

# Special Event Ideas

*for a fun & successful*

## United Way Campaign

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**  
**LIVE UNITED™**



United Way  
of Central Maryland

# Special Event Ideas

1. 5K
2. Angel Day
3. Auction
4. Bake Sale
5. Basket Sale
6. Basket Ball Shoot Off
7. Battle of the Bands
8. BINGO
9. Book Sale
10. Bowling Tournament
11. Cake Walk
12. Candy, Balloon, Cookie, Cupcake or Flower Grams
13. Candy Counting Contest
14. Car Wash
15. Casual Day
16. Charity Fair
17. Children's Drawing Contest
18. Chili Cook-off
19. Coin War
20. Community Fair
21. Cutest Pet (Mascot) Contest
22. Departmental Cook-off
23. "Dollar an Inch" Contest
24. Duct Tape Your Boss To The Wall
25. Dunking Booth
26. Eating Contest
27. Employee Cookbook
28. Executive Auction
29. Executive Chair Race
30. Family Feud
31. Family Party
32. Flower Sale
33. Formal Wear/Fancy Dress Day
34. Golf or Putt-Putt Tournament
35. Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest
36. Happy Hour
37. Hair-Raiser
38. Ice Cream Social
39. Jeans Day
40. Karaoke Party
41. Kiss a Pig
42. Luau
43. Lunch Box Auction
44. Match the Baby Face/Pet Picture
45. Minute to Win it
46. Movie Night
47. Office Task Challenge
48. Pie Your Boss
49. Pop a Balloon
50. Raffles
51. Scavenger Hunt
52. Skunk Them
53. Sports Tournament
54. Staff Olympics/Field Day
55. Talent or Fashion Show
56. Tricycle Races
57. Tug-a-War
58. Vendor Sales
59. White Elephant Sale
60. Wii Tournament

### 1. 5K

Pick a location, date & time; establish cost to participate; advertise with emails and posters. Charm City Run (or other local running clubs) can help with the timing and establishing of the event.

### 2. Angel Day



If an employee donates the equivalent to a day's pay, they earn an extra day of vacation or "angel day". This must have approval from HR.

### 3. Auction

Auctions are among the most popular fundraising events. They have high entertainment value and are full of suspense. Consider things that money can't buy - lunch with a manager, a boat ride on an executive's ship, a home cooked meal, etc. Whether it's live or silent - an auction will be a hit!

### 4. Bake Sale

Cakes, cookies, and treats oh my! Get in line and purchase a tasty treat baked by employees. Additional refreshments can be sold.



### 5. Basket Sale

Have departments compete for creating the best basket that will be sold in a silent auction or through the purchase of raffle tickets. Basket themes include sports, picnic, cooking, spa, golf, family fun, etc.

### 6. Basketball Shoot-Off

Charge participants a fee for a chance at 3 throws. If they make all three, they can move on to the next round. The shoot off continues until the last player is standing. The winner receives a prize or bragging rights—you decide.



### 7. Battle of the Bands

Let your staff show off their inner rock star. Have employees sign up as bands to battle it out. Air bands and lip syncing count too! Funds can be raised by selling tickets to the show and/or by having people pay a small fee to vote for their favorite band.

### 8. BINGO

Host a BINGO luncheon or evening event where employees and their families purchase bingo cards to win prizes. Everyone loves to win!



### 9. Book Sale

Advertise for employees to bring in used books. Hold a book sale at discounted prices. Donate any remaining books to a local United Way impact partner.



### 10. Bowling Tournament

Participants get sponsors to pledge a certain amount of money for the number of pins knocked over.



### 11. Cake Walk

Co-workers donate cakes. Place 6 numbers on chairs in a circle, then sell tickets to participate. Participants must walk in the circle around the chair until the music stops. Once the music stops, participants sit in chairs. A die is rolled and whichever number it lands on, that person sitting in that numbered chair chooses a cake. Keep going until all cakes are gone.

