

United Way Women's Leadership Council

Communications Toolkit

Prepared for: United Way Women's Leadership Council
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March 2011

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

	<u>Page Number</u>
	<u>Table of Contents</u>
Communications Toolkit Purpose	3
Communications Toolkit Overview	4
✓ Audiences – Who We Want to Reach	5
✓ Message House – What We Want to Say	6
✓ Message House – How to Use	7
✓ Toolkit Handouts (Description)	8
✓ Key Audience Information Kits -- Who Gets Which Handouts	9
Handouts	10
✓ Mission Statement	12
✓ Message House – What We Want to Say	13
✓ Our Story	14
✓ Facts at a Glance	16
✓ Local Successes	17
✓ Why You Should Be a Member	19
✓ Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor	20
✓ Chair and Board Member Bios and Photos	22
✓ Local United Way Women's Leadership Council Contacts	23
Communication Toolkit Templates	24
Additional Suggestions	37
Questions and Answers	41
United Way National Women's Leadership Council Key Contacts	45

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Communications Toolkit Purpose

The purpose of this Communications Toolkit is to raise the profile of United Way Women's Leadership Council as a dynamic force, led and supported by women, whose Mission is understood, whose Value is recognized, and whose Message is clear – making the decision to support us an easy one.

The more people hear about our work, the more they understand its life changing impact, and the more they are moved to join us as donors, volunteers, and advocates.

We invited Chairs of local United Way Women's Leadership Councils to participate in an online survey. Thank you for helping us better understand the communications challenges local Councils face and what tools and materials would be most helpful in raising visibility and recruiting support.

In response, the Toolkit includes guidelines, clear messaging, and easy-to-use handouts designed to help you spread the word, recruit new members, attract additional sponsors, and ignite the support of those who share our passion.

Components are flexible, to use together or separately as you prefer. Each piece is complete and accompanied by a local template to include information specific to your own community.

Toolkit components are not intended to replace your mission statements, fact sheets, brochures, etc. if they are working well for you. Our intent is that the enclosed elements will supplement or enhance what you are already using – and complement the United Way Message Strategy:

- United Way **advances the Common Good by creating opportunities for a better life for all.**
- Our focus is on **education, income, and health – the building blocks for a good quality of life.**
- United Way **recruits people and organizations who bring the passion, expertise, and resources needed to get things done.**
- **We invite you to be part of the change. You can give, you can advocate, and you can volunteer.**
- That's what it means to **LIVE UNITED.**

*By telling our story and speaking out loudly with “one voice,”
we can increase awareness of the
United Way Women's Leadership Council
in our communities and nationally.*

March 2011

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Overview

- [Audiences](#)
- [Message House](#)
- [Tool Kit Handouts](#)
- [Key Audience Information Kits](#)

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Audiences – Who We Want to Reach

While the community at large is important, our communications goal is to reach and influence the following:

Who	Why
Current Members	Who, by enhancing their knowledge will feel better connected and engaged and, therefore, more likely to give each year; recruit like-minded members and other supporters; and “talk-up” the Council’s work and impact to people they know.
Potential Members	Who may not know about the United Way Women’s Leadership Council, yet are looking to connect with a cause that has local impact, and be part of a powerful network of caring women who stand up and take action. Note: Professional women, new in town, are a strong membership target, as many look to join powerful networks.
Current Corporate Sponsors	Who currently provide financial and/or resource support, but routinely review their “investment” to ensure their company name remains aligned with the “right” non-profits. Note: Support can come from one internal corporate champion – a problem if they leave. This makes it important to familiarize other decision makers in the company with the Council’s work and purpose.
Potential Corporate Sponsors	Whose corporate citizenship includes financial and/or resource support of non-profits respected by the community. Note: Companies that target women as customers and employees are particularly good targets.
Media (Print, TV, Radio)	Who reach and influence all of the above, as well as the public at large.
Local United Way Board Members	Who should be informed regularly about the important contribution your Council is making to the community and to the greater success of your United Way locally.

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Message House – What We Want to Say

Note: See next page for how to use the Message House.

