Trends in Workplace Giving
Resources for Corporate Givers
Trends in Workplace Giving

Corporate citizenship practitioners, nonprofit organizations, and academic researchers observed the following best practices in workplace giving.

1. **Encourage giving year-round.** The campaign will be open and available to employees on a year-round basis, but will include an enrollment and marketing period for several weeks once a year.

2. **Engage key stakeholders—such as leadership and employees—to determine focus areas.** To drive business and social value, corporate citizenship professionals should take into account the interests and expectations of a variety of stakeholders—including their leadership and employees.

3. **Increase the ways employees can give back.** Workplace campaigns are more often being connected with employee volunteer programs and matching gift programs. Employers will offer employees multiple types of opportunities to participate in charitable activities—either by giving of time or money. Companies increasingly match employee payroll deduction gifts made through the campaign or “dollars for doers” programs that offer corporate cash gifts to organizations where employees have volunteered in significant numbers or for significant amounts of time.

4. **Provide engagement opportunities for varying employee segments.** Employees at different stages and levels are motivated to give and participate in corporate philanthropy and volunteer programs differently. Recognizing this, companies are offering more choice in their programs. Employees on a leadership track, for example, may be motivated to participate in a company’s philanthropic strategy for the recognition, the exposure to executives, and the leadership opportunities. More junior employees may be more inclined to give time and to participate in employee-directed activities.

5. **Leverage technology to drive engagement.** The introduction of more choice certainly brings opportunity for companies and their employees to express shared corporate and personal values through workplace campaigns. Some of the innovations in campaigns that have been enabled by better technology have presented challenges to the traditional community affiliates. The level of engagement with federated giving organizations varies significantly by geography. Federated campaigns (and organizations) are not being abandoned, but they are being challenged to change the way that they solicit and operate.

6. **Understand the higher standards of accountability.** The ability of donors to research and obtain information about charities will push the standards of accountability by charities to a higher degree of efficiency.

**Workplace giving overview and participation rates**

According to the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship’s 2015 Community Involvement study, employees play a key role in companies’ community involvement efforts by participating in workplace giving programs. Similar to volunteer programs, workplace giving can have a positive impact on employee attitudes toward their companies.

According to a 2013 study, participation in giving programs can help employees identify with their organizations more as a whole, which in turn can improve commitment and loyalty. In addition, a 2008 study found that employees who participated in a giving program experienced increased job satisfaction as a result of stronger commitment and an improved perception of their companies.
According to the 2015 Community Involvement study, more than 80% of companies offer workplace giving programs (see Figure 1). The following participation rates represent the percentage of employees, from responding companies, who participated in workplace giving programs, as of 2015:

- Giving campaign with match—median is 36%
- Disaster relief with match—median is 8%
- Gifts to higher education with match—median is 5%
- Gifts for any purpose with match—median is 15%
- Dollars for doers program—median is 5%

1. Encourage giving year-round

According to the America’s Charities report, Snapshot 2015: Trends and Strategies to Engage Employees in Greater Giving, year-round giving is becoming the standard with more than 60% of companies saying their giving program is open year-round. In 2013, only 24% of companies indicated they offered this year-round option. Year-round giving offers flexibility to employees and encourages charitable donations outside campaign periods.

In addition, according to CECP’s 2015 Giving in Numbers report, on average, the highest proportion of companies’ matching-gift budgets went towards Year-Round Policies, followed by Workplace Giving Campaigns (e.g., United Way).

2. Engage key stakeholders—such as leadership and employees—to determine focus areas

According to the 2015 Community Involvement study, more than 60% of companies engage with senior management to determine their focus—an important practice, as engagement at the leadership level encourages even greater stakeholder engagement overall. In addition, nearly 60% of companies also engage employees through surveys or other methods. According to the 2015 Community Involvement study, following company-organized giving campaigns, companies are most likely to offer disaster relief programs. Disaster relief is an area of major concern and companies have responded to employee calls for assistance to those in need. The majority of companies that offer programs for disaster relief match employee contributions.

3. Increase the ways employees can give back

The nearly 80% of companies that match contributions are most likely to offer a 100% match, according to the 2015 Community Involvement study. Of all the matched-gift programs offered by organizations, company-organized giving campaigns are the most popular with employees. Thirty-six percent of employees participated in company-organized giving campaigns in the most recently ended fiscal year, while 15% of employees engaged in gifts for any purpose (see Figure 2).
4 Provide engagement opportunities for varying employee segments
To communicate volunteer and giving efforts effectively, companies must consider how to engage employees at different stages in their careers. Employees at the early stage of their careers may be less willing to participate in workplace giving programs than employees in the mid or late-stages of their careers. While only 9% of companies consider the opportunity to identify future leaders as a top benefit of employee volunteer programs, research finds that employees in the earlier stages of their careers are most motivated by career development and promotion initiatives and opportunities. Older employees, however, are most deeply engaged by supervisor support and recognition.

