

# MAKING THE CASE FOR UNITED WAY: UNITED WAY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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Making the case for United Way is everyone's job. Whatever your United Way staff or volunteer role, you're a spokesperson for your community change work, an advocate for the worldwide United Way network and a steward of our brand.

That's why United Way Worldwide is creating easy-to-use strategic communications tools and trainings. Whether you're raising money, building awareness, advancing community impact or engaging volunteers and partners, you can find tools, tips and templates to help you make an effective case for United Way.

## ▶ KEY



ONLINE TOOLS



IN-PERSON TRAINING



VIRTUAL LEARNING



SUBSCRIPTIONS

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## TALKING ABOUT UNITED WAY AND OUR WORK

When people hear about the work United Way is doing to build stronger communities, they get excited. They want to be part of the solutions we're creating. And we want them to understand that we're creating community change that goes beyond charity.

But we need to tell our story the right way, highlighting results (not problems) and engaging individuals in our solutions. Here are research-based tools to help you do that:



**How to Talk about United Way: An Introduction** is a free, 20-minute online message training designed for any United Way staffer or volunteer. It's a great on-boarding tool! For United Way staff: <https://online.unitedway.org/groups/united-way-virtual-trainer-programs> (You'll see a link to this virtual trainer halfway down the page. It takes you to an Adobe Connect registration for the training, but is not a Webinar.) For board members and volunteers: <http://training.unitedway.org/introduction/>



**Why United Way?** These flexible communications templates are rooted in the messaging that research shows works best for donors. It includes a PowerPoint presentation and talking points for introducing your United Way and your impact work. <http://online.unitedway.org/stories>



**Education, income and health fact sheets** can be adapted to help you illustrate your impact work. You can position your work as part of a national movement achieving positive results, or use other communities' results to show where you're headed with similar strategies. These are available in multiple formats, including InDesign and Word. <http://online.unitedway.org/stories>

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**Making An Effective Case for United Way** is a one-day, hands-on skill development lab with United Way's top messaging consultant, designed to sharpen your communication skills with donors and stakeholders. In the lab, you'll create and adapt your United Way story from a one-to-one conversation to a "one to many" story, using the platforms of workforce campaigns, social media, community conversations and more. This program can also be brought to your United Way, to provide strategic communications training to your staff, board and key volunteers. You can sign up for 2015 classes here:

- March 11, 2015 in New Orleans  
[https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab\\_March11](https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab_March11)
- June 9, 2015 at the Mary Gates Learning Center in Alexandria, VA  
[https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab\\_June9](https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab_June9)
- July 7, 2105 at the Mary Gates Learning Center in Alexandria, VA  
[https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab\\_July7](https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab_July7)
- September 15, 2015 at the Mary Gates Learning Center in Alexandria, VA  
[https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab\\_Sept15](https://online.unitedway.org/CommunicationsLab_Sept15)



**Changing Opportunities for America: United Way's Role in Improving Education, Income and Health** is a booklet you can use with your boards and key volunteers to explain United Way's evolution in tackling community problems. It includes a discussion on collective impact, an infographic of our evolution from fundraiser to change agent, and a column from a Harvard University expert on why United Way is the right organization to be leading community change. Some United Ways have adapted this as annual reports, community reports or as a leave-behind for CEO visits. <http://www.unitedway.org/collectiveaction>

## SOCIAL MEDIA ... ENGAGING PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY ARE

Engaging our community around our work – all year long – is easier than ever with social media and online communications. The following tools and resources can help make your efforts strategic, effective and efficient.



**Social Media Strategy Framework for United Ways** is a template to help you develop or assess your social media strategy. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**United Way Digital Suite** helps you engage more people more easily, with customizable content across many social platforms. It boosts your individual engagement efforts and helps you measure progress along the way. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**Gaggle AMP** offers free, user-friendly social media messaging that makes it easy to create, execute, amplify and measure your call to action across Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>

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## YEAR-ROUND WORKFORCE CAMPAIGN

United Way's access to over 500,000 workplaces offers a unique opportunity to engage employees more deeply in our education, income and health work. New digital and visual tools can help reinforce our community change efforts to companies and employees.

The **LIVE UNITED Campaign** offers creative ways to help you enlist people in your work – in and out of the workplace – all year long.



**LIVE UNITED Advertising and Marketing Campaign** includes TV, print, radio, out-of-home, and web ads (with an interactive map highlighting local success stories) as well as posters and brochures to help you showcase your results. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**United Way Video Stories** depicts real education, income and health work happening across the worldwide United Way Network. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**Infographics** are a new focus. “Where The Money Goes” is an online, interactive graphic showing how United Way supports one child’s pathway to success and how his family and community benefit. It’s customizable and mobile-friendly, too. Some United Ways are using it as an icon for workforce campaigns, or even animating it in video. Stay tuned for more infographics to help you tell the visual story of your education, income and health work. <http://online.unitedway.org/infographics>



**Brochure and Poster Templates** that you can adapt to highlight your issue work and results. <http://online.unitedway.org/story>