Mission Statement

**The United Way Women's Leadership Council
mobilizes the power of women to
advance the Common Good in our communities**

\$700 Million Raised in Past 10 Years

- More women giving more money than any other similar women's philanthropic group
- Significant annual growth
- Maximizes individual giving for greatest impact
- **Locally, raised \$___ in __ years**

Powerful Network of Caring Women, Nationally

- Nearly 50,000 members in 120 U.S. communities
- Shared belief in importance of United Way
- Created and led by women; engaging hands on to drive change
- **Locally, attracted over ____ members**

Life Changing Impact, Locally

- Members unite to strengthen their communities by Giving, Volunteering, Advocating
- Focus on most critical issues in their communities: Education, Income, Health
- **Changing lives locally by [insert local measure(s)]**

Increasing Early Grade Literacy *

- Members united by concern that 1-in-3 4th graders can't read well enough to understand a simple story
- Taking action locally and nationally to address this crisis
- **Increasing early grade literacy locally by [insert local measure(s)]**

* *Note: Additional message pillar for United Way Women's Leadership Councils supporting UWW Early Grade Literacy initiative.*

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Message House – How to Use

The purpose of the Message House is to provide consistent, clear, and compelling messaging so that we are all speaking with one voice. This will help increase awareness and understanding of the United Way Women's Leadership Council and its mission. The Message House is designed in three sections:

Orange Roof (Mission)	Describes who and what we are and is the same as our Mission Statement. Use when you have a very short time to get someone's attention and get your message across.
Blue Pillars (Key Claims)	Identify the most compelling claims we can make about the United Way Women's Leadership Council. Use when you have a little more time.
Green Pillars (Support Points)	Provide supporting points for our claims – the details that give evidence for our claims. Use when there is time for a deeper conversation.

Information in the Message House can be used in:

- Presentations
- Speeches
- Written materials
- Web site

Adapt the Message House content for your community to showcase your local data, programs, and case studies by completing information at the bottom of each green pillar as indicated.

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Toolkit Handouts

Easy to use handouts and templates help you tell the United Way Women's Leadership Council story to raise awareness, grow membership, and increase financial support.

Handouts	Purpose
Mission Statement	Define our purpose to inspire others to join and support us. Use with most audiences to succinctly communicate who and what we are.
Message House	Provide consistent, compelling messaging so we all speak with one voice. Puts key facts at your fingertips for communicating in conversations and formal presentations.
Our Story	Communicate our "history" and successes and give others confidence this is an organization worth supporting. Use for most audiences to inspire them to want to join and support our work.
Facts at a Glance	Provide at-a-glance overview of who and what we are. Use with most audiences to inspire others to get involved and the media to take an interest in our story.
Local Successes	Demonstrate that our programs are having life changing impacts, so others know why they should join and support our work. Use with all audiences to bring the message alive and touch the hearts of people you are asking to join and support us.
Why You Should Be a Member	Convince potential new members to join. Use in reaching out to women you believe should be interested in joining.
Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor	Convince potential new sponsors to support your local United Way Women's Leadership Council. Use in presentations to leaders at companies you believe could be interested in sponsoring you work.
Chair and Board Bios and Photos	Put a "face" on your local United Way Women's Leadership Council. Use with all audiences to help others relate and understand who you are.
Local Contacts	Make it easy for members, potential members, sponsors, potential sponsors, media, and others to contact you. Use with all audiences to encourage others to connect with you.

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Key Audience Information Kits

- Who Gets Which Handouts -

Target Audience	Key Audience Information Kits	
Current Members	Mission Statement Message House Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Why You Should Be a Member Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts
Potential Members	Mission Statement Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Why You Should Be a Member Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts
Current Sponsors	Mission Statement Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts
Potential Sponsors	Mission Statement Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts
Media	Mission Statement Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts
Local United Way Board	Mission Statement Our Story Facts at a Glance Local Successes	Chair and Board Bios Local Contacts

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

Handouts

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Note About Handouts: Samples and Templates

SAMPLES

What follows are several sample Handouts – that is the printed materials that will go into each of the Key Audience Information Kits described earlier. Reading through these samples will give you an idea of how the Handouts work together in the various Information Kits to communicate essential aspects of the local United Way Women's Leadership Councils. For authenticity, Handout samples are based on information provided by the United Way Women's Leadership Council of Central Iowa, and we thank them for allowing us to use their "real life" examples in this way.

TEMPLATES

In the section following the sample Handouts, you will find a series of Templates. The format exactly replicates the Handouts, but with space left throughout so that you can very easily customize each one to your own local United Way Women's Leadership Council.

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

Mission Statement

**The United Way Women's Leadership Council
mobilizes the power of women
to advance the Common Good in our communities.**

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email: _____

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Messaging – What We Want to Say

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Life Changing Impact, Locally

- Members unite to strengthen their communities by Giving, Volunteering, Advocating
- Focus on most critical issues in their communities: Education, Income, Health
- **Changing lives locally by [insert local measure(s)]**

Increasing Early Grade Literacy *

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* Note: Additional message pillar for United Way Women's Leadership Councils supporting UWW Early Grade Literacy initiative.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Sample --

Our Story

From a handful of determined and passionate women, *this fledgling idea has grown into a national network of some 50,000 members in 120 U.S. communities, and the most successful philanthropic effort of its kind.* The United Way Women's Leadership Council was founded in 2002, based on an ambitious local model seeded in Greensboro, North Carolina four years earlier. Under the visionary leadership of Bonnie McElveen Hunter, later U.S. Ambassador to Finland, the concept recognized women as an emerging and powerful philanthropic force. With more members giving more money than any other similar women's group, the United Way Women's Leadership Council has raised in excess of \$700 Million and set a target of \$1 Billion by 2012.

