



**UNITED WAY**  
Central Illinois



# 2026 EMPLOYEE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR GUIDE

# Your Role as Employee Campaign Coordinator

Every journey needs someone who knows the route- and **that's you**. ECCs are the key to the success of every company's United Way fundraising campaign, serving as the connector between United Way and your fellow employees. With the materials and support we provide, you'll educate your colleagues about **United Way's vital work in our community** and invite them to take the first step. Because this year, we believe the way begins with you. Whether you volunteered or were asked to step into this role, we're grateful- and **we'll be right there with you for the whole ride.**

## The Mission of United Way of Central Illinois

Here's the reality: a significant portion of our neighbors in Central Illinois are working- sometimes multiple jobs- and still can't afford basic needs. United Way calls this the **ALICE population**: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. These aren't abstract statistics. They're people in our community who need a **hand up, not a handout.**

That's why United Way of Central Illinois has sharpened its focus. From 2026 through 2029, we're committed to **moving the needle in four specific areas**: giving kids the foundation they need to succeed in school, building a community that can weather a crisis, connecting people to mental and behavioral health resources, and helping adults achieve real financial stability. When you run a workplace campaign, you're funding all of it- **locally, directly, and meaningfully.**



**Jean Bruner-Jachino,**  
Director of Strategic Partnerships

“Last year, I had the privilege of meeting so many incredible people who give their time and energy to make these campaigns successful. I'm so excited to be back for another year alongside each of you- let's make 2026 even better!”

*-Jean*

# WHAT IS A WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN?

## FUN

A workplace campaign is more than a fundraiser- it's a chance to bring your team together around **something that matters**. From friendly competitions to **themed days** and **special events**, the campaign is an opportunity to **build culture** while building community.

## ENGAGING

Running a campaign is a team sport. Pull together a small committee, divide up responsibilities, and **lean on your United Way staff** whenever you need backup. What you're doing has real impact- on the **community**, and on your **workplace culture**. We're here to make sure it's worth every minute.

## EDUCATIONAL

Your campaign period is one of the most powerful tools United Way has for raising awareness. When employees understand the **real challenges** facing their neighbors- and see exactly how their dollars **make a difference**- giving becomes personal. Use videos, digital materials, and a **visit from your United Way** Director of Strategic Partnerships to bring the story to life.

View the 2026 Campaign  
Toolkit Here



# CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

Your step-by-step guide to a successful campaign- from first planning meeting to final turn-in.

- ECC Training-** Attend ECC training at the UWCIL office on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - Planning Meeting-** Schedule a meeting with your UWCIL contact to kick off your planning process.
  - Recruit Help-** Based on the size of your organization, recruit team members from across departments to help plan events and communicate to employees.
  - Set a Timeline-** Establish your campaign start date, key milestones, and end date.
  - Order Supplies-** Submit your supply order for physical and/or digital materials and pledge forms.
  - Set a Goal-** Review last year's campaign totals and set this year's targets- a dollar amount, a participation rate, or both.
  - Plan Activities-** Map out any special events, theme days, or volunteer activities you want to incorporate.
  - Build a Communication Plan-** Decide how and when you'll reach employees- emails, digital platforms, in-person events, employee mailboxes, and more.
  - Engage Leadership-** Present your plan to your CEO and leadership team for approval, including your timeline, goal, communication strategy, and corporate gift confirmation.
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- Host Your Kickoff-** Launch your campaign with an in-person meeting or email/video announcement. Consider inviting a speaker from UWCIL to present- even 10 minutes makes an impact.
  - Send Midpoint Reminder-** At the halfway mark, remind employees of the campaign deadline and how to turn in their pledge forms.
  - Send Final Reminder-** As the deadline approaches, send one last nudge to make sure no one misses their chance to give.
  - Track Progress-** Keep running totals and share updates with your CEO, your team, and your UWCIL Director of Strategic Partnerships throughout the campaign.
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- Collect All Donations-** Gather all pledge forms, cash, and checks into your reporting envelope and complete the front of the envelope.
  - Distribute Pledge Form Copies-** Make sure all three copies are accounted for- one for the donor, one for payroll, and one for UWCIL.
  - Turn In to UWCIL-** Deliver your completed reporting envelope and any unused or borrowed supplies to the UWCIL office.
  - Thank Your Donors-** Send a thank-you communication to all participants. Recognize your campaign committee and volunteers.
  - Celebrate Your Results-** Share your campaign totals internally and on social media. Tag United Way of Central Illinois!

BEFORE  
DURING  
AFTER

# WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN?

View the 2026 Workplace  
Giving Portal Here



## PREP

A little planning goes a long way. Know your numbers, get your CEO excited about the campaign, and **pull together a team before day one**. You don't have to figure it all out on your own- that's exactly what your UWCIL contact is here for. Reach out early, **make a plan together**, and you'll be amazed how smoothly things can go.

## INSPIRE

Before anyone opens their wallet, they need to open their heart a little. Your job is to help your colleagues see what **United Way's work actually looks like in Central Illinois**- the families navigating impossible choices, the kids who need a stronger start, the neighbors who just need someone in their corner. Use your kickoff, your videos, your conversations to **bring that story to life**. When people understand the why, the how takes care of itself.

