes for the most creative, nutritious, elegant or clever meals.
- **Chili Cook-off:** Participants pay to enter their chili into the contest. Choose judges and determine prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. After judging, employees can pay to sample each chili. Remember to supply cheese, sour cream, crackers, TUMS, etc.

## DIY Food Bars & Make-Your-Own Treats

*Interactive and customizable meals that double as fun experiences.*

- **Walking Taco Sale:** Sell individual bags of corn chips with divided plastic or foam containers filled with taco meat, cheese, sour cream, tomatoes, lettuce, packets of hot sauce, etc. Price accordingly.
- **Root Beer Float Sale:** Buy necessary ingredients. Floats made and served by executives can be a fun treat!
- **Nacho/Pretzel Sale:** Sell large plates of nacho and/or soft pretzels with cheese and jalapeno peppers. Donate proceeds to United Way
- **Mashed Potato Bar:** Make mashed potatoes and sell in plastic martini glasses with a variety of toppings.
- **Build Your Own Ice Cream Sundaes:** Have a wide variety of sundae toppings (nuts, fruit, cookies, gummy bears, crushed candy bars, whipped cream, cherries, etc.) available for sale for employees to build their own sundaes.

## Food & Culture Experiences

*Food as a celebration of story, tradition, and shared identity.*

- **Cultural Cuisine Celebration:** Invite employees to share dishes that reflect their family traditions or cultural background — along with a story, recipe, or memory behind them. You can also invite departments to highlight a region or cuisine as part of a shared potluck or lunch series. It's a delicious way to connect and learn from one another!
- **Sake/Sushi Tasting:** Individuals pay to attend an event featuring an assortment of sake and sushi. Provide background information on refreshments to make the tasting interesting.
- **Taste of the World Luncheon:** Employees pay a fee to eat a buffet of ethnic food that their co-workers bring from home, or that is donated by a local restaurant.
- **Restaurant Tree:** Donated gift cards from numerous restaurants are hung on a tree. Raffle tickets are given to donors who enter to win one of the gift cards, gift baskets or other prizes offered during the campaign.



# Games & Competitions

Add excitement with playful challenges and office bragging rights.

- **Talent Auction:** Have employees donate their talents for an auction – handcrafted jewelry, scrapbook services or a musical performance.
- **Trivia Contest:** Employees pay a fee to answer a daily trivia question and the first one with the correct answer wins a small prize.
- **Lego Guessing Game:** Large jar is filled with Legos and employees pay a fee to guess how many are inside. Prize is awarded for the closest guess.
- **Scavenger Hunt:** Employees search for unusual items around the neighborhood or office building. Teams pay a group entrance fee and have a set time frame to accumulate as many items as possible. The entire team must be present at the end of the hunt or have a penalty for late arrivals. Work with local businesses for gift certificates or other items as rewards for the winning team.
- **Penny Wars:** Divide the office by department or teams and have a money jar assigned to each. Members of each department deposit pennies, nickels, and dimes into their own jar and place quarters or “green” into the jars of the other departments. Pennies count as positive while quarters and “green” are negative. The department with the highest number (or often the case, the least negative number) wins a lunch provided by the company. [i](#)
- **Cornhole Tournament:** Charge an entry fee for a single elimination tournament. Winner receives bragging rights for a year or different prize (see incentives.)
- **Kickball Tournament:** Teams donate a small sum to participate. Spice up the game by adding obstacles that can be “purchased” by teams or individuals. Example: the opposing team has to kick with their nondominant foot.
- **Golf Putt:** Supply a putting green and club. Employees pay per putt for a chance to win prizes.
- **Tricycle Race:** Teams race in relay format around the office parking lot on small bikes. Employees bet on which team they think will win. All bets go to United Way.
- **Tug-of-War:** Have an interdepartmental competition. Each team pays a fee for entry with the winning team receiving a prize.
- **High Score:** Place a dart board in the office and sell dart board shots. Award prizes to winners.
- **Office Olympics:** Fire up the Olympic Torch (or grill) and let the games begin. Have a tricycle or office chair race. Use items around your work location for golfing, shooting baskets, etc. Have spelling contests, typing contests, competitions to develop the most persuasive or most complimentary memo, etc. Devise rules for each race in advance and seek participants, combine the event with a cookout as an incentive and designing award medals to display in the cubicles of winners. [i](#)
- **Spelling Bee:** Hold a spelling bee with an entry fee. Have galley observers place bets on their favorite participants.
- **Karaoke Contest:** Each department or team nominates one employee to sing a song. Choose a variety of music or spotlight a particular theme of music. The winner is chosen by audience applause or a panel of judges.
- **Look-a-Like Contest:** Employees dress as celebrities; host a personality parade and have co-workers pay to vote for the best costume.
- **Wii Olympics:** Organize a series of one-on-one Wii sport challenges among your co-workers.
- **Balloon Pop Surprise:** Put a prize note in each balloon (soda, casual attire day, gift card, candy bar, sports tickets, etc.) Be sure to have one big prize. Place balloons in a contained area and have participants pay to pop balloons for prizes.
- **Bingo:** Purchase Bingo cards and sell to employees. Every day, email a bingo number to all participants. The first one to reply “BINGO” wins a prize, and the game continues until all prizes are distributed.
- **“United Way Idol” Contest:** Employees donate to vote for the management singing group of their choice. The duo or group that attracts the most votes will sing a song in front of an audience.
- **Mystery Pumpkins:** Buy miniature or regular pumpkins for employees to purchase. Write numbers on the bottom of each pumpkin and draw numbers for prizes corresponding to the numbers. Pumpkins can be taken home and carved for a later Pumpkin Carving contest.
- **Rubber Duckies:** Write numbers on the bottom of rubber ducks and have prizes corresponding to those numbers. Charge participants for each time they pick up a floating duck from a large tub of water.
- **Apple Bob:** Fill buckets with water and apples. Tarps, goggles, shower caps and towels are recommended. On “go!”, contestants compete for 3 minutes to grab the most apples with their mouths (no hands!). Employees nominate contestants and vote using change or cash in jars.