Created and led by women, the Women's Leadership Council is an integral part of United Way. Its proof-positive mission is simple: "Mobilize the power of women to advance the Common Good in our communities." Research has revealed that women's number one philanthropic motivation is "connection to a cause," a point well understood by United Way Women's Leadership Councils' 50,000 members. Grounded in the idea that addressing the most critical local needs lifts the community as a whole and creates a better life for us all, members stand-up, unite, and take action on issues that hit closest to home by giving, volunteering, and advocating.

With a focus on education, income, and health, a sampling of local actions includes: implementation of a nationally-recognized teen pregnancy prevention program in Anderson County, South Carolina; taking-on female foster youth emancipation in Ventura County, California; piloting a new approach to parental engagement in inner city schools in San Antonio, Texas; visiting neighborhood parks to model playtime environments that promote literacy, math and social development activities with young children in Des Moines, Iowa.

According to a recent study by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, women are more likely to give and give at a higher amount across most income levels. The United Way Women's Leadership Council is setting the pace with donations that have consistently grown each year. Annual contributions per member range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 or more.

The corporate community also has taken note of the local impact the United Way Women's Leadership Council is having in its 120 communities. UPS, Best Buy, Macy's, Merrill Lynch, and Wells Fargo are just some of the companies that have jumped aboard to partner locally and nationally and help further the cause with funding and other resources.

Members' ages, ethnic backgrounds, geographies, professions and interests are diverse, yet the common denominator is a shared belief in the work of the United Way Women's Leadership Councils. A recent survey also showed that members like belonging to an organization created and led by women and connecting with other powerful, committed women in their communities.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Our Story, Continued

The vision of the United Way Women's Leadership Council is to be "the most recognized, esteemed, and flourishing network of its kind to maximize the contribution of women to the Council and their communities – locally, nationally, and globally."

Plans ahead include reaching \$1 Billion in contributions by the end of 2012; a major goal to increase early grade literacy; and expansion of membership. If the last ten years are evidence of what 50,000 caring, passionate and powerful women can do, this is only the beginning.

Note: Use the following template to add your local story:

Our Local United Way Women's Leadership Council

In [*name of community*] the United Way Women's Leadership Council * was formed in [*year*] and today has approximately [*number*] members. Consistent with the overall goal to address our communities' most pressing issues, our focus here is on [*name of program(s)*] with a goal of _____, _____, _____. The annual membership contribution is \$____. Membership activities include _____, _____, and _____.

For more information please contact [*local United Way Women's Leadership Council chair*] or [*local United Way staff person*].

- * If your local United Way Women's Leadership Council has a different name, we suggest substituting this first sentence: In [*name of community*] the United Way Women's Leadership Council is known as [*name*] which was formed in [*year*], and today has approximately [*number*] members.

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-- Sample --

Facts at a Glance

United Way Women's Leadership Council Facts at a Glance

- National network of 50,000 passionate, caring women dedicated to addressing the most critical needs in 120 local communities across the U.S.
- Mission is to “mobilize the caring power of women to advance the Common Good in our communities” -- members engage hands on in driving change.
- Raised over \$700M in contributions in first decade with more members giving more money than any other similar organization.
- Most successful philanthropic organization of its kind in the U.S.; founded in 2002, in Greensboro North Carolina by Bonnie McElveen Hunter.
- Programs focus on education, income, and health depending on local needs; new emphasis on early grade literacy based on members' alarm at latest statistics.
- Members commit to annual contribution of \$10,000 (or more) to \$1,000 based on community, and actively engage by giving, volunteering, and advocating.
- Goals include reaching \$1 Billion by 2012, putting major dent in early grade literacy statistics; growing locally; increasing awareness locally and nationally; and expanding internationally.
- Women's Leadership Council is an affinity group of United Way Worldwide.

Local United Way Women's Leadership Council Facts at a Glance

- (*Location*) United Way Women's Leadership Council founded in
- Currently has (*number*) members
- Has raised \$__ in (*number*) years
- Local programs focus on (*very brief description, e.g. "early grade literacy"*)
- Annual member's contribution is \$_____

For further information, please contact:

Name, Title
Phone, e-mail

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Sample --

Local Successes

What We Do

The United Way Women's Leadership Council of Central Iowa believes all children should start school ready to learn, and members engage *hands-on* in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, we can invest time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about.

