

# United, We Strengthen our Community.

United Way  
of Larimer County



## UNITED WAY OF LARIMER COUNTY WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN

# Special Event Ideas to Make Fundraising FUN!

Special events are a great opportunity to support United Way and have fun in the workplace. Even small events can be a great way to grow a campaign. When combined with employee donations and payroll deductions, your efforts make a big impact here in Larimer County!

### POPULAR SPECIAL EVENTS:

**Silent Auction:** Buy or solicit donated items and then have people place bids for the items of their choice.

**Jeans / Casual Days:** Sell opportunities for employees to wear jeans or other casual clothing.

**Barbecue Contest:** Fire up the grill and break out your best barbecue recipes! Require contestants to pay an entry fee and charge spectators by the plate. Ask members of the group to act as judges. Consider requiring homemade sauce or creating categories for different meats and veggies. Could also be done with chili, dips, cookies—the sky is the limit!

**Snack Cart / Table:** Purchase items at Sam's Club or Costco (or use homemade items) and sell them around the office for \$1 or \$2 with proceeds benefiting your campaign.

**Run / Walk:** Organize a fun run / walk. Gather donations or have participants pay an entry fee to compete in this run.

**Penny Wars:** Have a contest between employees—or managers—to see who can get the most pennies in a jar. Silver coins could count as negative points. Have the person with the most—or least—amount do something silly like take a pie to the face!

**Drawing for a Chance to Win:** Purchase or solicit a donated item and have employees make a donation for a chance to win. 50 / 50 pots are another great idea and don't require a hot-ticket item. The winner of a 50 / 50 pot gets half of the total pool, while the other half would be a donation to United Way.

### SPORTING EVENTS:

**Bike-a-thon:** Charge an entry fee. Participants collect pledges for the number of miles they ride.

**Bowling Tournament:** Set up a bowling alley in a hallway using bottled water and a ball. Charge participants to enter. Participants can get pledges for the number of pins knocked over.



**Executive Chair Race:** Set up a relay course for executives to go through. The executives are either sitting in a chair or on tricycles. Let observers “bet” on their favorite contestants.

**Tug-of-War:** Have employees play against executive staff or interdepartmental competition. Each team pays a fee to enter.

**Golf Tournament:** Participants pay a fee to enter. Have employees invite family and friends to raise even more money.

**Office Olympics:** Set up an obstacle course in the lunchroom, several offices, several floors of offices or outside. One station can be for typing a couple of paragraphs, another station for filing, another for photocopying, etc. The contestants pay an entry fee with the funds going to United Way.

**Tricycle Races:** Bring children’s tricycles. Before the race, employees pay to have sandbags or rolled pennies tied to opposing department managers’ tricycles. The first one to the finish line wins a prize for the department. A special prize could be a front row parking spot, baked goods, etc.

**Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament:** Rock crushes scissors. Scissors cut paper. Paper covers rock....you know the drill. Rope off an area to create a “boxing ring” where employees can compete against each other. Have employees place “bets” on who they think the winner will be. A fun idea is to have employees fill out brackets that predict who will win. The winner splits the money with United Way. You can host this tournament in conjunction with a barbecue or chili cook-off to gather more spectators.

**Minute to Win It:** A “Minute to Win It” fundraiser is inspired by the game show of the same name, where contestants are given 60 seconds in which to complete a game or challenge using everyday objects. Some examples of challenges include moving candy from one side of a room to the other with a straw (no hands), race to assemble the front of a cereal box that has been cut into 16 pieces, tap three balloons to keep them above ground for a minute, and using one hand to run a piece of thread through the eye of 10 needles. The possibilities are endless for the types of challenges you can create! To raise money you can charge an entrance fee to be a contestant and charge admission to spectators.

## FOOD EVENTS:

**Bake Sale:** Ask employees to bring their favorite cakes, cookies or breads. Even a small office can raise a lot of money with minimal effort. Sell per item or by the dozen. Jazz up your sale by adding a theme like all chocolate or healthy treats.

**Lunch Time Meals:** Sponsor a lunch of spaghetti, chili, barbecue or another favorite food. Charge a flat fee for all you can eat. The fee should be enough to cover expenses with some left over for a contribution.

