



**UNITED WAY
@ WORK**

LIVE UNITED





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UNITED WAY @ WORK ALL YEAR LONG

Employers, campaign coordinators and United Way staff who may be new to workforce campaigns – this book is for YOU! It's a collection of ideas to help employees get more engaged – all year long – with United Way's work.

This idea book offers fun ways every month to highlight one of United Way's three core issues: Health, Education and Financial Stability. Each month, we offer ways to inform, activate and support employees around that month's theme. We hope these ideas will spark more, and help you connect more people with local solutions – to help make your community a better place to live, work and play.

YOU'LL SEE ICONS THROUGHOUT:



Show the impact.

Informs employees, their families and the community about United Way's work to create lasting community change.



Take action.

Helps employees get involved in making a difference in their community.



Get connected.

Links employees to relevant United Way resources, often without leaving the office.



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tudies show that employees who feel connected to their community are healthier, happier, and more productive. Employees who feel more engaged with their community – while @ work – can help boost working relationships, job satisfaction, and the company’s bottom line.

United Way research shows that people want to do more than simply check a payroll deduction box, or write a check. They want to make a difference – to be a part of a larger effort to make their community a better place. When that happens in the workplace – by donating, volunteering or spreading the word – it adds value to the employee experience.

This idea book is a collection of opportunities to engage your colleagues in a way that fuels our work to build stronger communities around the world. Positive community change can’t happen without workplace engagement, so it’s important to always thank people for

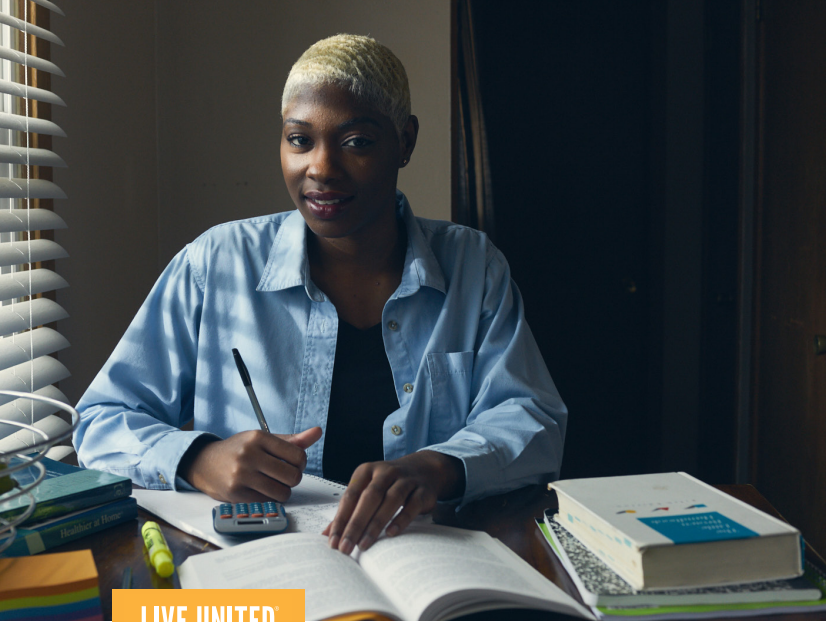
efforts made and time contributed. For “thank you” ideas, check out [An A-to-Z Guide for Giving Thanks](#) – a companion piece to this United Way @ Work guide.

When you partner with United Way, you are part of a network of more than 9 million donors worldwide. From businesses, governments and labor organizations, to community groups, non-profits and individuals – we are all working to make communities stronger.

If you’re a longtime supporter of United Way: Thank you. We appreciate all you’ve done. If you’re beginning our partnership: Welcome!

No matter what stage of our partnership you and your colleagues are at with United Way, we want everyone to be a part of building stronger communities. We’re focused on making life better for everyone, in every community.