**United Way @ Work – All Year Long** is an idea book, with a full year of issue-focused ideas for engaging employees in our work. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**A-to-Z Guide for Giving Thanks** is an idea book chock-full of ways to express appreciation to United Way donors. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>

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**GCL Toolkit** includes infographics, adaptable fact sheets, brochures and stories showing education, income and health results in various communities around the world to help corporate partners conduct United Way campaigns. <http://www.unitedway.org/pages/gcl-toolkit>



**Volunteer Engagement Ideas** offers tips and activities to involve community volunteers and employees in our impact work, including suggestions for United Way Day of Action on June 21. <http://online.unitedway.org/volunteer>



## ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCES EFFECTIVELY

Talking with donors about the issues that matter to them increases the effectiveness of your communications. Find out which issues they care about and let them know what you're doing to improve community conditions in that issue area. Segmenting your audiences is another key strategy: communicating with key donor segments lets you better target your messages.



**Women's Leadership Councils:** Women are more likely to go the extra mile for their passions and to influence charitable giving in their households. Learn more about involving women more deeply in your community impact work. <https://online.unitedway.org/groups/affinity-groups-0>



**Young Leaders:** Millennial donors are passionate about their causes and connecting friends to them, and can add new energy to your community change efforts. <http://online.unitedway.org/youngleaders>



**Major Givers:** Learn more about best practices for communicating with major givers. <http://online.unitedway.org/resourcedevelopment>



**Students:** Whether it's Alternative Spring Break or using social media to fuel change efforts, student involvement in United Way can bring new ideas and perspectives. <http://online.unitedway.org/student>

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## MAKING IT EASY



**United Way Studio To Go** is a low-cost, online tool that makes it easy to create branded, customized and localized materials. You don't have to be a marketing whiz, or even get special training, to master the program. This solution is ideal for smaller United Ways as well as larger United Ways looking to better leverage marketing strategies. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>



**Constant Contact** offers free accounts and includes branded templates to United Ways for e-newsletters, advocacy alerts, United Way Day of Action reminders and other targeted email communications. [https://online.unitedway.org/constant\\_contact](https://online.unitedway.org/constant_contact)



**One Each Technologies** provides an affordable 'website-in-a-box' with preloaded, branded website templates to make it easy to create an online presence for your United Way. <http://oneeach.com/unitedway>



**United Way Image Library** contains high-quality images for print and electronic communications. <http://online.unitedway.org/brand>

## NEED MORE HELP?

CONTACT: Rachel Perry, United Way Worldwide's Director of Issue Communications, at [Rachel.Perry@unitedway.org](mailto:Rachel.Perry@unitedway.org) or (828) 254-5503.

# MAKING THE CASE FOR UNITED WAY: TALKING ABOUT OUR ISSUES — ALL YEAR LONG



Many United Ways organize external communications with an editorial calendar. United Way Worldwide uses a quarterly, issues-focused thematic approach, focusing on one impact focus area at a time, to help us promote the work our network does. Here's an overview, with ideas for how your United Way could plug in locally.

## INCOME — JANUARY THROUGH MARCH

- Media event on financial stability, perhaps tied to free tax support (e.g. VITA, MyFreeTaxes.com).
- Celebrate volunteers working as financial coaches or at VITA centers.
- Promote results from the work you and your partners are doing on financial literacy, one-stop centers and more.
- Use commemorative opportunities — like Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day and America Saves Week — as hooks for press releases, columns, blogs and social media to elevate financial stability strategies underway.

## HEALTH — APRIL THROUGH JUNE

- Media event on health, perhaps tied to nutrition, summer activity for kids or highlighting what your community is doing through NFL Play 60.
- Celebrate volunteers working to support kids' physical activity (e.g. coaches, afterschool volunteers).
- Promote results from the work you and your partners are doing to support healthier communities (e.g. building playgrounds, supporting farmers markets), healthier kids (e.g. boosting immunizations, physical activity in school, afterschool programs) and healthier adults (e.g. supporting health insurance enrollment).
- Use commemorative opportunities — like World Health Day, Public Health Week, National Hunger Awareness Day — as hooks for press releases, columns, blogs and social media to elevate health solutions underway.

## EDUCATION — JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

- Media event on education, perhaps tied to back-to-school supply drives.
- Celebrate education volunteers who are reading buddies, mentors or tutors, while issuing a new call to action.
- Promote results from the work you and your partners are doing to improve education (e.g. boosting school readiness, spotlighting early literacy, helping struggling readers), spotlighting the importance of attendance and improving middle school success or graduation rates.
- Use back-to-school and commemorative opportunities — like International Literacy Day — as hooks for press releases, columns, blogs and social media to elevate education solutions underway.

## THE BIG PICTURE — OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER

- Media event on big community issues, or community conversations that give citizens from all walks of life a chance to voice their aspirations. Find tools at <https://online.unitedway.org/communityconversations>
- Highlight the education, income and health outcomes being improved in your community, emphasizing that all three are building blocks for a good quality of life and benefit everyone.
- Use commemorative opportunities — like International Volunteer Day, International Children's Day — or events like Giving Tuesday as hooks for press releases, columns, blogs and social media elevating community solutions underway.