# Virtual-Friendly

Engage remote teams with creative and connected giving.

- **Remote Raffle:** Sell digital raffle tickets online and let remote employees join the fun! Use a livestream or team meeting to draw winners – prizes can be mailed, emailed, or claimed in person. [i](#)
- **TikTok Talent Challenge:** Invite employees to showcase their hidden (or hilarious) talents in short videos. Share them on your company's internal platform or socials, then let colleagues vote with their dollars – every vote is a donation to United Way!
- **QR Code Scavenger Hunt:** Hide QR codes around your office or online workspace. Each code links to a clue, trivia question, or mini challenge. Participants donate to join the hunt – prizes await those who solve it all! [i](#)
- **Venmo Wall:** Create a digital “wall” of mini-challenges, raffle entries, or donation tiers, each linked to a Venmo QR code. Employees scan to give and unlock fun shout-outs, rewards, or actions from leadership! [i](#)
- **Balloon Grams:** Sell balloons with notes of recognition inside and deliver to co-workers.
- **Happy Holidays to Your Clients:** Make corporate donations on behalf of your clients to United Way. Send clients a holiday postcard communicating the generous gift to the community.



## Auctions & Raffles

Bid high, hope big – these ideas bring the thrill of winning to your workplace!

- **Silent Auction:** The company donates auction items such as office furniture, printers, scanners, computers, corporate box seats at a sporting event, company merchandise, etc. Employees are invited to donate items as well, and all proceeds go to United Way.
- **Box Raffle:** Boxes are placed in highly-trafficked areas with the name of a prize on each. Employees buy tickets and put them in the boxes corresponding to the prize they want to win.
- **Themed Baskets:** Ask individuals or departments to create themed baskets and auction off to the highest bidder.
- **Grab Bag:** Fill paper bags with small treats –candy or chips. Solicit vendors or clients for donations to include as additional prizes in half of the bags. Sell each bag at your workplace.
- **Extra Time Off Goodie Bags:** Assemble small bags of candy. In each bag, include a slip of paper with a message. Some messages include a “Congratulations! You won four hours of extra time off.” Some messages say “Sorry, you did not win extra time off. Please play again.” [i](#)
- **Pick an Egg, any Egg:** Fill plastic eggs with a variety of prizes. Charge a fee for the opportunity to participate and win.



## Executive Involvement

Because when leadership gets involved, everyone pays attention – and gives!

- **Executive Lawn Service:** Managers or executives donate time to do yard work at the homes of employees who bid for their services.
- **Executive Chef:** Auction off dinner for two or more at the home of an executive.
- **Executive Service:** Executives donate an hour to serve lunch to employees –have co-workers pay to be part of the event.
- **Jail:** Construct and decorate a jail made of cardboard. Managers are sentenced to the office jail for a determined amount of time or until they raise a set amount of bail money that is donated to United Way.
- **Car Wash:** Get a rubber hose, buckets, soap and everything else you'll need to host an old fashioned car wash. Ask a few employees (maybe even the boss in full suit and tie) to volunteer to scrub down and dry cars until they sparkle. Charge employees \$5 with all proceeds going to United Way. Charge more for special extras like cleaning the interior, polishing rims, or pictures of the boss washing the cars!