JANUARY

January is a time for fresh starts and resolutions – and in the United States, the start of a new tax season. As an employer, you can leverage these annual milestones into positive outcomes by engaging employees around the topic of **FINANCIAL STABILITY**.

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Show the Impact.

One fun way to get people thinking about saving is to organize a “Piggy Bank” program. It can teach employee’s young children about the importance of keeping money in the bank. In Las Vegas, young leaders helped elementary schoolers save over \$18,000 with a “Piggy Bank” program that included a financial literacy curriculum emphasizing the importance of saving. Find out more [here](#).



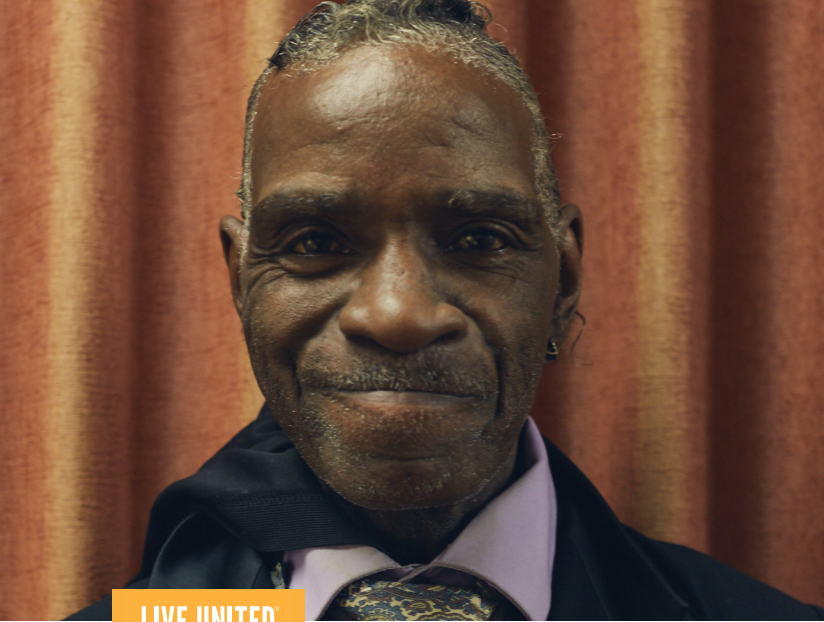
Take action.

Are there any financial literacy classes already in your school system? Work with your United Way to find out what the needs are there, and whether its dollars or advocacy that could expose more kids to things like “Piggy Bank” programs, especially in elementary and middle schools. Have employees write letters to the relevant education leaders in support of expanding or starting such classes.



Get connected.

Many United Ways are working to connect people with tools, information and resources to help them manage their money. United Way can bring financial literacy coaches, materials or a “lunch-n-learn” program to your company. And check out [MySmartMoney.com](https://www.mysmartmoney.com) created by United Way (and powered by SunTrust) as a free, easy and online way to get a handle on your money matters.



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FEBRUARY

A tax refund can be a great opportunity to start a savings plan that builds a family's future financial stability – so February is a great time to focus on the importance of **TAX PREPARATION**.



Show the Impact.

United Way is helping millions of Americans fortify their financial stability. In more than 250 communities, United Way offers online and in-person free tax preparation support, financial coaching and more. And 51 of those also take part in [SaveYourRefund](#), which encourages filers to save at tax time.

Get the scoop from your local United Way on their work, and ask them to help you inform employees about available financial resources. Coordinate with your United Way to plan a lunchtime workshop – then encourage attendance through newsletters, email, the company website and social media.



Take action.

One way employees can “pay it forward” is getting trained and certified by your local United Way to volunteer as financial coaches, tax preparers or just as event staff with local a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) programs.



Get connected.

Anyone at your company who earns \$64,000 or less can file federal and state taxes for free through United Way's [MyFreeTaxes](#). United Way has helped millions of families claim nearly \$10 billion in tax credits and refunds so far. It's sponsored by H&R Block®. Sign up as a MyFreeTaxes partner [here](#) to customize and download web banner ads, posters, flyers, social media content and more to spread the word in your company.



