



2025 WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN HANDBOOK



A guide to help
your
organization run
a successful
workplace
campaign in
support of
United Way of
Steele County

**2025
Giving
Campaign**

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THANK YOU!

Your Support Makes a Difference



FROM ALL OF US AT UWSC

Thank you for being a United Way of Steele County Workplace Campaign Ambassador! Your time, energy, and enthusiasm make a big difference in our community. Because of you, more people at your workplace will hear about how they can help others right here in Steele County.

When you lead a workplace campaign, you're not just raising money—you're **CREATING HOPE**. Every dollar raised goes toward programs that provide food, shelter, education, and support to those who need it most. From helping kids succeed in school to making sure families have a safe place to sleep, your efforts help change lives.

We know it takes extra effort to share this message, and we're so grateful you're part of it. Thank you for being a champion for good. With your help, we can build a stronger, healthier, and more caring community—together.

Let's make this campaign the best one yet!

1 in 4

Families listed as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Steele County.



47

of Workplace Giving Campaigns that supported United Way of Steele County last year.



103%

% of 2024's campaign goal that was reached thanks to YOUR help!



What Does the United Way of Steele County Do?

WHO WE ARE

United Way is dedicated to improving lives in Steele County, so we look at the big picture; not just one issue. We work two ways for maximum impact by funding over 50 direct services programs being serviced by 20 area partner agencies as well as partnering on initiatives that we refer to as opportunity programs. Not only do we help to meet the immediate needs of those who need our help, but we also focus on longer-term solutions. Most importantly, money raised in Steele County stays in Steele County.

OUR MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

Our Mission:

Uniting our communities to address critical needs, foster equity, and empower individuals for lasting change.

Our Vision:

Steele County will be a thriving community where every individual is empowered to succeed, supported by a culture of engagement, collaboration, equity, and compassion.

Our Values:

Collaboration, Empowerment, Equity, and Innovation

52

of programs funded by UWSC (as of 2025)

19

of Partner Agencies (as of 2025)

40,300

Individuals impacted in 2024

\$837,962

Donations made to 2024 UWSC campaign

STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

Thank you so much for taking the role as the Workplace Campaign Ambassador (WCA)! Not only are you providing a tremendous service to your organization, your efforts make a difference by improving lives and building a stronger Steele County!

We created this guide to help you achieve a successful campaign, whether that be 100% in-person, 100% virtual, or a hybrid-style campaign. United Way's campaign team is also available to support your efforts and help you access tools and discuss the ideas in this guide. Contact Operations Coordinator, Neil Lyons at neil.lyons@unitedwaysteelecounty.org for additional information.



STEP 1: CONNECT WITH US

We want to better understand your goals and how you would like to approach your campaign. We also want to tell you more about our strategy to support our community through employee campaigns like yours! Contact United Way of Steele County to get started. You can reach our team at 507-455-1180 or email President, Annette Duncan at annette.duncan@unitedwaysteelecounty.org or Neil Lyons, Operations Coordinator at neil.lyons@unitedwaysteelecounty.org

STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN

The keys to campaign success are preparation and teamwork!

- Determine which dates work best for your campaign.
- Assemble a team to help distribute campaign messaging across departments.
- Organize the donor experience that works best for your team, whether that is paper pledging, digital, or a combination of the two.
- Set fundraising and participation goals.
- Get creative with your messaging, incentives, games, and special events to make your campaign fun!

Steps for a Successful Campaign (cont.)

STEP 3: INSPIRE YOUR COWORKERS

Tell people how their donations are making a difference!

- Request a presentation from a United Way representative to share about programs that your fundraising will support. Partner agency representatives can also be included in these presentations.
- Promote a culture of giving back. A successful campaign requires frequent communications and reminders.
- Share your own story about why YOU support United Way.

STEP 4: MAKE THE ASK

The number one reason that people don't give is because they were never asked.

- Kick off your campaign with a fun event featuring an energetic and inspiring ask to give. We can assist in this production!
- Create fun activities to drum up support and provide incentives for your colleagues to participate. Get competitive while giving back!
- Have your company president/CEO write a letter or make a speech. Support from leadership is crucial to drive participation.
- Utilize the campaign team members to keep the campaign on the top of mind on team meetings, conferences, or emails.

