# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the SECC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Employees and Charities Love the SECC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Your Gift Can Do</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Role as Ambassador of the 2019 Campaign</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy and Fun Ways to Promote within Your Agency</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking a Speaker for Event or Fair</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Handling Procedures</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIRST AND FOREMOST, WE WANT TO THANK YOU. Thank you, not only on behalf of state employees, but the whole community. The work you’re doing with each campaign will truly create pathways out of poverty and support hundreds of deserving and vetted non-profit organizations in the Capital Area and beyond. Our most vulnerable neighbors, including veterans, the hungry, and homeless, thank you. As a Workplace Ambassador, you are our greatest champion in creating lasting change for our community. Because of you, we are securing permanent housing for our homeless neighbors, empowering students with the quality education they deserve, and sustaining programs that are helping veterans find employment and a hot meal.

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE. I hope you will find this handbook helpful in guiding you, step by step, through a fruitful and fun campaign season with tools, tips, and best practices to ensure your success. Remember, you’re not alone. Your SECC staff is here to help you. Whether it’s keeping you informed about our results, helping you get materials, or answering your questions, we are here to help you and your team.

We know this responsibility is additional work for you, but we hope it will also be an opportunity for you to hone your leadership skills, to meet new people, to strengthen relationships with other departments, and to learn about the charities across our great state who work to address issues that affect all of us and the world in which we live. And in Texas, we are very generous. An analysis from the Chronicle of Philanthropy, for example, found that Texas was the thirteenth-most-charitable state in the country, measured by how much discretionary income the median household gave. Texans also give generously of their time—fully 70 percent of the state’s first responders are volunteers.

ON BEHALF OF THE MANY PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES ARE FOREVER CHANGED BY YOUR DEDICATION, THANK YOU.
WE ARE HERE TO HELP

This handbook provides a step-by-step guide to creating a successful campaign season. Contact us any time you need help with materials, you want to know about your results, or if you need advice. We are ready to serve you and your team.

Sincerely,

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WHAT IS THE SECC?

- The Texas State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1993. Since that time, it has become one of the largest state employee charitable campaigns in the nation.
- Since that first year, active and retired employees of all Texas agencies and institutions of higher education, have contributed approximately $183 million to hundreds of charities across the state.
- The SECC provides a simple and cost-effective way for State employees to support charities that mean the most to them.
- Each year hundreds of charities across Texas apply to participate. Some of them serve all the state while others serve only in particular regions.

WHO GOVERNS THE SECC?

The SECC is governed at the state and local levels by a strict legislative code. By following these guidelines, all involved with the SECC ensure that the campaign is conducted fairly and equitably, and that the methods used to solicit donations are ethical and transparent. In this way donors may be confident in the work of the charities accepted into the campaign, and that their donations will be managed with care.

WHAT IS THE STATE POLICY COMMITTEE?

- The State Policy Committee (SPC) is comprised of three members appointed by the Governor, three members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, and three members appointed by the Comptroller of Public Accounts.
- The SPC is responsible for developing a campaign plan, a campaign budget, hiring a state campaign manager to administer the overall campaign, and for ensuring the eligibility of organizations applying on a statewide level.
- The SPC establishes the structural organization of the SECC at the state and local levels.
WHAT IS THE LOCAL EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE?

- The SPC’s role is to educate state employees about the value of supporting the community through workplace giving while providing responsible stewardship to achieve campaign goals.
- The Capital Area LEC approves the charities that apply to participate only in the Capital Area of the SECC.
- The LEC creates and provides campaign training for Workplace Ambassadors so they can confidently help lead a successful campaign.

