

SPECIAL EVENTS – FUN THEME IDEAS

Other Ideas:

- Health and wellness
- **LIVE UNITED**
- Be a superhero!
- Teaming up for our community
- Make a world of difference
- Hollywood
- Mardi Gras
- Shoot for the Stars
- Olympics
- Back to School
- Christmas in September
- Carnival
- 1960's, 1970's, or 1980's
- The Great Outdoors
- Grease (The movie)
- Music Mania
- Chocolate Heaven
- Space Odyssey
- Neighbor Helping Neighbor
- Be a Lifesaver
- Tea Party/Mad Hatter
- Build a Better Tomorrow
- Changing Lives/The United Way
- Get in the Game
- Mystery Theme
- Lights! Camera! Action!
- Minute to Win It!
- Costume Contest
- Block Party

- **Give United** so others can **LIVE UNITED!**
- **Sweet Encouragements!** Who doesn't love candy? Use some of these sweet treats to bring some fun and (sugar-induced) energy to your campaign!
- **Use a popular TV show** as the theme: Glee, Mad Men, Cupcake Wars, Survivor
- **Las Vegas** – Tie in the “What happens in Vegas...” theme to “What’s raised in Benton and Franklin Counties stays in Benton and Franklin Counties.”
- **Hour of Power** – Publicize what services are provided from 1 hour of pay donation.
- **Sports** – Hold a tailgate party. Have a playing field with players advancing towards the goal. “Go the extra yard- Give” Hold contests between Seahawks and Broncos! Make the loser dress in gear from the other team. Add a football toss - measure for distance and accuracy with prizes for the top Guy and top Gal. Charge per attempt.
- **Chip in for United Way** – Place chocolate chip cookies or a bag of chips on everyone's desk to let them know about an upcoming campaign and encourage them to “chip in”.
- **Beat the Bad Habit** – Get co-workers to stop being tardy to meetings, popping their gum, failing to recycle, leaving letterhead in the copy machine, whatever! Offenders pay a quarter for their transgressions!
- **Made in Washington**
 - WSU Cougar Gold Cheese
 - Wine/Beer/Spirits
 - Honey
 - Kirkland Costco
 - Starbucks
 - Country Mercantile
 - Chucker Cherries
 - Pasta Mamas



Airplane Toss

Throw paper airplanes through a hula-hoop, charge per throw. You may have to show them how to fold the airplanes, but lessons will cost. This is a great event if you have a big engineering department.

Auction

Ask employees to donate an item to be auctioned off. Items can include old items from home, a service (e.g., car wash) or handmade item (e.g., baked goods or crafts). Advertise your auction well in advance and combine it with a potluck lunch.



Picture Contest

Post employees' baby pictures and sponsor a contest to guess who's who. Post pet pictures and guess who owns them. Have employees purchase chances to guess.

Bagging It

Designate a day as a "Brown Bag Day" every month or every other month. Encourage staff to bring their lunches on that day and bring in a speaker to talk about United Way initiatives or a funded program. After the lunch, post a brief summary of the presentation on your website, print it in your newsletter or distribute via email.

Bake Sale

Many organizations hold bake sales to raise money. Ask employees to bring in baked goods for the event. Package in individual serving sizes for a mid-day snack. Advertise well in advance of the bake sale with posters, flyers and e-mail. Don't forget to recruit volunteers to help with set-up, serving and clean up.

Radio-controlled Car Race

Set up a pre-determined course/race map. Use timers to see who can run the course in the shortest time.

Barbeque

A barbeque is a common component of United Way campaigns. To make your barbeque successful advertise the items that will be served and sell tickets well in advance so that you can determine how many hamburgers (or hot dogs, steaks, etc.) you will need. Encourage management to cook.

Candy Grams

It doesn't take much time to organize a candy-grams fundraiser, but it can end up raising a lot of money. Sell candy grams to employees for a small fee and deliver them on the last day of your campaign. Try to pick a treat that ties into your campaign. For example, you could use Halloween candies if there is a Halloween theme. Bulk stores sell a wide variety of shaped gummy treats.

Casual Day

Casual Days are very simple to run. Make sure you get permission from management. Charge employees \$1 or \$5 to dress casually on the designated day. Employees can wear a badge that says they are dressed casually in support of United Way. Suggestions: Jeans day, pajama day, jersey day.

Coffee or Bakery Cart/Happy Hour

Arrange for volunteers to bring a coffee and snack cart throughout the office one day. Advertise it in advance. Solicit donations of coffee and snacks from suppliers or ask co-workers to contribute baked goods. If you do have to purchase items, make sure you sell them at a profit. Suggestions: popcorn, iced tea, ice cream bars

Cookie Exchange

Similar to a bake sale, ask employees to bring in their favorite cookies for the event. All cookies are placed on tables and employees can walk through and pick their favorite ones to take home. Charge by the container or by the pound.