STEP 5: WRAP UP AND GIVING THANKS

Thank the generous donors and celebrate your results!

- Finalize campaign results. Submit payroll deduction information to your HR or payroll processing staff and work with your United Way support staff to ensure they receive totals and donor details.
- Share the impact! Publicize the campaign results in your company newsletter, social media channels, or a message from the president/CEO.
- Send individualized thank you notes to each donor.
- Let United Way help you in sharing the hard work and commitment shown by your employees! We are able to share via our marketing and outreach channels that reach thousands.

The Basics of Your Role as WCA

WHAT IS A WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN AMBASSADOR (WCA)?

A WCA is a company employee who volunteers to oversee a portion of their company's annual United Way campaign. It is the WCA's responsibility to help plan and implement the campaign to ensure its success. Whether you have an official corporate social responsibility policy or not, your company will shine in giving back to the community!

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE ASK?

Make personal contact!

- People support organizations whose work aligns with their personal interests. Identify issues that are important to your co-workers.
- Hearing a personal story from an individual who has been helped by United Way compels more people to support the cause. **Coordinate a speaker presentation through United Way** to educate your employees and inspire them to join the cause.
- Remember, people listen to those who are passionate about the cause. Discuss your own observations and firsthand knowledge about United Way or through a United Way representative during a presentation.
- Promote payroll deduction contributions (if available) throughout the campaign, as it is the easiest way to give and make a significant impact.
- Giving is a personal decision. Always respect the employee's decision and thank all employees regardless of whether or not they give.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER?

Check this document, including the FAQ section. If you still are not sure, simply contact our United Way office and a staff member will assist you. Every question or comment is an opportunity to communicate with your coworkers and educate them on what United Way does to support Steele County.

Timelines for Internal Campaigns

ONE WEEK CAMPAIGN

MONDAY

Host a kickoff event with United Way staff, show a campaign video and host an agency speaker. Open up pledging and discuss plans for the next event.

INCENTIVE IDEA: If you make your pledge by 2 pm today, you will be entered into a special gift card drawing.

TUESDAY

Thank event attendees and share new information (video, materials). If kickoff was virtual and recorded, invite those unable to attend to watch the recording.

WEDNESDAY

Email touchpoint (video, materials). Don't forget to make your pledge by Friday, we will be having a drawing for all pledges turned in.

THURSDAY

Final push! Share where the company is on reaching the campaign goal.

FRIDAY

Wrap-up Event (Pictionary, trivia, games, food, etc.). Recap week and share what was raised by the company, have leadership thank the team for their contributions.

TWO WEEK CAMPAIGN

WEEK ONE

MONDAY

Host a kickoff event with United Way staff, show a campaign video and host an agency speaker. Open up pledging and discuss plans for the next event. **INCENTIVE IDEA:** If you make your pledge by 2 pm today, you will be entered into a special gift card drawing.

TUESDAY

Thank event attendees and share new information (video, materials). If kickoff was virtual and recorded, invite those unable to attend to watch the recording.

WEDNESDAY

Email touchpoint (video, materials).

THURSDAY

We encourage you to take a break from messaging to prevent donor fatigue.

FRIDAY

Recap week and what activities are ahead.

WEEK TWO

MONDAY

Show video, email campaign updates (possibly coming from leadership) and encourage everyone to pledge before Friday.

TUESDAY

We encourage you to take a break from messaging to prevent donor fatigue.

WEDNESDAY

Virtual or in-person event such as a panel discussion with agencies or a trivia game at the end with a prize.

THURSDAY

Final push to encourage pledging. Email touchpoint (video, materials).

FRIDAY

Reminder email in the morning to pledge. End pledging in the afternoon and announce the total!

In-Person Event Ideas

FUNDRAISERS FOR YOUR COMPANY

50-50 Raffle Fundraising

50-50 raffle fundraising involves the sale of raffle tickets with the proceeds being split evenly between the winner and United Way. Your only fundraising expense is the raffle tickets, and all you need is one or more ticket sellers. Raffle tickets normally sell for \$1 apiece, with an incentive for multiple purchases.

Baby Picture Contest

Employees provide a baby photo of themselves, and staff guesses who is who. Those who want to guess must pay per guess.

