

How to: Ask for a Pledge

Importance of CEO Support:

A meeting before the campaign begins is a great way to make sure he or she is fully on board. Once you have the support, your CEO can be helpful in a number of ways.

1. **Send a request letter to all employees.** Having your CEO make the "ask" is often an effective way to increase your campaign. A sample letter can be downloaded [here](#).
2. **Encourage your CEO to send reminder e-mails during campaign.** Our e-mail messages can help your CEO craft e-mails to remind people of the importance of their gift to the community through United Way.
3. **Get your CEO involved in your incentives.** Have the CEO offer his or her parking space, company suite at a sporting event or company car for a winning donor. Or, your CEO could host cocktails or dinner at his or her house.
4. **Send a thank-you letter to donors.** After the campaign, a personal "thank you" is best. A CEO letter is another good way to make employees feel appreciated.

Five Steps to a Successful Peer-to-Peer Ask:

United Way research shows that a peer-to-peer ask is the most effective way of asking for a pledge. Sincerely communicating your commitment to supporting the community through United Way really does make a difference. Leaving pledge cards in employees' mailboxes and hoping they will be returned is not recommended.

1. **Be prepared.** Show your commitment to United Way by increasing your pledge before soliciting co-workers. It is much easier to ask others to do what you have already done. Watch the campaign video to see stories about people who have been helped by United Way, and be familiar with facts about United Way. Finally, personalize your employees' pledge cards.
2. **Approach the donor.** Get the donor's undivided attention. Consider catching the donor on a break. Explain the purpose of United Way and why you support it. Bring United Way materials and be prepared to explain them. Share a personal story or United Way facts.
3. **Ask for an increase.** With new givers, ask for a first-time gift. Consider asking for a specific increase, such as \$1 more a week or pay period.
4. **Handle concerns.** Know your materials and answer questions honestly – never guess. If you don't know the answer to a question, let the donor know you will find out and then follow up with your United Way representative. Recognize that some donors have real concerns; people have a right to feel good about their gift.
5. **Say thank you.** Regardless of what the donor decides, thank them for their time. People like to know their gift is appreciated.