**UNITED WAY OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What does it mean to ‘LIVE UNITED TO THE POWER OF 5?’**

“Living United to the Power of 5” is meant to show us how every effort can go so much further when we work together.  So, if each of us takes the time to donate $5, tell 5 friends, give 5 hours, invite 5 people to join in the campaign and then add 5 more, the result will be exponential growth.

As we’ve learned in math, any number to the 5th power grows quickly.  Five to the 5th power quickly goes from the $5 donation or 5 hours of volunteer time to $3,125 in donations or 3,125 hours of volunteer time.  5 – 25 – 125 – 625 – 3,125.  When we’re all in this together, the ripple effect will lead to substantial impact for every person in every community we serve, every day of the year.  Will you join us?

**What’s new this year?**

United Way of Southwest Minnesota (UWSWMN) is continuing to meet you and your co-workers where you are, whether that’s in the office, working from home, or a hybrid model. As always, communication will be key between you and your co-workers, but also between you and UWSWMN. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to our office with questions or items that might make your campaign more successful. We cannot accomplish our mission of uniting people and resources to improve lives and strengthen communities without your support and the support of your co-workers! Thank you for all you do and the difference you are making to better our communities.

Another big change is that we have a new CEO. Meg Louwagie started her tenure as CEO on May 16, 2022. Please reach out to Meg (507-929-2273 or meg.louwagie@unitedwayswmn.org) if she can be of any help to you in your campaign.

**What are my responsibilities as a Campaign Ambassador in my workplace?**

As a Campaign Ambassador, you (and your team, if you have one) are responsible for coordinating the UWSWMN campaign at your workplace and planning all activities from planning to kick-off to wrap-up to reporting the results back to UWSWMN. Depending on the size of your workplace, a team of people may make the most sense. The UWSWMN staff and board are here to help you with any questions you have and to support you along the way. Your campaign can be as simple as a one-day event, or be spread over several days, or even throughout the year.

**Where do I access materials? What if I need additional materials?**

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UWSWMN tries to provide everything you need to have a successful campaign. We typically provide hard copies of campaign brochures, pledge forms and goal posters. Additionally, there are many resources available on our website including: campaign basics; social media ideas; educational resources; and fundraising ideas. If you aren’t finding what you need/want, please contact us at **507-929-2273** or **unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org** to discuss what you would find helpful!

**How long should our campaign run?**

Campaigns can be any length of time from one day to one week to one month or even throughout the year! Most occur sometime during the September – December window, but the timing and duration should be what works best for your company and will allow you and your team time to connect with all co-workers. We encourage a kick-off meeting and/or rally featuring a speaker from UWSWMN, distribution/posting of materials including the UWSWMN campaign brochure and pledge form (or information on how to pledge if other options are available at your place of business).

**What about Special Event fundraisers?**

Special events can add excitement to the workplace campaign and make a great addition to ‘the ask.’

Events should be fun and bring co-workers together (even if it’s only virtually!), while offering plenty of ways to learn how an investment in UWSWMN makes a difference in their own backyard. Special event ’donations’ should not take the place of an employee pledge.

**Many workplaces choose to hold special events throughout the year to support the community impact of UWSWMN.** Remember to invite UWSWMN staff...WE LOVE SPECIAL EVENTS!Make sure to take pictures and submit them to **unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org**!

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**I’ve just had a Special Event fundraiser...now what?**

A Workplace Campaign Report form is available online. Turn in special event funds right after the event is completed so you don’t have to keep cash in your desk and checks can be cashed promptly.

Each time you turn in money to UWSWMN, it should be accompanied by a Workplace Campaign Report. Please fill out the form as noted (i.e. some areas don’t need to be filled in each time). Each report should be for the funds/pledges you are currently reporting/turning in and **not a cumulative report of all funds previously turned in**. Remember to mark if it is a partial or final report.

**Do I need to include copies of pledge forms with my Workplace Campaign Report?**

That is preferred. We use the information on the form to inform, recognize, track and thank our donors. It’s especially important to have the pledge form if a donor has specified an impact area that they want their donation to be directed towards (i.e. Imagination Library, Education, Financial Stability, etc.). We value the privacy of every donor and do not sell or share their personal information with anyone outside of our organization. (See next question for alternatives to submitting pledge forms.)

**You can make a copy of the forms and bring/email those to the UWSWMN office OR bring the original pledge forms to our office and we will make copies for our records, returning the originals to you for your HR department.**

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We make a concerted effort to gather the names of our donors so that we may have a more personal relationship with them, keeping them informed (if they want) on how their investment is being used and what impact is being made through UWSWMN year round.

**Additionally, if a donor has made an investment that qualifies them for recognition as a *Leader in Giving,* we want to be able to thank them and verify how they would like to be listed in our annual report. Maybe even more important for some donors, is that if their donation is $250 or more, we send them a receipt that they can use for income tax purposes as needed.**

**Is there an alternative to submitting copies of all the pledge forms?**

Yes. Some companies provide pledge data in an excel spreadsheet with name, address, email, pledge amount, payment information (i.e. check, cash, payroll deduction, or credit card) and, if applicable, designation. If that works best for you, please contact us regarding submitting via this option.

**How are individuals recognized for their support if they give at a ‘Leaders in Giving’ level?**

As long as we have received copies of pledge forms and/or an excel spreadsheet with donor information, we will make certain that individuals giving at the leadership level are thanked via mail and are recognized in our annual report per their preference (i.e. some prefer to remain anonymous).