Bake Sale or Contest

Encourage employees to bake for a bake sale. All proceeds from items sold benefit your campaign. Have a "Top Chef" competition between floors or departments, or have a contest to see who makes the best dessert.

Balloon Pop

Employees donate prizes for this event – a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with air, put a note inside with the name of the prize. Employees pay \$1 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they've won. Include a United Way fact in each balloon.

Basket Raffle

Ask each department to sponsor, create and fill a theme basket (spa, chocolate, lottery, gourmet cooking, etc.). Sell raffle tickets for baskets. Employees can select which basket or baskets

they'd like to win

Chili Cook Off

Ask employees to cook a favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. Invite employees to pay \$10 for lunch (a sample of each chili dish). Each participant casts one vote for their favorite and the chili with the most votes wins a prize.

Office Olympics

Teams participate in Olympic or Minute to Win-It type events, such as waste basket paper ball free throws, breakroom obstacle courses, paper airplane contests, etc. Teams pay to participate and the company buys prizes or lunch for the winning team.

Employee Cookbook

Collect recipes from employees, and compile them into sections and into a cookbook. Sell the cookbook for a reasonable fee. Consider having an employee's child provide the cover artwork. Books can be printed and bound by a local business.

Miniature Golf

Create a mini-golf course that takes players through your building – even up and down in elevators! The lowest score will take home a prize. Interested employees return an entry form, pay a fee and bring a putter the day of the event.

Silent Auction

Ask vendors and employees to donate items, or solicit gift cards from local restaurants. Put the items on display online or in a prominent location. At a designated time, close the bidding. Then let employees know of the highest bid and continue the auction with one hour left to outbid it to win it.

Tailgate party

Create a sports theme for your campaign since the United Way campaign coincides with football season. Sell football fare from a truck in the parking lot "tailgate" style. Offer hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts, soft drinks and other goodies. Organize a tag football game, with participants donating an entry fee and observers wagering on the outcome.

Add'l Event Ideas

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES THAT RAISE AWARENESS

If you are unable to host a presentation by a member of the United Way of Steele County team, there are still ways to get your team motivated and engaged in the campaign. We have created a number of activities that engage the audience, spread the message of how their support makes a real difference, and highlight the needs of our community.

Below you will find a QR code that will link to a Google Drive that contains directions and print outs for these games. If you would like a member of our team to help facilitate the activity, please contact us and we will be happy to do so! These can also be built in to our presentations, though they do typically take 15-30 minutes to conduct. In the Google Drive, you will find the following:

1. **The Kitchen Sink activity**
2. **The Making Choices activity**
3. **"I am ALICE" stories**



**SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD MATERIALS**

UWSC as a Community Connector



BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

United Way of Steele County is more than a fundraiser—we're a connector. We bring together local nonprofits, businesses, schools, and community members to tackle big issues like hunger, housing, and education. By working together, we make a stronger impact than any one group could alone.

Whether it's connecting families to vital resources, supporting programs that help kids succeed, or partnering with local leaders to find real solutions, United Way serves as a hub for good. We listen to the needs in our community and help direct time, talent, and funding where it's needed most.

Campaign Best Practices

RUNNING THE BEST CAMPAIGN YOU CAN!

Kickoff

Invite employees to a virtual or in-person kickoff or record a video from a senior executive to distribute electronically to all employees. United Way and Partner Agency speakers are also available to join virtual or in-person kickoffs to share the impact of gifts made to United Way.

Utilize Available Resources

This WCA guide and more are available online in our Campaign Toolkit. These documents include sample email messaging, video links, PDFs of collateral materials and more. Your United Way representative can guide you through all steps of running a virtual or in-person campaign as well as help you set goals, train your team and more.

Communications

Coordinate outgoing communications to avoid overwhelming employees. Be sure to promote any corporate match, corporate gifts or other incentives to increase contributions. Have your Campaign Committee make individual asks of their team. If possible, this is always done best face-to-face. Consider phone calls instead of emails to facilitate interpersonal communication.

Incentives

Popular incentives and prizes include a day off with pay, rewards or raffles for unique experiences. Consider using their completed pledge forms as entrance into the raffle.

Events

Consider having in-person events once the campaign has launched to promote donation options and have a little fun. Host a silent auction with prizes like gift cards or host a virtual bingo game. For more event ideas, contact your United Way representative. Be sure to mark your calendar for United Way events throughout the year, as well!