Members are influencing legislation, enhancing State education standards, and implementing grassroots programs to improve the entire network of care and support that leads to success in kindergarten and throughout the child's education. We are involved in research-based strategies that ensure children are ready for kindergarten – the first step in the journey to graduation from high school; these strategies include:

- Safe and supportive settings with the goal of attaining high standards in the Iowa Quality Rating System
- Health development to ensure children's health
- Consistent caring adults to enable children to learn through loving, nurturing environments and everyday experiences

Local Successes

The United Way Women's Leadership Council has:

- **Strengthened the quality of early learning centers and home providers in Central Iowa neighborhoods**, by investing in teacher development, educational materials, and safe environments.
- Supported programs to ensure children's health, including **Smile Squad** – a mobile dental health program, childcare nurse consultants, and therapeutic classrooms.
- Focused on **mobile reading programs** for home health providers and child care centers; **mobile play and learn programs** to improve literacy, math, and social development; and **"Born Learning"** – a campaign to advocate for parents as their child's first and best teacher.
- Contributed more than **\$8.4 million since 2002** to advance the Common Good in our community.

Robbie's Story

Robbie's story shows how the lives of children and families can be transformed. Robbie's parents struggled in school when they were children and were just passed along in the system. As caring parents, they didn't want the same thing to happen to their child. Robbie was like other healthy toddlers showing normal language development, when he suddenly reverted to saying only two words, "mama" and "dada." His parents looked into possible causes and learned that Robbie simply needed more positive contact with other children and adults.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Local Successes, Continued

Fortunately, Robbie's parents were told about "Play and Learn," a program funded by United Way Women's Leadership Council that takes learning opportunities into lower-income neighborhood parks. It was life changing for Robbie and his parents. At "Play and Learn,"

Robbie had a chance to socialize with other children, while his parents learned valuable skills to help their child's early learning and development. Now, Robbie's mom is connecting with other moms, becoming more social herself, and is going back to earn her GED. She says, "If I can show Robbie that mom can do it, then I know he can." Today, Robbie's cognitive and motor development is normal, and he is on track for a successful kindergarten experience – the first step in his journey to graduation from high school.

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email: _____

We thank United Way of Central Iowa Women's Leadership Connection for allowing us to use certain "real life" examples in this Toolkit.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Sample --

Why You Should Be a Member

United Way Women's Leadership Council

The United Way Women's Leadership Council of Central Iowa is a powerful local network of caring women who are standing up and taking action to address our community's most critical issues. We are one of 120 United Way Women's Leadership Councils across the U.S. -- a *national* network of 50,000 women united by our passion and unified by our mission to advance the Common Good in our communities to make a better life for us all.

What We Do

What sets us apart is that members engage *hands-on* in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, members can invest their time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about. The United Way Women's Leadership Council of Central Iowa believes all children should start school ready to learn. Members are influencing legislation, enhancing State education standards, and implementing grassroots programs to improve the entire network of care and support that leads to success in kindergarten and throughout the child's education. We have taken on three specific measures:

- Safe and supportive settings with the goal of attaining high standards in the Iowa Quality Rating System
- Health development to ensure children's health
- Consistent caring adults to enable children to learn through loving, nurturing environments and everyday experiences

Since our founding in 2002 Central Iowa's most caring women have contributed more than **\$8.4 Million** to advance the Common Good in our community.

The Membership Experience

- Connect with a powerful network of caring women, locally and nationally
- Get involved in the way that is right for you:
 - Make an annual contribution
 - Volunteer your time, professional expertise, and talent
 - Advocate at the local, State, or national level
- Attend local United Way Women's Leadership Council meetings and social events
- Attend United Way National Way Women's Leadership Council annual conference
- Receive updates on projects and programs
- Engage in making a better life for all in our community

How to Join

We invite you to be part of the change. Women who donate \$___ become members of United Way Women's Leadership Council.

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email _____

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-- Sample --

Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor

United Way Women's Leadership Council

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What We Do

What sets us apart is that members engage *hands-on* in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, members can invest their time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about. The United Way Women's Leadership Council of Central Iowa believes all children should start school ready to learn. Members are influencing legislation, enhancing State education standards, and implementing grassroots programs to improve the entire network of care and support that leads to success in kindergarten and throughout the child's education. We have taken on three specific measures:

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Local Successes

The United Way Women's Leadership Council has:

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- Supported programs to ensure children's health, including **Smile Squad** – a mobile dental health program, childcare nurse consultants, and therapeutic classrooms.
- Focused on **mobile reading programs** for home health providers and child care centers; **mobile play and learn programs** to improve literacy, math, and social development; and **"Born Learning"** – a campaign to advocate for parents as their child's first and best teacher.
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United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor, Continued

Benefits of Being a Sponsor

When you sponsor the local United Way Women's Leadership Council you associate your Company and brand with this powerful network of caring women and the most successful philanthropic effort of its kind.