MARCH

In the windy days of March, it's time to fortify **JOB STABILITY**. Even with the good jobs that your company provides, there may be lower-wage employees in your company, or in your employees' families and neighborhoods, struggling to make ends meet.

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Show the Impact.

Invite your local United Way to host a “lunch-n-learn” for employees to share information about what’s happening in the community to help people get with the education and job skills needed to obtain or advance in good jobs. Your United Way may be partnering with the local community college, chamber of commerce and workforce development council. For a great example of a successful employer-United Way collaboration, check out [United Way’s Working Bridges](#) program in Burlington, Vermont.



Take action.

Arrange a clothing drive to help struggling women get the clothes they need for job interviews. Have employees bring in gently worn women’s business clothing. Depending on your company’s business, consider launching an in-store drive to add to the donation with contributions from customers or the public. Find out more about how the United Way in New Haven, CT does this with a “spring cleaning” [clothing drive](#).



Get connected.

Your human resource department and local United Way can work together to identify critical resources for employees in crisis, such as financial or family counseling, short-term guaranteed loans, transportation to and from work or appointments, or affordable housing, medical treatment or childcare.



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APRIL

As the weather turns warm in April, it's time for getting outside. National Minority Health Month and World Health Day both fall in April, so this month is a great time to focus on **STAYING ACTIVE**. There are lots of ways of making fitness fun for employees and their families.



Show the Impact.

Your United Way can help arrange for a prominent local athlete (e.g., local high school/ college coaches) to speak to employees and their families about physical activity and the importance of staying active. Give out pedometers at the event!

Many local United Ways have partnerships with college teams. For example, the 12 schools in the [Atlantic Coast Conference](#) work with United Ways in Massachusetts, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Check with your United Way to see what you can do to help promote youth health and wellness with them.



Take action.

Encourage your employees to join United Way's effort to help middle schoolers develop healthy habits. Our partnership with the NFL has produced *Character Playbook™*, a curriculum that students cultivate and maintain healthy relationships. It's available to schools and community organizations in all 32 NFL markets, across their viewing areas. Together, we want to provide character education for 1.2 million students by 2020. That's one out of every four middle school students. Learn more about *Character Playbook™* in your community [here](#).



Get connected.

Start an employee walking or running club. Take advantage of apps and online programs where employees can compare, compete and continue to encourage each other. Or work with your local United Way to sponsor a kids' running club, like [this one](#) in Sioux Falls, SD.



MAY

With home gardens reaping harvests and Hunger Awareness week in May, the time is right to engage employees around opportunities for **EATING HEALTHY.**

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Show the Impact.

Ask your CEO to shine the spotlight on hunger in your community by challenging employees to survive the week on a food stamp budget. Your United Way can help facilitate this, like [this example](#) in Seattle. Use your company's internal communications channels to keep employees tuned in to the challenges people face putting healthy food on the table.



Take action.

Get your employees involved in fighting hunger. Ask someone in each department to lead a healthy food drive, and work with your United Way to stock local food pantries. Check out what United Way in [Wilkes-Barre, PA](#) is doing to get more healthy food on their neighbors' plates, with opportunities for donating, volunteering and spreading the word about feeding one's neighbors.



Get connected.

Many working families are still struggling to afford healthy food. Ask your United Way for information about healthy food resources, and ask them to create posters for employee break rooms, common areas, bathrooms and cafeterias.



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JUNE

United Way Day of Action is held on June 21st each year, making June the perfect month for **GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED**. On this day, communities around the world join together, harnessing the volunteer spirit and improving the conditions of their communities.



Show the Impact.

Ask your United Way tell your company the story of the difference volunteering has made in your community – maybe with a video or an infographic. Share it with your company, through email and your Intranet, as you encourage employees to join United Way Day of Action on June 21st. Together, we can build stronger communities – all over the world.