### 12. Candy, Balloon, Cookie, Cupcake, Compliment or Flower Grams

Pick one of the above and have employees purchase to send to their colleagues. The item is delivered with a card with a special message like: "Thanks for all you do." or "I appreciate you!"

### 13. Candy Counting Contest

Participants pay to guess how many pieces of candy are in each jar. Winners take home the jar of candy!

### 14. Car Wash

Employees donate to have their car washed by their "Boss" in business clothing. Charge extra for special services like cleaning the interior. Charge for photos of the event.



### 15. Casual Day

Sell "Casual Day Badges" for employees to dress down on certain days. Define what is meant by "casual" to avoid confusion. Invite your employees to have fun during casual days. Have a Sports Team Day, Silly Hat Day, Outrageous Shirt Day, etc.



### 16. Charity Fair

Speak with your United Way representative to coordinate. Charities will setup tables at the event and offer employees the opportunity to learn more about the work their programs are doing. For added fun, provide each employee with a questionnaire regarding the participating charities. Employees who have correctly completed the questionnaire entered in a prize drawing.

### 17. Children's Drawing Contest

This is a nice way to get kids involved. Give employees "official photographs" of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Or, children draw what certain words or phrases mean to them, e.g., "helping others," "hope," etc. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to the employee. There is an entry fee per child. Employees vote for their favorite drawing by paying a small fee per vote. Display winning pictures as part of a "permanent art collection".



### 18. Chili Cook-Off

Get ready for some good chili for a great cause. Staff, who dare, enter their best chili recipe into the Chili Cook-Off. A panel of "chili experts" selects the Official Chili Champion. There is a fee to enter the event and a separate fee to taste each chili recipe. Sodas, chips and crackers can be sold additionally.



### 19. Coin War

Got Change? Most people do. Why not enter it into a friendly competition that goes to charity. Each department has an empty water jug. Employees drop in spare change. Quarters, dimes, and nickels are considered positive. Pennies and dollars count as negative. Employees may "sabotage" another department's jug with pennies and dollars that are subtracted from their totals. The department with the most money in their jar wins.

### 20. Community Fair

Try a carnival theme with hot dogs, soda and popcorn. Employees try their luck at games like ring toss and the fishpond. Include entertainment and art displays from your picture contests. Either charge a fee to attend the fair or charge separate fees to participate in the games and enjoy the food.



### 21. Cutest Pet (Mascot) Contest

Invite employees enter their cutest pet pictures to compete for the title of "cutest pet". Set a cost to enroll and encourage staff to votes by paying a small fee. The pet with the most votes wins! To add a twist, companies can adopt the winning pet as the company's mascot for the year. Pictures of the pet can be included in newsletters and posters around the office.

### 22. Departmental Cook-off



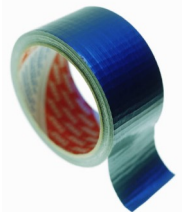
Each department has a cook-off on a different day. A theme, menu and pricing are decided. At the end of the campaign, a winner is decided based on judges' taste testing throughout.

### 23. "Dollar an Inch" Contest

Engage executives in a competition for the shortest tie. Employees pay to cut off an inch of their favorite executive's tie. Make sure you have many ties available. Ties can be donated or purchased at a thrift store.

### 24. Duct Tape Your Boss to the Wall

Sell a yard of duct tape for a fee and have employees tape the boss to a wall or door. Contributions can be collected for guesses on how long the boss will stick to the wall once the stool they have been standing on is taken away.



### 25. Dunking Booth

Rent a dunking booth and determine who is going to be dunked. Try to get the management team to participate. Establish a cost for tossing the balls.

### 26. Eating Contest

Whether it's wings, pizza or hotdogs, see who can eat the most food for a good cause. Have employees form teams to see who the ultimate eating champions are. Funds can be raised by having teams pay to enter. Prizes can be awarded to the winners to promote competition.

### 27. Employee Cook Book

Collect recipes and helpful household hints into a customized cookbook. Book sales go towards your campaign.



