United Way of Northeast Louisiana

Community Engagement Volunteer Toolkit
United Way of Northeast Louisiana fights for the education, financial stability, health, and basic needs of every person in our community. We win by living united. By forging unlikely partnerships, finding new solutions to old problems, mobilizing the best resources, and inspiring individuals and organizations to fight against our community’s most daunting issues.

In 2017, United Way of Northeast Louisiana launched VolunteerUNITED, a Volunteer Engagement Center developed to connect individual and group volunteers to the region’s most pressing needs, providing a rewarding, customized volunteer experience.

We invite you to join the fight as a United Way of Northeast Louisiana volunteer. Whether you’re seeking a volunteer opportunity for yourself, your family, or your church or organization, our Community Engagement Manager is here to help you discover a meaningful opportunity to lend a hand and impact lives right here in Northeast Louisiana.

**EMPLOYEE TEAMS**

United Way will help connect your employee teams to meaningful volunteer experiences that impact lives in our community. Whether it’s one-day activities or team-building projects, our Community Engagement Manager is available to assist you through the entire process.

We do it all for you! It’s a service we provide at no cost to companies who support United Way in the annual campaign. We also offer this one-time service to “new” companies to help introduce them to the work of United Way and its community partners. Our customized options are organized to support United Way of Northeast Louisiana’s community impact work in education, financial stability, health, and basic needs.

**INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES**

Once your employees volunteer as a team, many of them will be inspired to do more as individual volunteers.

There are several opportunities available at United Way for your employees to volunteer on their own. Whether you’re passionate about helping 2nd and 3rd graders increase their reading skills, or participating in an interactive simulation that teaches high school students about banking, budgeting, and savings, or lending your time to 2-1-1 to help people during times of disaster, United Way of Northeast Louisiana has an opportunity for you.

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**Six Great Reasons to Get Your Company Involved!**

- Enhance employee teamwork skills
- Improve public image
- Brand awareness in the community
- Increase employee leadership skills
- Increase employee productivity and loyalty
- Build community goodwill

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For more information about VolunteerUNITED, browse the pages of this toolkit or contact United Way of Northeast Louisiana by calling 2-1-1, or visit unitedwaynela.org/volunteer.
THE PROCESS

**Step 1:** To organize an activity for your team, complete the online request form at unitedwaynla.org/volunteer or call 2-1-1. Each request is handled with quality customer service and customization.

**Step 2:** The Community Engagement Manager will coordinate with the appropriate partner or program staff to identify and develop a list of options for you and help you create a budget (if required).

**Step 3:** Once you’ve selected an activity and it’s confirmed, the Community Engagement Manager will continue serving as a liaison to ensure your volunteer day is well organized. A United Way representative project leader will accompany your team during the project.

EMPLOYEE TEAM OPPORTUNITIES EXAMPLES

**EDUCATION**

Equip 2nd and 3rd graders to succeed in school and life by giving them the tools they need to learn and grow. Create Literacy Kits made up of a book and a collection of related objects, games or other activities designed to make reading interactive and enjoyable for young children.

Many students leave school without enough food to eat at home. Host a food drive and assemble Snack Packs for students in after school programs.

Collect and/or buy school supplies to create Teacher Supply Packs for teachers to use throughout the year to replace every day supplies in their classrooms and/or to give to students as needed. The packs would include basic school supplies (scissors, glue sticks, pencils, erasers, etc.)

Support child care and community centers by keeping them clean and safe for children and youth. Work together to clean, organize and beautify facilities for United Way community partners.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY**

Prepare and serve meals to the hungry and homeless in our local area. Breakfast, lunch and dinner served at varying times and locations.

Collect baby items to help at-risk mothers and give their newborns a strong start. Assemble items in a Baby Box so that these babies get a healthy beginning in life.

Develop a basic Financial Literacy workshop to help individuals with budgeting, managing a checking account, and learning to save.

Host a Dollar & Sense Reality Fair. Employees participate from beginning to end in this simulation for high school students and help them actively learn how to make better financial decisions and gain knowledge of budgeting, saving.

Adopt a home, room or yard for a new construction or renovation to help individual, women and children at a shelter or transitional living facility.

**HEALTH**

Ensure families have the food they need. Help sort, pack and stock food that will be used to provide food at home for individuals and families without food. Help make special events for people with disabilities in an awesome and safe environment.

Keeping clean is an important part of remaining healthy, but homeless individuals and families struggle to afford these necessary supplies. Provide essential toiletry items to the homeless by hosting a hygiene supply drive and assembling Personal Care Kits. Engage with seniors by participating activities such as bingo, arts and crafts and board games.
**THE PROCESS**

**Step 1:** To volunteer for one of United Way of Northeast Louisiana’s initiatives, programs, or committees, please complete the online request form at unitedwaynela.org/volunteer or call 2-1-1. It is United Way’s priority to respond to all requests with quality customer service and customization in mind.

**Step 2:** You will receive initial confirmation from the Community Engagement Manager and be provided a list of opportunities with United Way.

**Step 3:** If United Way does not have a volunteer opportunity that matches your interest and time commitment, we will connect you with one of our impact partner agencies for additional opportunities.

**INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE OPPORTUNITY EXAMPLES**

**EDUCATION**

READ.LEARN.SUCCEED., United Way of Northeast Louisiana’s education initiative, focuses on 3rd grade students reading on grade level, with the ultimate goal of improving graduation rates. Sign up to volunteer at unitedwaynela.org/volunteer to be a READ.LEARN.SUCCEED. volunteer reader, or simply call 2-1-1. Also available as a Team Opportunity (2-6 people).

**FINANCIAL STABILITY**

Dollars & $ense Reality Fair is United Way of Northeast Louisiana’s interactive financial education simulation during which high school students actively learn how to make better financial decisions and gain knowledge of budgeting, saving, and banking. Also available as a Team Opportunity.

**HEALTH**

Support with day activity programming and special projects for seniors

Provide art, cooking, dance etc. classes for adults in integrated settings in the community

**BASIC NEEDS**

Collect, sort, and pack essential items for disaster relief

Answer 2-1-1 calls during high call volume, including natural disasters, and/or help monitor resources.

TRAINING REQUIRED

Provide service to customers, sort incoming products, and assists in the maintenance of a local thrift store that benefits the homeless.