Take action.

United Ways across America use Day of Action to provide free, nutritious food to those in need. Learn more [here](#). In Boynton Beach, FL, United Way conducted a community-wide food drive leading up to the Day of Action, then galvanized volunteers from local companies to sort the food to ensure it got to 1,000 hungry children and their families. Ask your United Way to help you do something similar, on June 21 or any day.



Get connected.

For employees who may need help for themselves or their families, make sure to post information about accessing your local 2-1-1, which connects people in need with real people to help with local health and human services, in visible and prominent places. Your local United Way may have posters for employee common areas, restrooms, break rooms and elevators. Find out more about 2-1-1 [here](#).



JULY

In July, students in the U.S. are well into their summer vacation. Too often, this turns into an academic summer slide, especially for low-income students who may not have access to quality enrichment activities. July is a great time to be **VOLUNTEER AS A READER, TUTOR OR MENTOR.**

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Show the Impact.

Connect with your local United Way to find out what's happening to low-wage students during the summer. Where are the gaps? Supplies? Healthy snacks? Volunteers for enrichment programs?

In Ames, Iowa it was all three. United Way worked with employers, schools and agencies to fill the gaps. Employees worked in classrooms, served meals and more. Find out more and watch an inspiring video [here](#).



Take action.

Few things help a child succeed in school, work or life than strong reading skills. Reading with young children (kindergarten through third grade) is a fun – and meaningful – way to volunteer. Ask your United Way to identify programs that will need reading volunteers when school starts. United Way may be able to help train and deploy employees, too. Encourage your employees to stay engaged, and ensure your customers learn about this great work by posting photos to Instagram and Facebook, and following United Way on Twitter @UnitedWay.



Get connected.

Your employees may know about children in their extended families, neighborhoods or churches who need a reading buddy, academic tutor or mentor. Get a list of existing support programs from your United Way, share via your company Intranet or email, and encourage employees to spread the word.



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AUGUST

August kicks off the school year – and it can be a stressful time for struggling families. Too often, students in low-wage families can't afford new backpacks or school supplies, so this month is a great time to **STOCKPILE SCHOOL SUPPLIES.**



Show the Impact.

Back-to-school is a great time to shine the spotlight on the difference education makes in a community. Work with your local United Way to host a Common Good Forecaster event, using our [Common Good Forecaster](#) tool. Over breakfast, your United Way can demonstrate exactly what it would mean for your community to raise high school graduation rates. After the demonstration, your United Way can facilitate a conversation with employees about how they can help make that happen – in real life.



Take action.

Ask employees to support a company-wide school supply drive. United Way can work with its partners and the schools to identify what's needed. Make it a competition – which department can stuff more backpacks full of supplies by Friday? In Jacksonville, NC, companies and individuals spend a week each summer “stuffing the bus” (a real school bus!) with school supplies for homeless children. Find out more [here](#).



Get connected.

Two-thirds of children living in poverty have no books at home. Coordinate with your local United Way to organize a children's book drive, and ask them to stage a distribution event. In Rhode Island, United Way galvanizes businesses around a statewide book drive every summer, and offers a useful book drive toolkit online. Check it out [here](#).



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SEPTEMBER

September means a new school year is in full swing, and it's also Attendance Awareness Month. There is no better time to focus on the importance of better **ATTENDANCE**.



Show the Impact.

Most people don't know that missing school early on creates academic problems later. Kids who miss more than 18 days of their kindergarten year often end up with lower test scores later on. That makes it hard to catch up. By 9th grade, missing 20 percent of the school year is a strong predictor of dropping out. Ask your United Way to share attendance information (from United Way's partnership with [Attendance Works](#)). Hold a celebratory kickoff event to announce your company's support of good school attendance and its link to good attendance in the workplace.



