



United Way
Oxford

Special Event & Engagement Ideas

A guide to special event fundraising



HOW to Get Started

Decide on what type of event you want to host or participate in. Fundraising events can be done in the workplace, in your community or in the comfort of your own home. This section will provide you with a variety of event ideas depending on the type of event you'd like to put on. Whether it's virtual or in person, we will help you have some fun, get connected, and do a whole lot of good for our community!



Workplace Event Ideas

Presentation Assembly

With a keynote speaker or entertainment, add food, a fun theme and maybe a team-building activity to engage participants. Tickets to participate can be sold as well as tickets for food and activities.

Pub Crawl or Food Crawl

A charity pub or food crawl can make a fun night out equally as meaningful. Plan your route with local breweries, pubs and restaurants, charge for entry, and invite registrants to secure donations for each stop they make. Put a fun twist on the event by adding a strict dress code or ask people to dress in costume. Consider inviting a United Way speaker to speak at the different locations sharing information about the charity and how the donations will be invested.

Breakfast or BBQ

Have the head of your company host a breakfast or BBQ for your workplace and ask employees to make a donation to attend. Recruit other leaders to volunteer and cook for the office making it a fun networking opportunity for all those attending.

An introduction from United Way

Set up a meet and greet with your United Way representative. It can be in person or pre-recorded depending on your needs. This is a great way to answer any questions that the team has and share the work of United Way in our community.

The Great United Way Bake Off

Get ready for some sweet smells with this fundraising event idea. Participants compete to bake the most delectable treat out there, and guests can donate for the chance to taste test and vote for their favorites.

Spin Off

Popularly known as "Spinning," this indoor activity asks riders to sweat for a cause. Partner with a local gym and ask your contacts to participate for a suggested donation. You could even ask a local instructor to donate their time and lead the class through a workout. To jazz up the event, throw in mood lighting, a killer playlist, and excessive fist-pumping for an awesome ride.

Seeing is Believing Tours

There is no better way to understand the United Way programs at work in Oxford County than through a Seeing is Believing Tour, either in person, virtually, or by having an Impact Speaker share their story at your location. Your team will be immersed in the work that United Way's partner agencies do to create long lasting social change in Oxford County. Learning how we collaborate with volunteers, donors, organizations and others to make a difference for thousands of people in our community. Donors will hear the personal stories of agency staff, volunteers, and program participants to truly understand the impact of their investment.



Challenge for Charity

Get your coworkers to take part in a virtual challenge while raising money for United Way. Have your co-workers commit to doing something physically challenging for every \$10 they raise.

Ten push-ups for every \$10? Yes! Climb ten flights of stairs? Go for it! Run a mile? They can do it! Did someone say burpees?! Not only does it inspire people to keep active and moving, it can create fun, friendly competition amongst everyone involved, not to mention all the feel-good endorphins! Encourage them to add a personal touch to it by recording themselves doing the challenge and feature video clips in your email communications or intranet to inspire others to participate or donate.

Dance-a-Thon

Host a dance-a-thon and challenge participants to dance for as long as they can. This fun peer-to-peer event keeps participants and donors on their toes—literally. Have dancers create peer-to-peer campaigns and set a minimum goal for participation. Fundraisers will tap into their networks to raise money before the event, but donations will flow until the last dancer standing receives a prize! Supporters can also vote for their favorite dancers or request songs for \$5—Spice Girls anyone?

Trivia Night

Miss going to trivia night at your favourite local establishment? Create your own virtual trivia night for your colleagues and raise funds for United Way! Play against your colleagues in real time by inviting them to join you virtually via a preferred platform to tackle questions across a range of topics and themes—competing for the ultimate Trivia Master bragging rights.

Birthday Giving Campaign

Instead of gifts you can ask for donations in support of community. You can spread the word using tools like Facebook that offers an opportunity to raise funds for a charity of choice during your birthday.

Online Auction Anyone?

Online auctions work similar to in-person ones, and the concept is simple - the highest bid wins! Besides offering a variety of unique and useful items, remember to also include services (when the situation permits) and virtual experiences. Encourage your co-workers to donate popular items (gift cards, gift baskets, etc.), as well as unique and rare ones (sports memorabilia, autographed items, virtual coffee with a prominent person within your organization, etc.) People are more likely to support and bid if it's for a good cause, so variety is key.

Give it Up

To demonstrate how the smallest donation can make a difference, ask fundraisers to give up something daily, for example a beverage or meal, and donate the money they would have spent to community instead. Provide supporters with data showcasing the impact of \$5, \$10, \$20+ donations to United Way. Then encourage them to share their activity on social media and ask their networks to give up something and donate too.