# Office Pop-Ups & Sales


Bring in the goods and give co-workers a reason to stop by.

- **Spring Plant Sale:** Employees dig up plants and bulbs from their yards or bring in house plants to sell to other employees. Proceeds go to United Way.
- **Flower Sale:** Sell flowers by the stem. Charge for inter-office delivery.
- **Golf Balls "Fore" Sale:** Collect old golf balls. After a clean and shine, charge by the dozen or in smaller packages.
- **Garage/Sidewalk Sale:** Solicit donations of gently used items from co-workers. Promote your sale both internally and to the general public.
- **White Elephant Sale:** Employees donate odd/funny items for sale. Co-workers are given the opportunities to buy these items and stipulate where in the office/in whose workspace the object should be displayed. Set a time frame for which the items must stay in the bought location.
- **Entertainment Drive:** Employees donate new or slightly used books, movies, board games, puzzles, etc., and hold a sale to benefit United Way.



## Surprise & Delight

Whimsical ideas that keep things light, silly, and totally unexpected.

- **Psychic Reading:** A psychic/card reader, preferably one who will donate the time, visits the workplace. Employees pay a small amount to have their fortunes read, with proceeds benefiting United Way.
- **Buy a Boa:** Purchase brightly colored feather boas for employees to buy. The purchaser chooses a person to wear the boa for the day. In order to get rid of the boa, the wearer must pay to pick another employee to wear it. The boa must be worn at least 10 minutes prior to choosing another lucky boa-wearer.
- **Hour of Music Sale:** Employees buy an hour of music to be played in the workplace for an hour (can be for shorter amount of time during lunchtime.)
- **Massage Therapist:** A massage therapist, preferably one that is willing to donate time, visits the workplace and employees pay for time slots to be massaged. Proceeds go to United Way.
- **Octobeard:** Beards are grown throughout the month of October. Contestants pay to participate. At the end of the month there are 3 or 4 days of "beard carving", where beards are shaved into different shapes. Pictures are taken and voting commences! Voting consists of donating change (negative points) and cash/checks (positive points).
- **Smell the Roses:** Have a local florist donate flowers. Employees buy arrangements to send to co-workers or keep for themselves.
- **Charge Late Fees:** Employees who arrive late for meetings, or produce any other tardiness, pay a fee to be donated to United Way. 
- **Sports Day:** Charge employees a fee to wear their favorite sports team's jersey or t-shirt.
- **Change Bandit:** A co-worker dresses as a bandit (as approved by company security.) Have the bandit visit employees to procure spare change.



## Parking Perks & Workplace Rewards

Make the daily grind a little sweeter with coveted privileges.

- **Paid Parking:** Auction off a years worth of free parking.
- **Front Row Parking:** Hold drawing for front row parking spots for a year, or during the winter months.
- **Bring Your Dog To Work Day:** Allow your co-workers to bring their pets to work and organize a tricks competition or costume party. If allergies are a concern, try Pet Match Day: employees bring a photo of their pet to the office, and co-workers try to match the animal to their owner.








# More resources

Helpful tools, links, and extras to support your success.


## Tools to Inspire & Engage


 **Campaign Kickoff:** Kick things off right! Host a workplace meeting featuring a representative from United Way and one of our incredible Partner Agencies. Add coffee, donuts, or raffle tickets to sweeten the deal and encourage attendance.


 **Campaign Pages:** Make giving effortless with customized online campaign pages, designed to reflect your company's brand and streamline pledges and donations.

 **QR Code Cards:** We'll create quarter-page cards featuring your logo and a unique QR code that links directly to your company's online giving page – perfect for desks, breakrooms, and bulletin boards.



 **Impact Calculator:** Ever wonder what your gift really means? Use our Impact Calculator to see how many lives your donation can touch. Just enter an amount and get instant results – it's a powerful tool to connect dollars to real impact.

 **Organizational Impact Calculator:** Looking at the bigger picture? This tool helps estimate your company's collective impact. Input your number of employees, pay periods, and donation amount to visualize how many lives your team can change – a great tool for setting campaign goals!

 **ALICE the Experience:** Step into the shoes of our ALICE population – **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. This interactive online simulation offers a powerful look at the day-to-day challenges faced by working individuals who are above the poverty line but still struggling. Best viewed on desktop, it's a quick and meaningful way to build empathy and understanding.

## Campaign Resource Center

Need a one-stop shop for all your campaign tools? Visit our online Campaign Resource Center for downloadable forms, flyers, sample links, graphics, and more – everything you need to run a successful campaign, all in one place.



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Resource Center



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