Dollars for doers programs offer employees the opportunity to support nonprofits by dedicating volunteer time and financial support from their employers. Nearly 40% of companies choose to maximize the impact of their volunteering and giving programs by offering a dollars for doers program, yet the median percentage of employees who participated in dollars for doers programs is 5% in the most recently ended fiscal year (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
Dollar for doers program

Some companies have made greater progress in their efforts than others—reaching participation rates as high as 50% or as low as 0.3% for dollars for doers programs. This broad range may reflect an equally broad array of options and requirements outlined by the company.

5 Leverage technology to drive engagement
Technological tools have become increasingly essential to managing community involvement programs, from grant making to employee giving and volunteering.

According to the America’s Charities report, Snapshot 2015: Trends and Strategies to Engage Employees in Greater Giving, more than 85% said they use technology to allow employees to give money, and 65% use it to record volunteer hours and 69% use technology to sign up for a volunteer event. About one-third (37%) use technology platforms to empower employees to promote their favorite causes.

Furthermore, according to the America’s Charities report, Snapshot 2015: Trends and Strategies to Engage Employees in Greater Giving:

- 40% of companies have implemented a new employee engagement platform within the last 18 months.
- Companies say their current engagement and giving platform make it easy to:
  - 86% - Give money
  - 83% - Volunteer time
  - 70% - Sign up for a volunteer event
  - 65% - Record volunteer hours
  - 54% - Access the corporate matching gift program

6 Understand the higher standards of accountability
The best charities are transparent and accountable to the public. Donors should be able to see evidence of this in the information organizations provide on their website. Information about a nonprofit organization’s staff and board of directors should be readily available. Prospective donors should read recently filed financial information such as a Form 990.

In addition to reviewing the financial information disclosed on the 990, look at 990 Parts IV, V, and VI to see if the charity is committed to best management practice. For example, does it have a conflict of interest and conflict of commitment policies and management processes? Are they complying with the independent audit requirement? Are all of their required filings up to date? Are executive officers borrowing from the organization?

Prospective donors should learn about a nonprofit’s accomplishments, goals, and challenges by reviewing its website and talking with staff and others in the field. Beyond the number of activities or people served, donors should be able to learn about the quality and depth of the organization’s results as well as their capacity to continue to get these results.
United Way Worldwide overview

United Way Worldwide is engaged in nearly 1,800 communities across more than 40 countries and territories worldwide. United Way's main focuses are education, financial stability and health. United Way campaign success varies widely by geography. In some regions of the country, the United Way is stronger than ever. For example, for the sixth straight year, United Way of King County, Seattle remains the top affiliate for overall fundraising. Much of the success of the best-performing affiliates appears to be connected to planned gifts and bequests and a diversification of funding.

The top 10 affiliates in terms of overall fundraising last year were:

- United Way of King County, Seattle, Wash - $109,260,000, down 12.6%
- United Way of Greater Atlanta, Atlanta, GA - $103,900,000, up 4.2%
- Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minneapolis, MN - $100,380,000, up 5%
- United Way of Greater Houston, Houston, TX - $86,750,000, down 3.1%
- United Way of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis, MO - $80,380,000, down 0.1%
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA - $65,510,000, down 0.2%
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, Philadelphia, PA - $64,120,000, down 4.6%
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH - $63,750,000, down 1.4%
- United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Dallas, TX - $62,790,000, up 1.2%
- United Way of Central Indiana - $60,080,000, up 2.1%

In 2014, United Way raised $5.18 billion. United Way reported total public support of $3,872,917,029 for its 2014-15 campaign year, down about 1%, or $40,282,451, from a revised $3,913,199,480 for 2013-14. Total revenue was down 2.9%, from $4,266 billion last year to $4,142 billion this year.

Based in the Carroll School of Management, the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship combines the most valuable aspects of a professional community and the resources of a leading academic institution for our members. We integrate the perspectives and experience of some of the leading corporate citizenship professionals in the field today with management best practices, helping you align your corporate citizenship objectives and business goals. We also conduct ongoing research, which is available to members through weekly, monthly, and biannual publications. Center resources and professional development opportunities support positive outcomes for your functional area, your organization as a whole, and for you as a leader.