

# HOSTING AN AUCTION

## WHY HOST AN AUCTION?

Not everyone chooses to contribute to the United Way campaign through payroll deduction, but hosting an auction provides a fun, easy way for everyone to get involved. Your auction can be as large or small as you want and it can be an easy add-on to an existing campaign event.

## HOW DO I RUN A SUCCESSFUL AUCTION?

United Way can host the auction on our DonorPoint giving platform. Set up is easy, outbid notices are sent automatically, and payments are collected online. Ask your United Way representative about this option.

The key to running a successful auction is getting folks excited about the items they could win! Prior to the start of your auction, send a message to your team highlighting to the top items. Then, when the raffle launches, provide clear instruction on how people can participate. Be sure to send reminders periodically while the auction is open and generate some friendly competition on popular items. Once the auction is closed, you can announce the winners in an event or via email.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD AUCTION ITEM?

Collecting donations and items for the auction is the most time consuming part of the process. Your campaign committee should have a standard request letter and start reaching out to local businesses and partners for support 4-6 weeks before the campaign kick-off. Alternatively, you could ask each department to assemble a themed basket. Popular auction items include:

- Tickets to a concert, play, or sporting event
- Autographed memorabilia
- Gift baskets from local salons and boutiques
- Experiences like chef's dinners and gym memberships

Experiences and hard-to-get items are always popular, but don't be afraid to get creative. Combine smaller donations into more robust baskets to make the package more appealing. Or, auction off a primo parking spot, company swag, or CEO for the day experience!

Though it is great to have some high-value items to generate excitement around the auction, a best practice is to set a minimum value amount for all items.

## HOW DO I DETERMINE STARTING BIDS AND BID INCREMENTS?

Best practice in auction set up is to have the starting bid be 30% of the value of the item. Another best practice is to set a minimum bid increment, usually at 10% of the value. This means that for an item valued at \$100, the minimum bid would be \$30 and the minimum bid increment would be \$10.

Mid-way through your auction, review the items and see if there are any that have not received a bid. For those items that do not have a bid, drop the minimum bid to 15-20% of the item's value. Then, send a message to your staff announcing the new price points to encourage participation.



Questions? Please contact:

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