Take action.

Your United Way and local educators can suggest specific ways employees can help kids improve school attendance, but you can also find lots of tips, tools and resources to support Attendance Awareness Month in this [toolkit](#).



Get connected.

Work with your United Way to educate your employees about the importance of getting kids to school on time, every day. Even in middle and high school, attendance matters. You can host a "lunch-n-learn" to get the word out, and provide information flyers like [this one](#).



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OCTOBER

With the holidays quickly approaching, leverage this surge of generosity by ramping up your **WORKPLACE GIVING** campaign and give employees opportunities to give back to their communities without ever having to leave the office.



Show the Impact.

A kick-off event is perfect for boosting excitement – the more spectacular and fun, the better! Advertise the kick-off via email, social media and on your company Intranet to get people pumped up about the fun to come.

Consider adding some substance to the fun! If your United Way has a community impact snapshot flyer or brochure that shows what your company’s support helped achieve last year, be sure to have copies of that at your event.



Take action.

Whether you use paper or online pledge forms, it’s more important than ever to make your campaign fun and exciting. Be creative with content that gets contributors excited about giving and volunteering. Encourage generosity and make everyone glad they decided to get involved! If you need videos, infographics or stories about United Way’s global impact, you can find them on United Way’s Corporate Resources site [here](#).



Get connected.

Follow up with employees to make sure they have what they need to contribute. Keep information available in a readily-accessible place – on your company Intranet, if everyone has access to it – for employees who decide to contribute later.





NOVEMBER

November is here, and it's time to look more deeply at everyone in our lives and the ways we can give **BIG THANKS**.

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Show the Impact.

Saying thank you and having their accomplishments acknowledged goes a long way – it engages and encourages volunteers to continue their effort. Connecting thanks to impact is the key to volunteer engagement. Communicate by example so that others will follow your lead – and talk to your employees about the importance of saying thanks – especially to those working directly with clients. Thanking is appreciated by everyone!



Take action.

The simplest way of expressing gratitude is to just say it or write a note. You can also give a unique piece of “kid art” as a reminder of the sentiment. Work with your United Way to generate art in daycare centers or after school programs it may fund.



Get connected.

Give people more options for saying “thanks,” and it will be that much easier for them to take action! A supply of note cards or a subscription to Constant Contact can be helpful for employees who need to make a large-scale effort to thank their clients. Hook employees up with United Way’s [“An A-to-Z Guide for Giving Thanks”](#), and you’ll help get them off to a great start!



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DECEMBER

In many cultures, December is an important month for **HOLIDAYS** – and a great opportunity to add to the celebration while providing one final opportunity for employees to contribute to United Way!



Show the Impact.

This is a good time to provide a snapshot from your United Way about how your community has come together over the last year to create greater opportunities for all. If you've been tracking your company engagement, you could even work with your local United Way to create a customized e-card that thanks everyone in your company for all the giving, volunteering and advocating that they've done. Or it could be a simple email from your CEO. By lifting up the good work that United Way – and your company – have done together will make everyone feel the spirit of the holiday season.



Take action.

It's also a great time to focus kids on the value of giving. Team up with your United Way to help teach your employees' kids about philanthropy. In Austin, TX, United Way hosts a Family Volunteer Day, when parents and kids decorate ornaments, drop off books for a book drive and write holiday cards to local teachers.

Another way is to share this great [video](#) from Kid President, *How To Change The World*, with employees. Encourage them to watch it at home with their kids, and discuss how their family can change the world!



Get connected.

For many families, the holidays are a time of need. 2-1-1, United Way's free and confidential service, connects individuals in need with human services such as training, employment, food pantries, help for aging parents, addiction prevention, affordable housing and support groups, as well as opportunities to volunteer. Promote 2-1-1 to employees through newsletters, in-office signage, in safety meetings, etc. – and ask them to spread the word. (Find out more about 2-1-1 [here](#).)