- Your Company will be a leader in helping the community and making a better life for all.
- Your female employees will be invited to participate in whatever way is appropriate for them. They can:
 - Donate money
 - Volunteer their time
 - Become advocates at the Local, State, or National level
- Your representatives will be invited to United Way Women's Leadership Council meetings and social events.
- You will receive regular updates on the projects and programs supported by the United Way Women's Leadership Council.

What Is Involved

We invite you to be part of the change and ask for a contribution of \$_____ to be a Sponsor.

Please, contact [name], [title], for further information.

-- Sample --

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Chair and Board Members

Photo

Mary Smith, Chair

Mary Smith serves as Chair of the local Women's Leadership Council for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Mary is a logistics manager at UPS and was a founding member of the Women's Leadership Council when it was created in 2007. She has been an active donor and community volunteer for many years and has a particular interest in early grade literacy programs. Mary invites all women in [____Community ____] to join the Women's Leadership Council and become involved in whatever way is appropriate: give, volunteer, or advocate.

Photo

Sue Jones

Sue Jones joined the Board of the local Women's Leadership Council in 2009. Sue is a community volunteer and mother of three girls ages 12 to 18. She focuses her volunteer efforts working with United Way early grade literacy programs at elementary schools in her neighborhood and across the County. Sue also volunteers at her church where she serves as treasurer.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Sample --

Local Contacts

Nancy Brown
Executive Director,
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
nbrown@ocuw

Mary Smith
Chair
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
msmith@aol.com

Sue Jones
Board Member
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
sjones@gmail.com

March 2011

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

Templates

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Note About the Handouts: Templates

In the section that follows, you will find a series of Templates. The format exactly replicates the Handout samples that can be found earlier in the Toolkit. Spaces have been left throughout so that you can easily customize to specifics of your own local United Way Women's Leadership Council. On completion, these Templates become the Handouts that you will use in the Information Kits to reach your key audiences.

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

-- Template --

**[Name of Community] United Way
Women's Leadership Council**

Mission Statement

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mobilizes the power of women
to advance the Common Good in our communities.**

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email: _____

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- **Template** --

Message House – What We Want to Say

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United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

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Note: Use the following template to add your local story:

Our Local United Way Women's Leadership Council

In *[name of community]* the United Way Women's Leadership Council * was formed in *[year]* and today has approximately *[number]* members. Consistent with the overall goal to address our communities' most pressing issues, our focus here is on *[name of program(s)]* with a goal of _____, _____, _____. The annual membership contribution is \$____. Membership activities include _____, _____, and _____.

For more information please contact *[local United Way Women's Leadership Council chair]* or *[local United Way staff person]*.

* If your local United Way Women's Leadership Council has a different name, we suggest substituting this first sentence: In *[name of community]* the United Way Women's Leadership Council is known as *[name]* which was formed in *[year]*, and today has approximately *[number]* members.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- **Template** --

Facts at a Glance

United Way Women's Leadership Council Facts at a Glance

- National network of 50,000 passionate, caring women dedicated to addressing the most critical needs in 120 local communities across the U.S.
- Raised over \$700M in contributions in first decade with more members giving more money than any other similar organization.
- Most successful philanthropic organization of its kind in the U.S.; founded in 2002 in Greensboro North Carolina by Bonnie McElveen Hunter.
- Mission is to "mobilize the caring power of women to advance the Common Good in our communities."
- Programs focus on education, income, and health based on local needs; new emphasis on early grade literacy based on members' alarm at latest statistics.
- Members commit to annual contribution of \$10,000 (or more) to \$1,000 based on community and actively engage by giving, volunteering, and advocating.
- Goals include reaching \$1 Billion by 2012, putting major dent in early grade literacy statistics, growing locally, increasing awareness locally and nationally, and expanding internationally.
- Women's Leadership Council is an affinity group of United Way Worldwide.

Local United Way Women's Leadership Council Facts at a Glance

- [Location] United Way Women's Leadership Council founded in
- Currently has [number] members
- Has raised \$__ in [number] years
- Local programs focus on [very brief description, e.g. "early grade literacy"]
- Annual member's contribution is \$__

For further information, please contact:

Name, Title
Phone, e-mail

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

Local Successes

What We Do

The United Way Women's Leadership Council of [*fill in community name*] believes [*fill in local focus / measures*]. Beyond an annual financial contribution, we can invest time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about.