**Potluck Lunch:** This is an easy money maker! Have everyone bring a dish and charge a small fee to eat.

**Potato or Sundae Bar:** Build your own baked potato or ice cream sundae. Include all the fixin's—invite others to pitch in their favorite toppings and then charge a fee. Fun and appropriate for all groups and ages!

**Dinner For a Week:** Get seven restaurants to donate a dinner for two and raffle off a week of eating out. Sell tickets for around \$30 each. The lucky winners are able to eat out every night for a week.

**Salsa & Dip Contest:** Ask employees to make either a salsa or dip (or both) to enter into the contest. You could set ticket prices to be \$5 per entry. Sell tickets to employees who would like to judge the dips, either \$0.25 per ticket or maybe \$1 per ticket. They can purchase as many tickets as they'd like and vote as many times as they'd like. The winner of the contest then gets a prize (maybe a paid day off!), bragging rights, a silly trophy, etc.

**Office Picnic:** Choose a day to gather at your company's green space or at a local park. Have employees pay a few dollars to be able to enjoy a slightly longer lunch break in the great outdoors! Could be combined with a pitch-in or a cooking contest for an even greater impact!

## OFFICE EVENTS:

**Ugly Tie Contest:** Company executives wear their ugliest ties and solicit "votes" (charge a vote is \$1) from employees. The person with the most votes (and money in hand) at the end of the day wins the prize. The money raised goes to United Way.



**Board Game Tournament:** Choose some classic and favorite games to play and charge an entry fee to play individually or as a team.

**Dog Wash:** People bring their dogs on a leash to an outdoor location with several water faucets. They pay a small fee to have dog washers wash and towel dry the animals.

**Trivia Night:** Host an evening where participants pay an entry fee to answer trivia questions. The audience pays an admission fee to watch the event.

**No Talent Contest:** Organize a talent contest where the contestants purposefully perform badly. Suggestions: singing out of tune for an entire song, silly and failing magic tricks, dance routine out of sync, etc. Charge \$1 for admission. However, to exit the building before the end of the contest is \$5 (or more). You could also consider hosting a karaoke night

**Funny Photo Contest:** Have a funny photo contest and ask for submissions from your group. Set up pictures like an art show. Place a jar, can, or box in front of each picture in which people can place coins or bills to vote for their favorites. Leave the display set up for at week or a long weekend.

**Used Book Sale:** Everyone has books that have been sitting on shelves, in the attic or in the basement collecting dust. Ask your colleagues to donate books they no longer want and set up a book sale in the office with proceeds benefiting United Way.

**Rake It Up:** Have employees pay to have their yards raked in the fall. Then assemble a group of volunteers to rake each yard.

**Blind Auction:** Get as many people as you can that will be attending the event to bring a wrapped package. The contents could be humorous or something of actual value. Donors can weigh down the boxes with a brick to disguise the contents, have an oversize box for a very small present, or wrap boxes within boxes to increase anticipation. Announce that at least one of the boxes contains something of value. As guests arrive they place their boxes on a display table so potential bidders can examine them and speculate on what they contain. Using a silent auction, make sure everyone has time to pick them up and shake them before the bidding. At the specified time, the results of the silent auction will be announced. Above all, make sure you allow time to have everyone open their box in front of the group.

**Reverse Raffle:** A reverse raffle is one where you don't want to win. Give a free ticket to everyone attending a regular organization meeting or special event. Tell them they are automatically included in the drawing for a slightly embarrassing prize (singing a song standing on a table, wearing a silly hat or mask, having their face painted, wearing a funny costume, etc). If they don't want to be eligible for the prize, they can "sell" their ticket for \$1 to \$10.

**Charity Garage Sale:** Gather donation items from your organization's members and other community members, and hold your garage sale in a high-traffic area.

**Take an Employee "Prisoner":** Take an employee—or better yet, a manager—"prisoner" for a day. You will set an amount for "bail" and the employee is usually kept in a fake cage in a public place and only allowed to have their cell phone with them. They are only released when he or she has raised a certain amount of money. This can be especially helpful if your campaign is very close to its goal.