Talent Show

Think your co-workers are a super talented bunch just waiting for their moment to shine?

Host a virtual talent show and ask them to record and upload a 2-3 minute video of themselves showcasing their talent (think singing, playing an instrument, doing a magic trick, juggling fruit or body contorting into a pretzel!). Encourage people to vote for their favourite act by donating, where every donation is a vote towards selecting a winner. The act with the highest dollar amount raised wins! To raise even more money, consider asking for a registration fee from all the contestants, or asking executive leadership to sponsor a contestant, and have it count towards their total money raised.

Online Platforms & Interactive Tools

Virtual Event Platforms

- **Google Hangout**
- **Microsoft Teams**
- **Webex**
- **Zoom**
- **GoToWebinar**

Interactive Online Tools

- **Quiz**—Kahoot.com
- **Bingo**—Bingobaker or Myfreebingocards
- **WordCloud**—WordCloudsrdclouds.com
- **PowerPoint Game**—Rusnakcreative.com
- **Live stream**—Streamyard, Facebook Live, Instagram Live, YouTube Live
- **Scavenger Hunts**—Quickhunts.com
- **Online Games**—Jackboxgames.com
- **Social Fundraising**—Facebook.com
- **Raffle**—requires AGCO licenses

Recipe Potluck

As a tribute to the days before recipe phone apps, you can crowdsource recipes from different supporters, and even across your organization, to compile a charity cookbook. Ask supporters to include a dedication, doodle, or note with each recipe submission so that the book feels unique and personal to your organization.

Video Game Showdown

Turn video-gaming into the most charitably productive activity in your community. Host a gaming night where people can sign up and create a fundraising page, play games (or one selected game) for an extended amount of time, tournament- style, and ask their friends and family for donations. Different individual or team contests (and prizes) can drum up excitement and donations throughout the evening.

Holiday Party

Is your office hosting a Holiday Party? Consider making UW your charitable partner and asking employees to make a donation in lieu of a Secret Santa gift, or consider making one larger donation on behalf of your organization instead of individual gifts this year. Consider including a corporate match and have employees make a gift that can be multiplied by the matching gift. Announce your collective success at your annual Holiday Party!



Bingo!

Everybody LOVES Bingo! Create admission packages that include entry to your fundraising event, a book of bingo game sheets and an added bonus, like a dauber or a ticket for a complimentary refreshment. Packages can be pre-sold at the door or via a mobile-friendly donation form. Selling individual bingo game cards gives serious players additional chances to win and can be a great source for additional donation revenue. Need a bingo caller or ticket seller? Ask volunteers to sign up. Remember to apply for a bingo license before you begin.

Handy Around the Home

Are you handy around the house or yard? Offer your talents to friends, family and neighbours for a donation to United Way.

Ice Cream Social

This fundraising event idea is perfect for families and children. Ask your community and local businesses to donate supplies, get the word out, and charge per scoop or per frozen treat. Consider adding an ice cream eating contest into the mix. This type of event would be ideal on a weekend or in the summer when families have more free time on their hands.

Board Game Night

Ditch the keyboards and controllers and kick it old school to raise money for United Way. Put together a board game fundraising event that's friendly for all ages, complete with an assortment of game options. Charge for entry and host mini virtual or in-person tournaments among different sets of players and advertise prizes for the winners.

Community Car Wash

A good old-fashioned car wash is a classic summer fundraising idea. Advertise your event ahead of time on social media to let the local community know what hours your volunteers will be accepting customers. Request a suggested donation and offer different levels of service, such as wax or a towel dry.

Sporting Tournament

Ask each team to fundraise a minimum amount to participate and to come geared up for some serious sports! Teams can come up with fun names and recruit their family and friends to be a part of their fundraising and cheering squad. Pick the sport of your choosing. Hockey, dodgeball and curling are some favourites!

Mowing for a Cause

For much of the country, spring is the season of cleaning. Stray sticks and stones have wandered into yards, and the grass—having finally escaped the snow—looks unruly as ever. Take the burden off of your community and advertise a lawn maintenance and cleanup service in exchange for donations. Recruit landscapers to volunteer their services.

Yard Sale Fundraiser

Collect gently worn clothes, home goods, or collectibles and host a yard sale. If you have valuable items like first-edition books or signed collector's items, you can hold an auction for the top-tier items at the end of the day. In addition to opening up donations to your community to local celebrities or philanthropists for those high-ticket items. To generate buzz around the event, take pictures of the items and post them on social media.

Need More Ideas?

Email United Way's team at
info@unitedwayoxford.ca

Have ideas of other fun events?

Send them to info@unitedwayoxford.ca