## ASK

Here's the truth: most people want to help. They just need someone to show them how. The number one reason people don't give is simply because no one asked them- **so ask everyone**, warmly and without pressure, across every department and every level. Make it easy to say yes. Then remind them again at the midpoint and the deadline. A **gentle nudge** from someone they trust makes all the difference.

## THANK

Don't let your campaign just quietly end. The people who gave- whether it was \$5 or \$5000- chose to invest in their community, and that **deserves to be celebrated**. Shout it from the rooftops, or at least the company intranet. Recognize your team. Share your results. Let people feel the **impact of what they did together**, because that feeling is exactly what brings them back next year.

# CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

Day One

Anytime

Halfway

Deadline



## Kickoff Meeting

Host a kickoff that introduces employees to the campaign and United Way. Invite a **UWCIL speaker**. This can be done in as little as 10 minutes.

## Special Event

Plan at least **one fun activity** during your campaign window to keep energy up and remind employees the campaign is still going.

## Email Reminder

Send a "Did You Know?" about UWCIL impact alongside a **friendly deadline** reminder.

## Turn in to ECC

Remind staff to turn in **pledge forms and gifts** by the deadline.

# POST CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

## THINGS TO NOTE

- Start **strong**: Don't rely on the deadline.
- Let **participation** be the goal, not just dollars.
- Campaigns with at least **one event** consistently do better.
- A friendly follow up **recovers more pledges** than you may think.

# HAVE FUN!

2-3 Days After

3-4 Days After

1 Week After

## Grace Period Collection

Give a couple of days for any **last-minute gifts** that missed the deadline to find their way to you.

## Payroll Copies & Thank

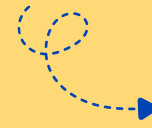
Turn in white pledge form copies to **payroll** and yellow copies to **UWCIL**. Send your **thank-you communications** to all participants.

## Return Envelope & Supplies

Fill out and return your completed **reporting envelope** with all gifts and pledge forms, along with any unused or borrowed supplies to UWCIL.

# KEEP EMPLOYEES ENGAGED

View more Fundraising  
Ideas Here



## Sample Fundraising Activity Ideas

- **Bake Sale (or “No-Bake Sale”)-** Sell homemade goodies for donations- or flip the script and charge people to not bring anything and skip the kitchen entirely!
- **Cutest Pet or Childhood Photo-** Submit your most adorable (or embarrassing!) photo, let the office vote, and watch the laughs roll in!
- **Jersey/Sports Day-** Rep your favorite team or school, pay to play, and turn the office into a sea of team colors for the day!
- **Change Wars-** Set out collection jars and let departments (or whole organizations!) compete to collect the most spare change- loose coins add up fast and all paper money is negative!
- **Basket Auctions-** Build themed gift baskets, put them up for bid (or raffle them off), and watch the competition heat up- always a crowd favorite!
- **Extra PTO Raffle or Auction-** Raffle or auction off bonus time off (check with HR first!) and watch donations skyrocket overnight!

## Year-Round Engagement with UWCIL

- **Volunteer:** United Way connects companies with **hands-on opportunities** that fit your team’s size and schedule- from **one-time events to ongoing commitments**. Reach out to your Director of Strategic Partnerships to find the right fit.
- **Build a Culture of Giving:** Companies that **volunteer together give together**. Put community involvement on your workplace calendar, recognize employees who show up, and share those stories internally. **Culture is built in the in-between moments**.
- **Onboard New Hires with Purpose:** Introduce United Way during onboarding and invite new employees to **sign up for updates** at [uwcil.org/sign-up](http://uwcil.org/sign-up)- so they’re already connected before next year’s campaign launches.
- **Stay Connected:** Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube for impact stories and volunteer opportunities year-round. **Share what resonates**. Keep the mission visible.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How much of my donation stays local?

**100% of undesignated donations** support grants to funded programs right here in Sangamon and Menard Counties. UWCIL's audited administrative and fundraising expenses are underwritten by the endowment and a select number of corporate gifts- so every undesignated dollar raised during the campaign goes **directly to program services**.

## Can I direct my gift to a specific organization?

Yes. Donors **may direct all or a portion of their contribution** to any of UWCIL's four impact areas, a specific funded program, or any external 501(c)(3) organization- all at no administrative charge. That said, United Way's expertise in assessing local needs means your **undesignated gift often goes further**.

## When does the campaign run?

Pacesetter campaigns launch in July and August, with our official **kickoff in September**. Most individual workplace campaigns run September through November- though other timelines are **always an option**.

## Why are Employee Campaigns – and ECCs – so important?

More than **50% of all UWCIL support** comes from individual giving through workplace campaigns. Every gift, at any amount, helps United Way **move the needle** for our community. And none of it happens without ECCs like you.

## I have a question that isn't here. Who do I call?

Reach out to your **Director of Strategic Partnerships** at 217-726-7000 or visit [uwcil.org](http://uwcil.org). We're happy to help.

## CONTACT INFO:

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217.726.7000 • [www.uwcil.org](http://www.uwcil.org)