Members are [*fill in areas of key activities*]. We have taken on [*number of*] specific measures:

-
-
-

Local Successes

The United Way Women's Leadership Council has:

- Strengthened [*fill in impact*] by investing in [*fill in area of commitment*]
- Supported [*fill in impact*]
- Focused on [*fill in area of focus*]
- Contributed more than \$____ since [*date*] to advance the Common Good in our community.

[Local Family's or Child's] Story

[*Fill in Name*] story shows how the lives of children and families can be transformed.

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email: _____

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

Why You Should Be a Member

United Way Women's Leadership Council

The United Way Women's Leadership Council of [*fill in community name*] is a powerful local network of caring women who are standing up and taking action to address our community's most critical issues. We are one of 120 United Way Women's Leadership Councils across the U.S. -- a *national* network of 50,000 women united by our passion and unified by our mission to advance the Common Good in our communities to make a better life for us all.

What We Do

What sets us apart is that members engage *hands-on* in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, members can invest their time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about. The United Way Women's Leadership Council of [*fill in community name*] believes [*fill in area of focus from YOUR Local Successes*]. Members are [*fill in key activities from YOUR Local Successes*] We have taken on three specific measures:

-[use same measures presented in YOUR Local Successes]
-
-

Since our founding in [*date*] [*community name*] most caring women have contributed more than \$__ million to advance the Common Good in our community.

The Membership Experience

- Connect with a powerful network of caring women, locally and nationally
- Get involved in the way that is right for you:
 - Make an annual contribution
 - Volunteer your time, professional expertise, and talent
 - Advocate at the local, State, or national level
- Attend local United Way Women's Leadership Council meetings and social events
- Attend United Way National Way Women's Leadership Council annual conference
- Receive updates on projects and programs
- Engage in making a better life for all in our community

How to Join

We invite you to be part of the change. Women who donate \$__ become members of United Way Women's Leadership Council.

For more information, please, contact: _____ Phone/email _____

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor

United Way Women's Leadership Council

The United Way Women's Leadership Council of [*fill in community name*] is a powerful local network of caring women who are standing up and taking action to address our community's most critical issues. We are one of 120 United Way Women's Leadership Councils across the U.S. -- a *national* network of 50,000 women united by our passion and unified by our mission to advance the Common Good in our communities to make a better life for us all.

What We Do

What sets us apart is that members engage *hands-on* in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, members can invest their time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about. The United Way Women's Leadership Council of [*fill in community name*] believes [*fill in area of focus from YOUR Local Successes*]. Members are [*fill in key activities from YOUR Local Successes*] We have taken on three specific measures:

-[use same measures presented in YOUR Local Successes]
-
-

Since our founding in [*date*] [*community name*] most caring women have contributed more than \$__ million to advance the Common Good in our community.

Local Successes

The United Way Women's Leadership Council has: [*fill in from YOUR Local Successes*]

- Strengthened [*fill in impact*] by investing in [*fill in area of commitment*]
- Supported [*fill in impact*]
- Focused on [*fill in area of focus*]

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Why Your Company Should Be a Sponsor, Continued

Benefits of Being a Sponsor

When you sponsor the local United Way Women's Leadership Council you associate your Company and brand with this powerful network of caring women and the most successful philanthropic effort of its kind.

- Your Company will be a leader in helping the community as a whole and making a better life for all.
- Your women employees will be invited to participate in whatever way is appropriate for them. They can:
 - Donate money
 - Volunteer their time
 - Become advocates at the local, State, or National level
- Your representatives will be invited to United Way Women's Leadership Council meetings and social events.
- You will receive regular updates on the projects and programs supported by the United Way Women's Leadership Council.

What Is Involved

We invite you to be part of the change and ask for a contribution of \$_____ to be a Sponsor.

Please, contact [*name*], [*title*], for further information.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

Chair and Board Member Bios

Photo

Mary Smith, Chair

Mary Smith serves as Chair of the local Women's Leadership Council for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Mary is a logistics manager at UPS and was a founding member of the Women's Leadership Council when it was created in 2007. She has been an active donor and community volunteer for many years and has a particular interest in early grade literacy programs. Mary invites all women in [____Community ____] to join the Women's Leadership Council and become involved in whatever way is appropriate: give, volunteer, or advocate.

Photo

Sue Jones

Sue Jones joined the Board of the local Women's Leadership Council in 2009. Sue is a community volunteer and mother of three girls ages 12 to 18. She focuses her volunteer efforts working with United Way early grade literacy programs at elementary schools in her neighborhood and across the County. Sue also volunteers at her church where she serves as treasurer.