### 28. Executive Auction

Get the Executive staff to donate half a day to United Way. Auction each executive off to the employees. The executive must take over the employee's job for half a day.

### 29. Executive Chair Race

Invite executives to roll to the finish line. Set up a relay course for executives to go through sitting in chairs. Use a stop-watch to time contestants with the best time winning a prize. Observers wager on their favorite contestants and the winners receive a prize.

### 30. Family Feud

Ask teams to pay a fee to enter the family feud game. Have funny topics that are specific to your organization and poll the workforce before the game to prepare the top answers. Winning teams can win incentive prizes.

### 31. Family Party

Host a fun night or weekend day when staff can bring their whole family into the office for fun. Have face painting, games, prizes and/or a community service activity for the whole family to enjoy. Charge an entrance fee to raise money.



### 32. Flower Sale

Talk to a local greenhouse and have flowers donated or sold at cost. Establish pricing to make a profit.



### 33. Formal Wear/Fancy Dress Day

Employees pay to wear special clothes for the day. Pick a theme like "Wedding Wear" to make it fun and get employees excited to dress up!

### 34. Golf or Putt-Putt Tournament

Work with a nearby golf course to get reduced rates. Charge players the regular price with proceeds going to United Way. Humorous prizes can be awarded like shortest drive or highest score. OR Set up a miniature golf course within your own office, lobby or work area. Charge each player to play and award a prize to the player with the lowest score.



### 35. Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest

Use a Halloween theme. Hold a pumpkin carving contest. Invite employees to enter carved pumpkins individually or by group. Charge a fee to enter and a small fee per vote. Award prizes to:

- Best traditional
- Most creative
- Best effort (group or individual)

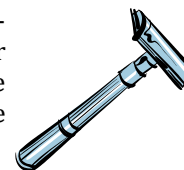


### 36. Happy Hour

Work with a local restaurant or bar to host a fundraiser with your employees. Have a portion of sales donated to your United Way campaign. For additional contributions, sell raffle tickets for donated items.

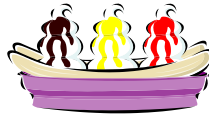
### 37. Hair-Raiser

Convince a staff member to shave their facial hair and/or head hair for a good cause. If your campaign reaches its goal, this employee will become a spectacle for all staff to see. Alternately, employees can volunteer to be a part of the hair-raiser and have employees vote for the staff they want to see with a close cut. Set a cost for each vote.



### 38. Ice Cream Social

Have executives serve ice cream to show their United Way support. Try to get ice cream donated by local vendor and charge for each bowl. Everyone loves a good ice cream social!



### 39. Jeans Day

Allow employees who donate the opportunity to wear jeans every Friday of the campaign. This will encourage people to give sooner to have the maximum amount of jeans days. Alternately, sell jeans day passes that can be used throughout the year. Make sure you have HR approval!



### 40. Karaoke Party

Participants pay to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance. Participants ask employees to support them by pledging. At the event, have a big box of funny hats, boas, and other costume items available for participants to use. Video tape the event and sell videos to those who would like to save the memories. A variation on this activity is "Executive Karaoke" where employees pay money for executive to get up and sing the song of their choice.

### 42. Luau

Invite employees to a mini luau. They can buy pineapple upside-down cake, ham, and other goodies. Give prizes to employees wearing the most outrageous Hawaiian attire.



### 43. Lunch Box Auction

Employees supply lunches to be auctioned off. Give prizes for the most creative or elegant lunches.



### 44. Match the Baby Face/Pet Picture

Employees bring photos of themselves as babies, or a photo of their pet. Other employees buy ballots listing the photos by number and guessing which baby/pet, belongs with whom. A prize goes to the employee who correctly identifies the most.

### 45. Minute to Win-it

Model obstacles off the popular game show, Minute to Win-it. Create a series of challenges that must be completed within a minute in order to move on to the next level. When a challenge is not completed, those employees are knocked out of the contest. Employees can sign up as singles or groups with a fee to play. Winners are awarded prizes and/or bragging rights.