Pumpkin Carving Contest

Put together a team of carvers or individuals. Set different categories for judging (most creative, scariest, funniest, etc.). Charge teams/individuals to enter or charge people to vote for their favorite.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Chili Lunch or Cook-off

Invite employees to bring in a batch of their best chili, then have co-workers judge each chili based on taste, texture and fire value. Advertise in advance with posters, memos and e-mails. To help the luncheon run smoothly, sell tickets in advance. Provide rolls and salad. Charge an entrance fee and tasting fee.

Decorating Contest

Host a decorating contest and charge participants to enter or charge employees to vote on a winner. Items to be decorated could include an office, a piggy bank, a toy car, a t-shirt or anything else you can think of!

Email Bingo

Email bingo can take place all day unlike traditional bingo. Sell bingo cards to email users. Throughout the day, call out bingo numbers using email. The first email user to get bingo should then reply to all and win a prize.

Pie Toss

Recruit management to help you with this carnival classic. Give employees the opportunity to toss whipped cream pies or damp sponges at willing volunteers for a dollar or two. Make sure that targets wear garbage bags to protect their clothes.

Executive Car Wash

Ask members of the senior management team to wash cars during one lunch hour. Hold the car wash in the parking lot and charge employees \$3 or \$5 to have their cars washed.

“Root” for the Community

Provide root beer and ice cream and sell to employees during break or lunch. Set up tables with information about United Way initiatives and partner providers for an educational piece.

Games (Carnival Style)

Set up old-fashioned carnival games such as a ring toss, fish pond and balloon dart-throw. You can purchase inexpensive prizes through Oriental Trading. Award prizes to the winners of the “games of skill”.

Penny Wars

This event can last the duration of your campaign or year round. Have departments compete to collect the most pennies. For an interesting twist, you can make it so that other types of coins are worth negative points. For example, a nickel would cancel out five pennies. This allows people to “sabotage” other teams while raising more money for United Way.

Midnight Breakfast

If your organization has a third shift, charge employees for a midnight breakfast served by executives and other day employees. This can also be done with a second shift crew.

Farmer’s Market

Ask employees to bring in extra items from their gardens.

Allow employees to purchase fresh home-grown produce.



Something-a-Thon

Walk-a-thons, Dance-a-thons, Skip-a-thons and other “Marathons” are popular events. Have participants collect pledges for your event based on the number of hours danced or miles walked.

Volunteer Event

Organize a group of employees to volunteer for United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Potluck Lunch

Ask each staff member to contribute a dish for a potluck luncheon. Make a sign up form ahead of time to ensure a mix of salads/starters, main courses, drinks and desserts. Give it a multicultural twist by requesting dishes from all over the world. Charge a small fee to eat.

Tacky Toilet

Inspire competition between branches or departments. Put a toilet on a platform, with a plexi-glass lid with a slot under the seat. Employees must fill the bowl with change before they can pass it on to the next location. Each location must add a “tacky” decoration (such as a hula girl, etc.) to the toilet before they pass it on. Post a sign saying “Don’t flush your money away, Give to United Way” to inspire customer giving!

Scavenger Hunt

Hold an office scavenger hunt. Split into teams (perhaps by department) and have employees search for a few items during the lunch hour. Award a prize to the winners. You can also hold scavenger hunt electronically with questions about United Way and the programs we fund

Crazy Olympics

Employees compete in crazy “athletic” events for silly prizes. Participants donate to enter. Observers wager bets on their favorite entrants. Examples of events: three-legged race, tricycle race, push an egg (not hard-boiled!) across the finish line with your chin. Mini-golf using beach balls, pool cues, etc. Use your imagination!

Sausage Race

Hold a Klement’s Sausage race! Have designated employees wear the costumes and race around parking lot. Employees can bet on winners. Make it extra fun by requiring specific sausages to start behind or ahead of the pack (those under 30 step back three paces, person signing all paychecks step up four paces, etc).

Survivor

Create tribes (teams) to compete throughout your campaign for prizes. Hold luxury challenges each day where groups compete mentally or physically for a treat such as soda, candy or raffle tickets. Some suggestions for luxury challenges include the following: United Way quiz, office mini-putt game, trivia game or a scavenger hunt.

Where in the County is Your CEO?

The company CEO or president can visit different United Way agencies and get his/her picture taken there. Be sure not to show the agency name (unless a clue is needed). Share a photo with employees each day and they can guess the correct agency to win a prize. This game is fun, shows that the CEO/President is a supporter, and gets employees to read through the materials in order to find the answers.

