CORPORATE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

United Way of Rhode Island

Easy to Implement Volunteer Collection Drives

Collection drives provide a unique opportunity for your company's employees to volunteer and support the local community and for you to diversify your volunteer project calendar. United Way of RI can provide you with technical assistance and support to help you run a successful drive and identify local agencies willing to accept your donations.

How to plan a collection drive

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Who will help you? Identify project team members who can assist you and share the work of running your drive.

What will you collect? Collect input from your team on what item(s) you'd like to collect and how you'll do it.

Who will you donate the items to? Choose an organization to receive your collected items. United Way can assist you in finding the right organization in need of your items.

How will you market and implement your drive? Identify the best ways to recruit participants. Determine how your collection will run (i.e. will you put bins out, have drop-off dates, offer a drive through drop off). Then start your collection. Plan storage space in advance, and routinely check drop-off bins.

What will I need to do to package the donated items? Once you have your items, you'll want to go through them to make sure they are in good condition. Pack items to donate in boxes (- copy paper boxes work great) or shopping bags. Store the items until you're ready to donate them.

How do I get the items to our donation partner? Work with United Way or with the nonprofit partner to set up your donation plan. Agree on the date, time and place for the transfer. Make sure to take photos to celebrate and memorialize the project.

Examples of collection drives

Active Military Kit – Send a care package to those serving in the military, such as socks, hand sanitizer, trail mix, sunblock, puzzle books, gum, ear buds, and a letter of thanks, all in a drawstring bag.

Blood Drive – Hold a blood drive on site, saving up to three lives with each donation. For more information contact the RI Blood Center at ribc.org.

Children's Book Drive – Partner with United Way in our Children's Book Drives. Our big drive is held annually in April and May, collecting new and gently used children's books to be donated for home libraries to stop summer learning slide. We provide posters and flyers for you to customize and will even come out to pick up your books. But you can hold a book drive with us at any time during the year.

Clothing Drive – Find new homes for your unwanted clothing by donating it to others who need it. Adults or children's clothing drives can be held onsite. There is also a great need for business clothing for participants in workforce training programs to wear on interviews.

Diaper Drive – Collect diapers for a local diaper bank or nonprofit organization that provides them to under-resourced families.

Food Drive – Collect canned and nonperishable food to be donated to a food pantry. Or for remote workers, have them purchase gift cards to a local supermarket or a chain store. Every spring, the National Association of Letter Carriers holds the Stamp Out Hunger food drive with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. Have your employees and their families donate food by leaving it for their mail carrier to pick up. Have your company participate in this larger, statewide effort.

HOLIDAY DRIVES

Toy Drives – Set up your own company collection site for a nonprofit and engage your employees to create holiday cheer, putting smiles on the faces of children for the holidays.

Food Drives – Particularly around Thanksgiving, consider collecting items to go into Thanksgiving baskets. Collecting gift cards to purchase items like a turkey are also a good idea.

Senior Wishes – Organizations like Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island collect small gifts to be given out for the holidays. They even have their online wish list for purchase and shipping to make it easy. Examples of items that they are looking for include gloves, hats, playing cards, puzzle books, and more.

Soup Kitchen Winter Weather Drives – Homeless organizations often accept cold weather items such hats, gloves, scarves, and socks at this time of year.

Hygiene Kits – Collect toiletries and personal care items for homeless men, women, and children, packing them in a shoebox or large Ziploc bags. Include a note of encouragement to brighten their day.

New Home Kits – Collect items such as cleaning supplies, paper towels, toilet paper, dish towel, wash cloths, bath towels, soap, shampoo, and conditioner, bundled in a laundry basket, to help teens aging out of foster care or families leaving shelters. Include a card with your company's well wishes.
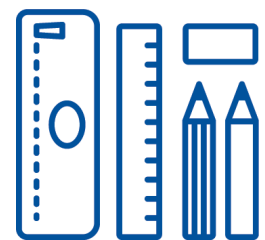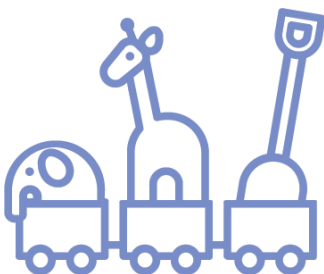
School Supplies Drive – Hold a drive to prepare kids for learning by collecting school supplies for kids going back to school. Donate backpacks filled with school supplies. For the younger children, include crayons, markers, glue sticks, and a pencil case and pencils. For older students include several single subject notebooks, pens, and pencils.

Snack Packs for Kids – Collect healthy snacks for children at an afterschool program. Include items like Goldfish or pretzels, fruit cups, juice boxes, granola bars, spoon, napkin and notecard of inspiration. Items can be placed in a small, decorated or stickered paper lunch bag.

Winter Coat Drive or Hats and Mittens Drive – Collect gently used, clean, children's, women's and/or men's coats or hats and mittens to warm up a cold winter.

HOLD AN ONLINE DRIVE

Use a vendor to run your collection drive online. This works particularly well if you have employees working remotely. YouGiveGoods.com is an example of one such service. You decide what new items you want your team to purchase for the drive. Their wide-ranging options include: food, books, toys, coats, school supplies, and diapers for disaster relief, military, homeless shelters, and more. You set up your customized drive page and send supporters there to purchase new items. When the drive is completed, the goods are shipped to your donation partner. *(This is a fee-based service.)*

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