

United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties Community Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities



The United Way Volunteer Center helps businesses build partnerships, connect with one-time volunteer projects or year-long engagement (and everything in-between), community events, community drives and opportunities for community engagement. We will help you develop annual service plans, provide best practices, help solidify service objectives, provide online volunteer sign-up and hour tracking and help develop volunteer recruitment campaigns.

Benefits of Workplace Volunteerism

- Enhances your public image in community
- Attracts customers and clients
- Improves employee morale and teamwork
- Good for community by creating positive social change

Volunteer Website

Online volunteer matching website for local volunteer opportunities. Event, one-time and on-going volunteer opportunities are listed by nonprofits and organizations.

Volunteer.UnitedWayJWC.org

Group Projects

The United Way Volunteer Center makes it easy to volunteer together as a group by connecting meaningful volunteer projects to groups. A Volunteer Group can be small or large, such as corporations, civic groups, places of worship, public schools or neighborhood groups.

Community Engagement

Poverty Simulation

Hands-on activity that provides the opportunity to experience the everyday tough choices of a low-income family in our community.

Collections and Drives

United Way assists in planning and distributing items from collections and drives to meet community needs, ie. paper goods, winter coat/warm clothing, hygiene items, school supplies, non-perishable food, laundry supplies, stocking stuffers etc.

Volunteer Express

As a service to volunteers, organizations and the community, United Way publishes a monthly volunteer e-newsletter with one-time and event volunteer opportunities in the community. Contact United Way to subscribe.

Volunteer Leadership Directory

Website that lists leadership volunteer opportunities that are available in the community, including Boards, Committees, Commissions and Projects.

LeadershipDirectory.org

My Very Own Book Drive

Annual book drive in April that is coordinated by United Way to collect children's books for grades pre-K -6 to increase access to books at home for all kids. Books are distributed to students through the highest percentage of poverty schools, summer lunch programs and service agencies.

Holiday Adopt-a-Family

Individuals, businesses and groups contact United Way to "adopt" a family that has been identified and referred by a partner agency during the holiday season.

On-Site/At-Home Volunteer Projects



Literacy Kits

Literacy Kits contain a children's book and an activity related to the book to make reading fun. The kits are distributed to families for early elementary-aged children through the highest percentage of poverty schools, summer lunch programs and service agencies.

Volunteers complete the literacy kits by making the activity (includes coloring, cutting, pasting, etc) to go with the children's book. Typically, one volunteer can complete 1-2 kits in an hour. Literacy Kits are available for over 100 children's books, including topics of STEM, animals, diversity and inclusion, and financial literacy.

Cost: \$8/Kit

Alphabet Flash Card Sets

Children's knowledge of letter names and shapes is a strong predictor of their success in learning to read.

Volunteers complete the sets by decorating flash cards with the capital and lower case of each letter and creating a picture of an object, animal, household item etc. that corresponds with the letter on the back of the card. Typically, one volunteer can complete 1-2 sets in an hour. The flash card sets will be distributed to students at high poverty schools and Kindergarten orientation.

Cost: \$2/set

Birthday Bash

Fill a child's birthday gift bag with a cake mix, frosting, candles, a card and party décor and a positive note for the birthday kid. Bags will be distributed to families living in local shelters and accessing food pantries and other programs. Cost: \$6/bag

Mindful Stress Balls

Mindful stress balls help remind kids to breathe and relax to get through a tough moment. Volunteers complete the stress balls using several balloons and an assortment of filling materials. The goal is to create a great tool for portable stress relief. Project typically takes 15 minutes to complete. Cost: \$.50/stress ball

STEM Coding Kits

Introducing coding to kids through a fun activity, designed for any age, is a great way to build skills and learn problem solving. Coding kits contain pipe cleaners, beads, string, and instructions to build words in binary.

Cost: \$2/kit

Healthy Snack Packs for Kids

When a student worries about food, it can be difficult to focus on the valuable education that will lead them to later success. A healthy snack pack filled with brain food (such as granola bars, juice box, pretzels and more) is a simple way to help a child succeed. When they are decorated to look like animals, that makes everything more FUN! Cost: \$4/pack

Reading Magic Carpets

Magic Reading Carpets are fun, colorful reading mats for young readers that are handmade by volunteers. The goal is the help get young minds excited about books and reading. The magic reading carpets are mobile so their 'book nook' can be anywhere the carpet can go. The magic carpets will be distributed with Literacy Kits at Kindergarten Orientation. Typically, one volunteer can complete 2 magic carpets in an hour.

Cost is \$6/magic carpet

Life-Size Board Games

Jumbo versions of a Scrabble-like crossword game or the Candy Land-inspired "Imaginary Lands," are built with the goal of engaging kids to develop social skills like teamwork and problem-solving. Volunteers complete the life-size games by working together to design, paint, and follow the easy-to-understand directions to create the games. The games are provided to local schools and youth programs to offer interactive and engaging literacy activities. This activity works best for a group size of 10-12 people and requires 1.5 to 2 hours and space for the game to dry overnight. Cost: \$125/game

Reusable T-shirt Bags

Put your old t-shirts to use and turn them into reusable grocery bags to support a local food pantry. The bags are great to use when distributing food and when you align it with a group food drive, you are supporting sustainability and food security. The bags will be distributed to local food pantries.

Typically, one volunteer can complete 2-3 bags in an hour. Volunteers will need to provide t-shirts for the project.



On-Site/At-Home Volunteer Projects



Cards for Homebound Seniors

Receiving a holiday or cheerful card can serve as a simple reminder that someone cares about you. Yet for homebound seniors, it can mean much more because they often miss the daily human interactions they used to have. Volunteers use cardstock, paper, markers, stickers and other decorations to create cards that will be delivered with Meals on Wheels.

Senior Activity Kits

Physical distancing has caused many seniors to feel isolated and lonely due to not seeing their loved ones. Senior Activity Kits will provide local seniors with activities they can do from the safety of their home.

Cost: \$4/Kit

Teacher Kits

According to the most recent national data, teachers spend \$467, on average, on supplies for their classroom. Providing teachers with a few classroom supplies and some words of encouragement is a great way to start a teacher's day with a smile. The kits will be distributed to teachers at schools across the community.

Cost: \$10/kit

Teen Hygiene Kits

It can be easy to take for granted something as simple as body wash or deodorant. For teens living in poverty or struggling, having access to personal care items supports their health and self-respect. Kits will be distributed to teen-serving organizations and through Student and Family Advocates. Volunteers assemble and decorate kits with positive messages.

Cost: \$8/Kit

Calm Down Kits

Calm Down Kits are a container filled with easy tools and strategies to help calm and self-regulate when feeling big emotions. It is great for all ages. Kits will be distributed through agencies and programs serving families.

Cost: \$5/Kit

Family Game Kits

Families are spending more time together while staying safe at home. The kits are simple and include an instruction sheet to engage families in new, fun, educational activities.

Cost: \$3/Kit



Customized projects available to fit any engagement or CSR goals.

For more information on any service project, contact **Patti Fields** at patti.fields@unitedwayjwc.org or 319-338-7823