For more information contact: _____ Phone Number/email _____

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

-- Template --

Local Contacts

Nancy Brown
Executive Director,
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
nbrown@ocuw

Mary Smith
Chair
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
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Sue Jones
Board Member
United Way Women's Leadership Council

000-000-0000
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March 2011

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

Additional Suggestions

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Additional Suggestions

The previous pages provide basic guidelines and Handouts to help you enhance awareness of your United Way Women's Leadership Council and bring to life the impact of your work on advancing the Common Good in your community. Following are additional suggestions we felt would be helpful.

What's in a Name?

Known nationally as the United Way Women's Leadership Council, some local communities go by different names. To create one strong national brand, ideally all communities would unite under one name and, therefore, strengthen connection to the United Way Women's Leadership Council's 50,000-strong *national network*. Our survey of Council Chairs indicates some are willing to adopt the widely used United Way Women's Leadership Council, and we encourage you to do so. If you feel your local name is so well entrenched that changing it would be a mistake, we ask that you couple its designation with "A Member of the United Way Women's Leadership Council" to reinforce the national heft and presence of the whole network.

Note: Plans are in discussion to create a "Member of the United Way Women's Leadership Council" logo for use locally.

Working with the Media

Media are important gateways to those audiences you are looking to reach, inform, and influence. A well-placed story or news item can give a significant awareness "lift" to your local United Way Women's Leadership Council. With this in mind:

- ✓ **Develop a local media contact list.** Include reporters, editors, and producers of local newspapers, lifestyle magazines, TV, radio programs, and perhaps online media covering local interest and news in your market. These people churn fast – keep your list current.
- ✓ **Get to know your local media representatives.** Part of their job is to stay abreast of the community and newsworthy happenings, and many will be willing to sit down for a briefing on your United Way Women's Leadership Council, its programs, and its impact. Find out what stories she/he likes to cover to better tailor your newsworthy activities and local impact stories to her/his editorial needs. Be sure to give the reporter a Media Kit -- elements provided in this Toolkit.
- ✓ **Be accessible to local media.** As Board Chair, make your contact information (office, home, and cell phone numbers and email address) available so that when a reporter is working on a story about local community issues, philanthropic topics, etc., and in need of an informed quote or comment, she/he turns to you as Chair of the United Way

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Additional Suggestions, Continued

Women's Leadership Council, first. If you are accessible and responsive, media will keep coming. This kind of media exposure can go a long way in building the stature and credibility of your local United Way Women's Leadership Council with the community at large, as well as other media outlets.

- ✓ **Emerging Issues and Difficult Situations.** Occasionally, something can happen that throws the media and community spotlight on an organization in a way that can threaten its good name and reputation. If you are aware of an issue that could potentially embarrass the organization, or if you receive a call from a reporter that concerns you, immediately inform your local United Way CEO, as well as Linda Paulson at United Way Worldwide. (Contact information follows.) They will provide guidance and resources to help you.

Getting the Hook In

You never know where the next potential lead will come from, so be ready to know what to say to pique interest. An unanticipated conversation with a someone-who-knows-someone can be the gateway to recruiting a new member, a new sponsor, or other party well placed to help you advance your work. Be prepared to talk about your United Way Women's Leadership Council whenever the opportunity comes up, and listen for openings that enable you to do that. The Message House featured in this Toolkit puts key facts at your fingertips. Take time to become familiar with it so that you are ready to ignite a conversation when an opportunity presents itself.

Spreading the Word

The "voice" of your United Way Women's Leadership Council is heard through its members. As Chair – the leader – you have a special opportunity to communicate its mission, purpose, and impact on the community at large. Consider contacting your local business councils, professional associations, corporate women's organizations, Rotary Clubs, and other community groups that invite guest speakers to address their members and propose your local United Way Board Chair or Women's Leadership Council Chair as a speaker.

Select a topic on which the United Way Women's Leadership Council has informed insights relevant to the organization and larger community. For example, choose an issue on which the United Way Women's Leadership Council has a specific focus, a report out on a successful action, or insights into women and philanthropy. The purpose of addressing local groups of influence is not primarily to make a recruitment pitch, rather to reinforce the community leadership standing of your United Way Women's Leadership Council and put a face on it. Done right, connections will be made and membership recruitment and engagement will follow naturally.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Additional Suggestions, Continued

Web Site

While these Communication Toolkit materials are intended as "Handouts" for your key audiences, their content can easily be adapted for use on your local United Way Women's Leadership Council web site, and in your brochures, etc.

Reinforcing Our Relationship with United Way

In preparing materials for distribution to our various audiences, making the connection to United Way is important for our standing and credibility. Below is a statement that United Way uses to describe its role and purpose. Consider incorporating this into your communication materials where you feel it is appropriate:

We all have a stake in making sure that today's children grow up to be productive citizens who give back to the community. The best thing we can do to get them off to the right start is to focus on education. One of every four students does not graduate high school on time. We know that high school dropouts are 12 years in the making. Still, nearly half of American children start school without the basics they need to succeed in school. This has significant consequences for all of us. To have strong communities with a skilled workforce, we need to commit to cutting dropout rates in half by 2018.