Recognition and Thanks

Send thank you e-cards from your CEO, Campaign Chair, or other team members. Send personal thank you notes to each of your Campaign Committee members. Highlight givers of a certain level on a team call or monthly e-newsletter. If possible, host an event or have a special thank you for donors who give at a certain level. Publicize results and reiterate the impact of gifts via your company newsletter, email or intranet.

Pledging Tools & Other Giving Vehicles

THE MANY WAYS TO GIVE

Paper Pledge Forms

- Best for in-person campaigns.
- Requires no set up – just let your United Way representative know how many you need.
- Great tangible reminder for donors.

e-Pledge

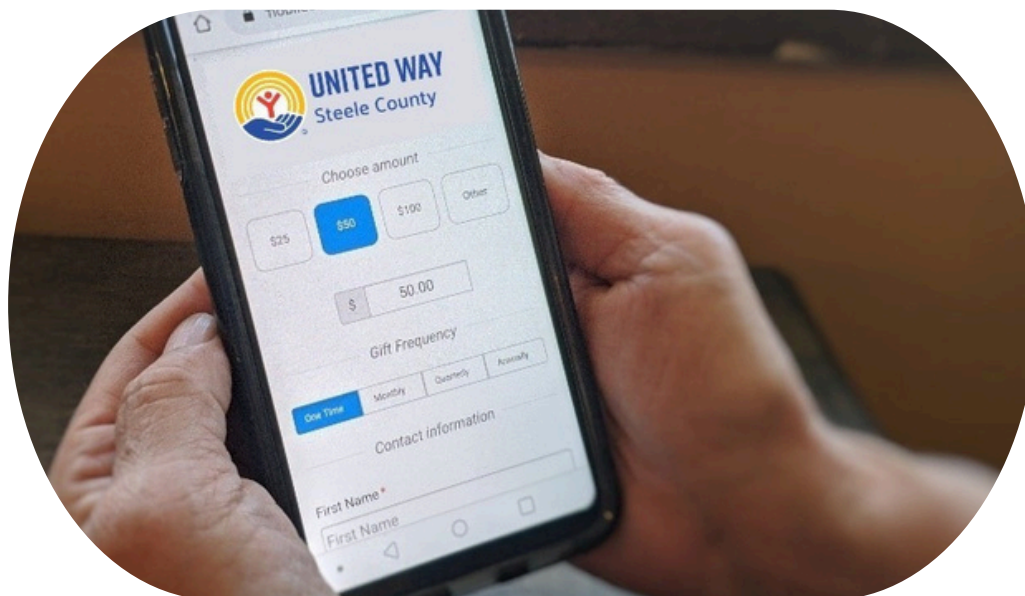
- Ability to send follow up emails to non-respondents.
- Company branded campaign website.
- Ease of dissemination.

Online Giving

- Ability to share via email.
- Provides donors with options for one-time payment or monthly payments via credit card or bank transfer.

Other Formats

- Venmo and text-to-give options allow for other, simpler giving options
- Easy to send to employees and former employees as well.
- Contact your United Way representative to discuss what pledging format(s) may be best suited to your company and its needs.



Social Media



BE AN ONLINE ADVOCATE!

Social media is a great way to engage your employees in your workplace campaign and promote your internal philanthropic efforts to an external audience. Digital engagement is more important than ever these days. Be sure to discuss a digital strategy and even consider adding someone from IT to your campaign team.

Be a Social Media Champion

Please be sure to tag us in your posts and link to our website or social media pages where you can! We'll do our best to cross promote your efforts on our channels too, so monitor our pages as well and give us a **Like** or **Share**. And don't forget to use relevant hashtags on your posts. Here are a few we suggest: **#UnitedIsTheWay** or **#SupportLocal**

Get Creative

For those interested in taking your social media efforts a step further, here are some fun new ideas to consider:

- Use Facebook Live during campaign events, particularly if you have multiple offices or locations.
- Have a staff member take over your Instagram account for the day and share impactful photos.
- Participate in our #WednesdayWhy challenge! Every Wednesday of your campaign period, share a photo or a video of one employee sharing their "why" for giving to United Way. We recommend that your first week be the CEO or another senior-level executive.

FOLLOW US!



