

Looking for a way to engage your employees in the work of United Way or experience firsthand challenges many face daily?

Consider including one of the interactive activities below during your Campaign Kickoff event or during a United Way impact update throughout the year to engage employees with meaningful activities that build understanding, inspire action, and unite Greensboro around clear paths out of poverty.

Reach out to your United Way Rep for more information in how to bring these activities to life at your organization!

ASPIRATIONS FOR GREENSBORO: MOVE PEOPLE FORWARD

Total time: 15 minutes

Participants write one aspiration they have for themselves, their family, or Greensboro on a piece of paper, then crumple it into a ball and try to toss it into a wastebasket without moving from their spot. The activity shows how circumstances beyond someone's control can make even a simple goal harder to reach—and how the right support can create a clearer path forward. Close by reading several aspirations aloud to reinforce a shared truth: our neighbors want the same stability, opportunity, and pride we all want. United Way of Greater Greensboro helps unite our community so more people can move toward those goals.

NAVIGATING BARRIERS: CLEAR PATHS TO SUPPORT

Total time: 10 minutes

This activity helps participants experience how confusing, incomplete, or inaccessible instructions can turn an ordinary task into a real barrier. It can be framed through language access, limited information, unfamiliar systems, or lack of support—challenges many individuals and families face while trying to meet basic needs. Use the discussion to connect frustration in the room to the larger reality of poverty: when systems are difficult to navigate, people need clear guidance, trusted partners, and coordinated support. United Way of Greater Greensboro works with partners to bring clarity to complexity and help neighbors find personalized paths out of poverty.

MAKING CHOICES: BUDGETING FOR STABILITY

Total time: 15-20 minutes

Participants use candy pieces as a monthly household budget for a family of four in Greensboro, deciding how to cover essentials such as housing, food, transportation, healthcare, childcare, and unexpected expenses. The exercise makes visible the difficult tradeoffs many families face every day and creates space to share local data about poverty and financial stability. Close by connecting the experience to United Way of Greater Greensboro's work: using data, strategic partnerships, and community insight to turn contributions into thoughtful solutions that help families move toward lasting stability.

PANTRY BAG EXERCISE: FROM IMMEDIATE NEEDS TO LASTING SOLUTIONS

Total time: 15 minutes

Invite two volunteers to compare the contents of their pantry bags and discuss what each item might solve in the short term. Then guide the group toward the bigger question: what would it take to address the root causes behind the need for the bag in the first place? This activity helps distinguish immediate relief from long-term stability. United Way of Greater Greensboro supports both urgent needs and coordinated, people-first strategies that help households move beyond crisis and build a stronger future.

POVERTY SIMULATIONS: SEEING POVERTY MORE CLEARLY

Online

Total time: 30 minutes

This online simulation walks participants through a series of budget decisions a family may face when resources are limited. It helps employees see how quickly everyday choices can become difficult when income, time, transportation, childcare, or healthcare access is constrained. Use the debrief to reinforce that poverty is complex—but clearer understanding can inspire more informed, united action.

In Person

Total time: 30-60 minutes

When resources are available, the best decision can seem obvious. For families facing poverty, difficult choices are often a daily reality. A small setback—like a car repair, missed shift, medical bill, or childcare issue—can quickly become a crisis without the right support. This activity helps participants better understand the barriers many neighbors navigate and why coordinated services matter.

The simulation prompts participants to make realistic decisions with limited resources, then reflect on what those choices reveal about poverty in Greater Greensboro. It is designed to build understanding, challenge assumptions, and connect employees to United Way of Greater Greensboro's role in uniting partners around clear, personalized paths to lasting stability.

Close the conversation by naming both the challenge and the possibility: no one organization can end poverty alone, but when Greensboro works together—with data, listening, strategic partnerships, and shared commitment—we can break the cycle of poverty for more families.

In-depth simulation

Total time: Full-Day through Triad Goodwill (cost associated)

Would you like full immersion for your employees to experience? Ask for more details!

PRIVILEGE WALK: UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS

Total time: 15-45 minutes

This reflective activity helps participants recognize that people begin from different starting points because of circumstances, systems, and supports that shape opportunity. The goal is not guilt or shame; it is awareness, empathy, and a deeper understanding of why poverty can persist across generations. Use the debrief to connect individual reflection to collective action: when we understand barriers more clearly, we can work together to build stronger, more accessible pathways for every neighbor to move forward.

VISUALIZATION EXERCISE: IMAGINING A STRONGER GREENSBORO

Total time: 5-10 minutes

Guide participants through a brief reflection on what a thriving Greensboro could look like when more families have access to stability, opportunity, education, healthcare, housing, and meaningful work. Invite them to picture one neighbor, one household, or one child moving forward because a connected community showed up with the right support at the right time.

This exercise creates an uplifting moment to connect personal belief with shared action. Ask participants to consider what role they, their workplace, or their campaign can play in helping break the cycle of poverty. The message is simple: every gift, volunteer hour, partnership, and conversation can help move people forward.

Close by reinforcing United Way of Greater Greensboro unites the caring power of our community, align resources, and lead with data, listening, and collaboration so more Greensboro families can find clear paths out of poverty.