**United Way Women's Leadership Council
Communications Toolkit**

Questions and Answers

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Questions and Answers

(Q&A prepared by Linda Paulson)

In our online survey we asked Board Chairs what they felt were the “tough” questions when talking about the United Way Women's Leadership Council. Below are answers to help you respond to these and similar questions. Should you have other questions to which you would like responses, please, contact: [Linda Paulson at 703-836-7112 ext. 422](mailto:Linda.Paulson@unitedway.org)

Why should someone be part of United Way Women's Leadership Council?

United Way Women's Leadership Council mobilizes the power of women to advance the Common Good in our communities. Our focus is on education, income, and health – the building blocks for a good quality of life.

What sets us apart is that members engage hands-on in driving change in our community. Beyond an annual financial contribution, members can invest their time, professional expertise, and talent to advance causes we care passionately about.

Joining with us means being part of the most successful women's philanthropic network of its kind today. Your passion, combined with the power of nearly 50,000 members in 120 communities, who have raised \$700 million in a decade, maximizes your capacity to get things done. You become part of a powerful local and national network of caring women. Our ability to get things done makes us unique.

(Please refer to the “Message House” and “Why You Should Become a Member” information sheet in the Communications Toolkit for more information.)

Why does United Way take money off the top of every donation?

In order for us to be most successful in our mission, it's critical to have strong staffing and infrastructure in place. United Way's overhead costs are among the lowest of all non-profits, and are used to ensure accountability, trust, and results in the community. We could not be where we are today as United Way Women's Leadership Councils if it were not for the support we get from the resources of United Way.

Why does my Women's Leadership Council need to be part of United Way?

The Women's Leadership Council is an integral part of United Way. United Way is committed to advancing women's philanthropy and is a key leader in this work. While the United Way Women's Leadership Council focuses on specific causes, our goal is to enhance the reach and impact of United Way as a whole across all our communities. In addition, as part of United Way, we have access to expert professionals who work with us to be sure our time and effort are being placed where they have the greatest life changing impact. Our success comes from joining together the power of women with the power of United Way.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Questions and Answers, Continued

Is going through the United Way the best use of my money...wouldn't I be better off going directly to my chosen organization? (for use by United Way Women's Leadership Councils that allow designations)

The most impactful way you can invest in your community is to give through your United Way Women's Leadership Council. This way, you know your gift is combined with the power of other women's gifts as well as their time, professional expertise, and talent to create a stronger community for all of us. If you also decide to designate part of your gift to another organization, you can trust that United Way will handle it efficiently and effectively.

Why does (name of local Council) differ from the United Way Women's Leadership Council?

The United Way Women's Leadership Council is the name of the national network. While most local networks go by the same name, some use a slightly different variation of the name. Our group is called _____, because we established our group prior to the national name being established.

How do I help women in the community understand that if they donate to the United Way at a certain level, they automatically become a member of their local Women's Leadership Council? (if appropriate)

The materials in this Communications Toolkit are designed to help you do that. Membership is one thing; active membership is quite another and this should be the goal of all those who donate at your designated level. The "Why You Should Become a Member" information sheet will help you communicate the value and benefits of membership and, therefore, encourage involvement.

Why do we have to give (\$ amount) to be a member?

The mission of the United Way Women's Leadership Council is to "mobilize the power of women to advance the Common Good in our communities." Our members are united in their passion for this mission. Life changing programs require funding, and we ask members to demonstrate their passion by also making a personal financial commitment. This funding enables our United Way Women's Leadership Council to pursue our mission and fosters a bonding and connection among members.

What are your specific case-by-case results? How do you know your work is successful?

The Communications Toolkit provides guidelines and an example of how to effectively "tell the story" and highlight the life changing impact of your local successes in a way that will help capture both the heart and the head of the person posing the question. (Please refer to "Local Successes" and "Robbie's Story" in the Communications Toolkit.)

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

Questions and Answers, Continued

How do we sustain our initiatives and recruit members on a regular basis?

Communication is the key. Unless you communicate you cannot inform; unless you inform you cannot engage; and unless you engage you cannot recruit or retain. The Communications Toolkit is intended to provide you with guidelines and materials to help you do this effectively. Additional ideas are included in the "Helpful Suggestions" section.

United Way Women's Leadership Council Communications Toolkit

United Way National Women's Leadership Council Key Contacts

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For Questions about the United Way *Women's Leadership Council* Communications Toolkit contact:

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