@uwsteelecounty



Volunteer Opportunities

VOLUNTEERISM BUILDS STRONG TEAMS!

Let Us Be Your Partner in Volunteerism

Together, we can go beyond the annual workplace campaign and provide a meaningful way for your employees to put their talents toward community good through activities that align with your organization's corporate social responsibility goals.

We Know Our Community

No other organization is better equipped to connect volunteers to the needs of Steele County. We have been working with dozens of local organizations for decades, learning their needs and capabilities in our communities. We have the capacity to connect you to numerous local volunteer opportunities.

We Create an Experience

Whether you're looking for a unique team-building exercise, business-to-business networking, or a great fit for your corporate social responsibility platform, we can help you meet those needs. Our staff will help connect you with engaging volunteer experiences that will be fun and impactful for your team.

We Make It Easy for You

We are here to make your volunteer opportunity one to remember. Our staff will help you customize your activity so that everyone leaves energized and inspired. We can set up communications and connect you with the organization or project that fits your needs and the needs of your employees.

BUILD YOUR TEAM. BUILD YOUR BUSINESS. BUILD YOUR REPUTATION.





UNITED WAY
Steele County

MAKING A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

40,300

Individuals served
in 2024

9,250

Free meals delivered
to those in need

1,000+

Free books delivered
to children each month

430

Tax filings completed
at NO charge

WE ARE DEDICATED TO SERVING THE
RESIDENTS OF STEELE COUNTY IN
ORDER TO BUILD A STRONGER AND
MORE EQUITABLE COMMUNITY!



FOLLOW US



@UWSteeleCounty

www.UnitedWaySteeleCounty.org



UNITED WAY
Steele County

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK



HELPS A SENIOR IN NEED

by providing free, nutritious meals delivered right to their home



SUPPORTS A STUDENT

seeking employment by providing workforce training to get a good job



HELPS A FAMILY

remain in their home in the face of eviction

**Help
Change
a Life.
GIVE
TODAY!**

Your generous support makes a difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors right here in Steele County!

245 SE 18th St, Ste #1 Owatonna, MN 55060
507-455-1180 UnitedWaySteeleCounty.org



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: HOW LONG SHOULD OUR WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN RUN?

A: The average campaign runs for one or two weeks. Longer campaigns often take up additional time and resources for both the campaign coordinator and employees. One to two weeks is sufficient to kick off your campaign, get the message out effectively, and make your ask without overburdening staff. An exception could be if you are the campaign coordinator at a very large or multi-site company.

Q: ARE DONATIONS TO UNITED WAY TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

A: Yes. For additional information, please visit our website.

Q: WHEN SHOULD OUR GIVING CAMPAIGN RUN?

A: Most campaigns take place sometime between September and November, but they can happen at a time best suited for your organization.

Q: IF EMPLOYEES WORK REMOTELY, CAN WE STILL RUN A CAMPAIGN?

A: Absolutely! Since 2020, companies have pivoted how they run their United Way campaigns. This Campaign Handbook has information to equip any company to run a successful campaign no matter what the work environment is. Please contact your United Way representative if you would like to learn more about connecting with remote employees.

Q: WHEN DOES PAYROLL DEDUCTION START?

A: Payroll deduction usually runs from January 1 – December 31. However, United Way does not set your payroll schedule; it is a company's decision. Also, just a reminder that these are pledges only, employees are not liable to pay them if they leave their job for any reason.

Q: IF I NEED SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTANCE, WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

A: United Way of Steele County supports an information and referral service called 211. Simply dial 2-1-1 and a trained professional will gladly refer you to resources in your area. Otherwise, you are welcome to call our office and a member of our team will assist you with your needs.



2025 Partner Agencies



UNITED IS THE WAY™

How We Can Help

DON'T BE AFRAID TO REACH OUT!

Contact us with any questions that you have as you begin to plan or implement your workplace campaign. Our staff is here to support you throughout the process to ensure that you host the most successful campaign possible!

Speak with your United Way representative to place an order for the materials that you require (all provided at no cost!) or to schedule a presentation for your team. Together we can work to build a stronger and more equitable Steele County for all!



Contact Us

Phone

507-455-1180



Email

annette.duncan@unitedwaysteelecounty.org or
neil.lyons@unitedwaysteelecounty.org



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<http://www.unitedwaysteelecounty.org>



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