

Speakers Bureau

Frequently Asked Questions



United Way
Calgary and Area

What are the benefits of being a United Way speaker?

Being a United Way speaker gives you an opportunity to share, highlight, and bring awareness to the stories that matter to you. Some benefits you will find when joining the program are:

- Valuable public speaker experience;
- High-quality training;
- Meeting new people and accessing diverse workplaces in Calgary;
- Raising awareness about the local issues facing our community and inspiring people to create ripples of positive impact.

How do I become a United Way speaker?

To join the Speakers Bureau and become a United Way speaker, simply contact us at speakers@calgaryunitedway.org. We'll get back to you with next steps. In the meantime, think about how you would share your knowledge and story, and how it relates to United Way.

What if I have not done public speaking before?

Many of our speakers are new to public speaking. United Way will provide training and guide you while you are building your own speech.

What happens after I join?

After joining the Speakers Bureau, you are asked to write a speech that is 10-12 minutes long, but can also be shortened to five minutes if needed. United Way will provide a template and will guide you through this process. It is recommended that you learn more about United Way's work and local issues at www.calgaryunitedway.org to help you frame your story.

Is there any training?

Yes! We provide a half day training session for all new speakers in the spring. After completing your training, you will have the opportunity to present your speech to United Way's team, some fellow speakers and volunteers to hear their constructive feedback. This will help you perfect your skills and finesse your speech. We recommend you also practice by presenting to family, friends and/or colleagues.

When and how often would I be expected to speak?

Speaking events are generally held on weekdays, during business hours. The peak period is between September to December; however, you may be asked to speak year-round. We ask that speakers take on a minimum of three events during this period of time. The maximum number of speaking events is based on your availability and personal preference.

How are speakers selected for events?

The engagement team assesses multiple factors such as topic, time, audience size, and experience level before contacting a speaker for their availability. We want to match you with the best opportunity to ensure the highest level of success for you and the workplace requesting a speaker.

How much time should I schedule for a speaking event?

For virtual speaking engagements done via video conferencing we ask that you are available 5 - 10 minutes before the scheduled time and for 20 minutes following the start. You are not expected to speak for 30 minutes, this does, however, give a short grace period in case the event is running late or allows time for a question-and-answer period at the end of your presentation.

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How long are the speeches?

The average speaking time is 5-10 minutes, with an additional five minutes for a question-and-answer period. Some speaking opportunities are a one-hour panel. This will be identified on the speaker booking request submitted by the workplace to the engagement team and will be relayed in the request to you.

Where would I be presenting?

You will be speaking at various workplaces in Calgary and possibly surrounding areas. Typical events are department meetings, campaign kickoffs, and campaign wrap-ups. In order to adhere to Alberta Health Services' COVID-19 protocols, speakers will tune in virtually and give speeches online via video conferencing such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Who will I be presenting to?

Audiences will vary for each event, but the engagement team will let you know if the audience is comprised of workplace executives, directors, managers, general employee base, field workers, volunteers and/or external guests.

How big are the audiences?

Audience sizes can vary from small groups of 15 to large scale events of 500. The engagement team will notify the speaker on the audience size when contacting them for availability. New speakers will initially be matched with smaller audience sizes and move to larger scale events as their comfort level grows, unless specified otherwise. You will be matched according to your comfort level.

Will I be attending events on my own?

A United Way representative will be with you at every speech and answer any United Way questions. **We do not expect you to be an expert on United Way, we want you to focus on delivering your speech to the best of your ability.**

How do I ask for donations?

During training we will provide support on involving a donation request in your speech if it is a fundraising event rather than a general educational event. We will also ensure you feel comfortable and provide you with some guidelines to help you master your ask during the presentation.

Why should I encourage donations to United Way?

When people give directly to United Way, their donation creates lasting impact in the community, helping local people meet urgent needs and tackling complex social issues to improve local lives.

"[I joined United Way's Speakers Bureau because] I wanted to challenge myself and improve my business public speaking skills. I also wanted to share the impact of my line of work, the organization I represent, and encourage people to keep supporting United Way."
—Member of United Way Speakers Bureau

For more information please contact the engagement team at: speakers@calgaryunitedway.org