UNITED WAY
Metro Chicago

CAMPAIGN LEADERS GUIDE 2026 2027

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMPAIGN CHAIR

DAVID C. BLOWERS
Retired Vice Chairman
Northern Trust

It's great to be back as Campaign Chair, and I'm honored to partner with you for another year of impact across our region.

I'm continually inspired by your generosity and leadership, bringing your time, resources, and passion to help create positive change across the Chicago region. Year after year, your commitment to United Way helps turn community-driven ideas into meaningful action — creating opportunities, strengthening neighborhoods, and expanding access to the resources people need to thrive.

The progress we've made is inspiring, and the work ahead is full of possibility. Thank you for joining me in making this campaign year one of our most successful yet.

This is United Way.

5 STEPS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

STEP 1 Connect with Us

We want to better understand your goals and how you would like to approach your campaign.

- **Call or email your United Way representative to get started.** If you don't know who your contact is, call us at 312.906.2204 or email DonorHelp@LIVEUNITEDchicago.org.

STEP 2 Make a Plan

The keys to campaign success are preparation and teamwork. Having the right group of volunteers will increase the success of your campaign and make your role much easier.

- Set **fundraising and participation** goals, objectives, and a timeline, and identify and recruit your team.
- Utilize an **online giving platform** for a more streamlined donor experience.
- Learn about various strategies to **make your campaign fun and engaging.** Work with your United Way representative—we have many options for in-person, virtual, or hybrid activities!

STEP 3 Inspire Coworkers

Show people how their dollars are making a difference. Share data and stories about our work—and how donor support is helping create positive change.

- **Promote a culture of giving back.** A successful campaign requires frequent communications and reminders.
- Share your **personal story** about why you support United Way.

STEP 4 Make the Ask

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

- Kick off your campaign with a **fun event featuring an energetic and inspiring ask to give!** We can help you do that virtually or in person.
- Create fun activities to **drum up support and provide incentives** for your colleagues to participate.
- Have a company leader write a letter or make a speech. **Leadership support helps drive participation.**
- If in-person asks or events aren't an option, let us walk you through **email/virtual best practices.**

STEP 5 Convey Gratitude

Review **campaign results** with your United Way team.

- **Let us help you thank your donors.** Remember, we can't thank them if we don't know them! Sharing data is encouraged.
- **Share the impact!** Publicize the campaign results in your company newsletter, intranet, social media channels, or a message from the CEO.
- Send individualized thank-you notes to each donor. **Don't forget to say "Thank You!"**

MAPPING YOUR CAMPAIGN JOURNEY

KICK OFF YOUR CAMPAIGN

Core Best Practice

- Host a fun and engaging kickoff event!
- Invite your CEO and United Way representative to talk about United Way's impact.
- If virtual, use your company's preferred platform (Zoom, etc.).
- Length can vary. (Recommended ~30 min)

Bonus Best Practice

- If employees can't attend your kickoff event in person, host a virtual or hybrid session and share the recording through email, on your internal employee site, or at small gatherings.

DURING CAMPAIGN

Core Best Practice

- Track progress and adjust strategies and incentives accordingly.
- Send giving reminders.
- Continue sharing United Way impact stories and engagement opportunities.

Bonus Best Practice

- Host additional events for leadership donors, employee resource groups such as young professionals and women leaders.
- Host an in-person or virtual Day of Action or Care Project.

CAMPAIGN WRAP-UP

Core Best Practice

- Conduct a close-out meeting or rally.
- Share the final campaign fundraising total. Don't forget to thank and show appreciation to employees!
- Connect with your United Way representative to discuss year-round engagement opportunities and keep the momentum going!

ONLINE CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

Campaign Toolkit
(Print and Digital)

Email a United Way Representative
DonorHelp@LIVEUNITEDchicago.org

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