

RUNNING A VIRTUAL CAMPAIGN KICKOFF



As you launch 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 your community!
- **Inspiration.** The kickoff 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 in a common cause of caring and build morale, which is especially important in a time of social distancing.
- **Stage setting.** It demonstrates the passion your organization, your senior management team, and your colleagues have for your workplace campaign and supporting your community.

Your United Way staff partner is available to support you and can help you plan and customize your kickoff event. We have created tools and resources to support you in hosting your kickoff virtually.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Key considerations and planning

1. **Technology platform**

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

Helpful Hint:
Reference the [Virtual Kickoff Planning Schedule](#) for a five-week timeline that can help you get things rolling.

2. **Senior management support**

Support from your executives is critical to showing your entire organization stands behind your campaign. Book their time early on so they can participate in your virtual kickoff, or see if there may be existing meetings you can piggyback on. See [page four](#) for suggested talking points and presentation content your senior management team can personalize.

3. **Consider your audience**

For best results, we recommend scheduling your kickoff event for no longer than 30 minutes. If your employee base is large, you may consider hosting a series of kickoffs (e.g. by department) throughout the day, or across a few days. You want to strike a balance between being able to reach all your employees and ensuring people are comfortable enough to ask questions and participate.

4. **Determine the meeting host and other company speakers**

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

5. **Make it interactive**

Engage your colleagues during the kickoff. Consider interactive activities like online polls or quizzes to keep their attention online. Your United Way staff partner can provide ideas for these activities and help you build them.

6. **Raise awareness about impact**

United Way has impact speakers that can join your virtual meeting, online awareness activities, and campaign videos that can help demonstrate and share the impact of donations and inspire people to give. Your United Way staff partner can help you select the best awareness-building activities for your agenda.

Need an impact speaker for your event? Please contact your United Way staff partner and submit your booking request at least 10 business days prior to your event.

7. **Set clear action steps**

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



RECOMMENDED AGENDA

The following template agenda is a great jumping off point as you plan your event. Feel free to customize and adapt as you need to—and let your United Way staff partner know if you need additional support.

Virtual meeting login details: [include details here]	
Opening: 5 mins Time: XXX a.m./p.m. CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders	▪ Welcome ▪ Value of company's partnership with United Way ▪ Importance of United Way now ▪ Encourage all to get involved with campaign activities ▪ Interactive poll or quiz to get people engaged
United Way awareness activity: 7–12 minutes Facilitated by United Way	Activity examples: ▪ United Way & company quiz ▪ Group whiteboard sharing (e.g. "Why I care about community," "Which #UNIGNORABLE social issue resonates with me?") ▪ United Way video ▪ Guest impact speaker from United Way ▪ United Way online community impact activity
Closing remarks: 5 mins CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders	CEO/ECC to thank participants, and reiterate importance of United Way ▪ Call to action/donate now ▪ Share company fundraising/participation goals ▪ How to give ▪ Instructions on next steps – donation link to come, who to contact with questions, etc.

KEY POINTS FOR SPEAKERS

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

OPENING REMARKS

Welcome attendees, and thank them for joining the call:

- My name is.....
- Before we begin, I would like to welcome our guests who are with us this <morning> (introduce United Way and/or impact speaker).
- As many of you know, I am a strong believer in United Way's work and I am proud to be a part of <COMPANY'S> United Way campaign.
- We all know that poverty is hurting our community and undercutting what we stand for. This is even more evident now during this very challenging time of COVID-19; our most vulnerable community members are even more at risk.
- We have seen demand for community services increase since the beginning of the crisis here at home. And that need will continue to climb as we help people get back to work and settle into a new normal for our community.
- What inspires me is that as a community, we have all pulled together and looked at how we can help during this pandemic. Everyone is stepping up and doing what they can to help ensure no one falls through the cracks.
- Looking to the future, we need to think about what our role will be in our long-term community recovery. These issues we have seen in the last few months, such as access to basic needs, social isolation, and mental health concerns, they are not new and will continue to need to be addressed long after we settle into our new normal.
- That is why we partner with United Way. Throughout this crisis, they have been working to address these issues. They provide a vital network of care for local people and families who need support.

Add a key point about last year's campaign (your United Way staff partner can help provide some information or data if needed)

- 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 communities <across Canada>, raising over <\$XXX> for United Way.

If the speaker has a personal story about United Way or something they have experience, add it 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, United Way activity> and turn over to the activity facilitator.

CLOSING REMARKS

- Thank you, < GUEST SPEAKER>, for joining us today and speaking.
- United Way exists to improve lives, bringing together local people to make the biggest difference in their community. At <COMPANY>, we're thrilled to be part of creating greater impact in our community.
- Our annual United Way campaign starts on <DATE>. We have an amazing team that has worked hard to make this year's campaign our best yet. Thank you, <CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEER NAMES> for your leadership and dedication.
- By now, a donation link should be in your inbox. I encourage you to make your gift now. Let's demonstrate our commitment to our community before we officially launch the campaign on <DATE>. *<Optional if there is a multiple kickoff situation and you send out link early>*
- Helping one person can have tangible ripples of positive impact in our community, creating waves of lasting social change when we work together. Your donation to United Way through <COMPANY'S> campaign will help improve the lives of local kids, individuals, and families in Calgary and the surrounding area.
- United, we make the biggest difference. Thank you all for being part of this year's campaign!