Pentathlon

Schedule noon-hour events each day of the week. Some suggested events are paper airplane-throwing, wastebasket basketball, an obstacle course and a briefcase toss. Encourage interdepartmental competition and hold finals in the main lobby so that employees can cheer on their colleagues.

Balloon Pop

Blow up balloons and place a numbered ticket in each balloon. Participants purchase balloons and pop them to win a prize. Balloons may be placed around the office to create a festive atmosphere or put balloon bouquets on a cart and take to each person’s work station.



SPECIAL EVENTS – MORE FUN IDEAS

50/50 Raffle – Conduct a cash raffle with 50% of funds raised to winner and 50% to United Way.

Back to High School – Employees bring high school pictures of themselves. Hold a contest to guess the year of the photo and who it is.

Community Baby Shower – Take up a collection for a local shelter or agency. Present collection to UWBFCO.

Dress-up the Boss – Boss wears a costume voted on by all employees if the campaign goal is reached. Examples: tutu, animal costume, devil costume, etc.

Eating Contest – Who can eat the most in a given amount of time – burgers, hotdogs, kringle, pickles, watermelon, etc.

Executive Trades - Raffle off changing jobs for a day with management, have the CEO do office chores or even babysitting.

Football Helmet Drive – Use football helmets for employees to drop in loose change all week.

Give It Up - Ask your employees to give up purchasing their daily coffee, soda or snack for a day or week. They can donate the money they would have spent to United Way.

Minute to Win It games - have employees pay to play and the winner or best time wins a prize.

International Food Day – Employees can team together to create tasty treats from around the world. They can dress in appropriate costumes. Hold the event over the lunch hour. Employees purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths. A panel of “celebrity” judges awards prizes.



Plant Sale – Ask employees to dig up extra perennials to sell to fellow employees.

Quarter shot glass contest – Fill a large jug with water and put a shot glass at the bottom. Invite co-workers to drop quarters through a slot cut out in the lid. Provide prizes to those who drop their quarters in the shot glass.

Recycled Goods – Turn in recycled paper, cans, bottles, etc. and exchange them for money for the United Way.

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)

Spelling Bee – Organize a spelling bee with participants paying an entry fee. Have other employees pay to place bets on the winner. Award the winners with a special incentive.

Team Tees – Design a T-shirt with your company logo joined with the United Way logo to give to contributing employees who “team up” in the United Way effort. If you have competitions between department use different colors.

Tourney Time – Hold a broomball, softball, tee-ball, tennis, kickball or ping-pong tournament.

Unlock a chest of treasures – Encourage co-workers to buy a key for a certain amount. One key will open a treasure chest of prizes.

Walking Tacos - Sell individual bags of corn chips with divided plastic or foam containers with taco meat, cheese, sour cream, tomatoes, lettuce, taco sauce etc. Price accordingly.

White Elephant Sale – Solicit employees to donate odd items or services to auction. One person’s trash is another person’s treasure!

Wine Tasting – Hold a wine tasting at a local restaurant or wine store. Charge for entrance and ask establishment to also donate a percentage of sales to United Way.

SPECIAL EVENTS – LOW OR NO COST INCENTIVES

United Way of
Benton & Franklin Counties



Thinking of prizes and awards for contest winners can be difficult and expensive. Use these ideas for low or no cost incentives to award prizes to winners of campaign-related contests or to recognize outstanding efforts.



- CEO for the day
- Prime parking places
- Day or half day off with pay
- Executives serve lunch to employees
- Birthday off
- Time off to go to child's school event
- United Way promo items- shirts, cups, pens
- Company promo items- shirts, caps, coffee mugs, pens
- Computer lessons from knowledgeable employee
- Two hours off per month to volunteer for United Way
- Feeling Well Day off with pay
- Sleep in late day
- Volunteer to do someone else's undesirable tasks
- Name a rotating award after an outstanding employee
- Create a unique, catchy award that is an honor to receive
- Create a Wall of Fame to display pictures of loyal contributors
- Flee by 3 - leave at 3 p.m. on designated days
- Traveling trophy for the department with highest participation or volunteers
- Provide a free YMCA membership or passes to a fitness club
- Pass out raffle tickets that can be accumulated and redeemed for special gifts
- Do the job of the "front line" employees
- Have the CEO or senior executives write a personal note of thanks
- Match an employee's donation to United Way
- Have free refreshments in the cafeteria or break room
- Offer free popcorn every Friday (or every day)
- Managers take employees to lunch or dinner
- Department pizza day
- Award a "dinner for two"
- Tickets to a sporting event
- Gift certificates
- Movie or concert tickets
- Lottery tickets
- Gas card
- Massage at local spa
- Cookie jar filled with cookies weekly
- 2 hour lunch break
- Office redecorated or cleaned
- Company picnic
- Picnic basket full of goodies
- Have an executive volunteer to shave their head if the company meets its United Way goal