### 46. Movie Night



Transform your conference room into a movie theater using your projector screen. Invite staff and their families to purchase tickets to a viewing and offer popcorn and candy at reduced prices for your campaign.

### 47. Office Task Challenge

Set up an obstacle course in the lunchroom, several offices, several floors of offices, or outside. One station can be for typing a couple paragraphs, another station for filing, and other for photocopying, etc. The contestants pay an entry fee and the winner gets a prize.

### 48. Pie Your Boss

Grab the whipped cream, find your boss, and get ready to help the community! Staff pays per pie to cream their favorite staff member or boss. Bosses must agree to participate in advance.



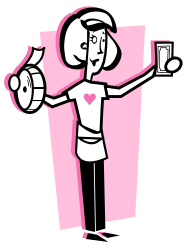
### 49. Pop a Balloon

Stuff a message inside a balloon announcing a prize or a thank you for your donation to United Way. Employees buy a balloon and have to pop it to find their message.



### 50. Raffles

Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize. Suggestions are:



- Homemade desserts
- Lunch with a co-worker
- Car wash
- Tickets to a special event
- Stay at a vacation home

Those employees turning in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the “early” date but before the campaign’s final event, receive one raffle ticket. Additional raffle prizes to consider:

- 1-Day vacation
- Prizes donated by vendors
- Tickets to sporting events, concerts, etc.
- Gift certificates from retailers, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.

### 51. Scavenger Hunt



Decide on a theme and whether this will take place inside or outside. Employees are asked to take pictures of the items that they must find. Find unusual items from

around the neighborhood or office building. You can plant items with selected employees for others to discover. Organize teams and charge an entrance fee. If each team includes members with different job titles, automatically award them 10 bonus points. Teams have one hour to accumulate as many points as possible. The entire team must be present at the end of one hour. If a team arrives late, assess a penalty of 2 points per minute. The team with the most points wins a prize.

### 52. Skunk Them

Toilet paper or silly string a coworkers desk but make sure to leave a stuffed skunk as well. They need to pay a donation to your team to be deskunked but also get to select the next victim to be skunked.



### 53. Sports Tournament

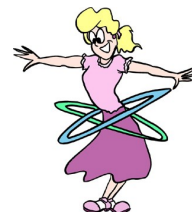
Have an organized tournament with employee teams, like flag football, basketball, baseball, or croquet. Charge admission to the game. Give away prizes at halftime.

### 54. Staff Olympics/Field Day

Staff members unite and participate in fun games. Participants donate an entrance fee. Employees can “guess,” for a fee, on the person or team that will win. The people who are correct receive prizes. Refreshments can be sold. Employees can serve as cheer leaders. Staff not participating in the events can work the concession stand.

#### Sample Staff Olympic Games:

- Hula hoop around the cones
- 3-legged race
- Wheel barrow race
- Sink a foul shot
- Carry an egg on a spoon
- Water balloon over and under
- Football through the hoop
- Chair Race (contestants sit on a chair and scoot to the finish line)



### 55. Talent or Fashion Show

Recruit your colleagues to participate in a talent and/or fashion show. Charge an entrance fee to watch the show.



### 56. Tricycle Races

The first one to the finish line wins a prize for the department! You can use this to boost morale or charge an entrants fee for each group.

### 57. Tug-a-War

Have employees against executive staff or interdepartmental competition. Each team pays a fee to enter.

### 58. Vendor Sales

Talk to your United Way representative about hosting a vendor to sell their items at your workplace. A portion of their sales will go towards your United Way campaign. Examples of vendors include jewelry, purses, cash for gold, etc.

### 59. White Elephant Sale

Employees donate items to be sold in the parking lot or cafeteria.



### 60. Wii Tournament

Run the event in a bracket competition style. Each team pays a fee to play. The winner receives a prize!

**Contact your United Way of Central Maryland representative if you have any questions!**