The 2019 LEC Committee is:

Theresa McShan, (Chair) Texas Health and Human Services Commission
theresa.mcshan@hhsc.state.tx.us

Sylvia McPherson, (Vice Chair) Texas Workforce Commission
sylvia.mcpherson@twc.state.tx.us

Carol Harper, Office of Court Administration
carol.harper@txcourts.gov

Reuben Leslie, Retiree (HHSC)
Rleslie4@austin.rr.com

Marie Welsch, Texas Juvenile Justice Department
marie.welsch@tjjd.texas.gov

Maria Moreno, Texas Medical Board
maria.moreno@tmb.state.tx.us

Regina Sinnard, Texas Department of Public Safety
regina.sinnard@dps.texas.gov

Carla Lawrence, Employee Retirement System of Texas
Carla.lawrence@ers.texas.gov
WHY EMPLOYEES AND CHARITIES LOVE THE SECC

Employees love the SECC because:

• It’s an easy, effective and cost-efficient way to give to the charities of your choice. Employees can give as little as $2 per paycheck to make a difference.
• There are over 1,000 charities to choose from offering a wide variety of services to the community.
• All charities are fully vetted by the LEC and must meet strict eligibility criteria. You can feel confident that your gift is being used efficiently and effectively by your designated charities.
• With rapidly changing needs, the SECC is your opportunity to give back to the community.

The charities love the SECC because:

• It’s a low cost and efficient way for charities to raise funds.
• The funds that are raised are unrestricted meaning they can use the money where it is most needed.
• The charities know exactly how much money they can expect from the SECC for the next year so they can budget accordingly.
WHAT YOUR GIFT CAN DO

- $2 a paycheck for one year provides 144 meals for hungry Central Texans.
- $3 a paycheck for one year provides seeds for one community or school garden.
- $5 a paycheck for one year provides clothes, shoes, and winter coats for 40 children.
- $5 a paycheck for one year covers a month’s electric bill for two elderly fixed income households.
- $5 a paycheck for one year allows 48 students to improve their reading or math skills through tutoring.
- $10 a paycheck for one-year buys toys and food for needy families and children during the holiday season.
- $10 a paycheck for one year provides a refugee or a person displaced by a natural disaster with clean drinking water for a year.
- $10 a paycheck for one year provides HIV counseling and testing for 25 at-risk individuals.
- $10 a paycheck for one year provides an afterschool program for a child with disabilities.
- $25 a paycheck for one year provides food, shelter and clothing to two homeless persons.
YOUR ROLE AS AMBASSADOR

As a workplace Ambassador you are the go-to person for your agency. Thank you for going above and beyond on behalf of others. This campaign only exists because of your commitment to your community.

Every Ambassador has their own style and we recognize this. Also, each agency is different in how they approach the Campaign.

A successful campaign is all about preparation and collaboration. Below are some helpful hints; a map to success!

Develop a plan for your agency or department

By looking at where you have been, you can better determine where you are going.

- Invite your local campaign manager to your campaign planning meetings to answer questions and offer ideas. Discuss campaign strategies that fit within your agency culture.
- Determine the means of pledging best suited to your agency: pre-printed pledge forms, PDF pledge forms, or if your agency has online pledging capability. Work with your local campaign manager to arrange for delivery or pickup of all your campaign materials.
- Determine the campaign timeline including the pledging timeframe and any presentations and activities that will be taking place.
- Outline campaign activities and determine which team members will be responsible for implementing them, including organizing the campaign kickoff, distributing and collecting pledge forms, special events, securing incentives, etc.
- Don’t forget your retirees; HR might be a good place to start to see if there is an opportunity to reach out to them.
Establish support from the top

- The success of your campaign depends on the commitment and involvement of your senior leadership.
- Gain approval for recruiting a campaign team and holding meetings and activities on agency time.
- Ask for visible support from company leadership during the campaign.
- Discuss strategies for top-down support, i.e. agency gift, special event, or match.
- Discuss options for engaging senior staff through a focused leadership campaign.

Recruit & train campaign volunteers

As a campaign ambassador, you will organize efforts to educate fellow employees about the charities in the campaign and help them find a cause they care about. You might want to enlist the help of a few volunteers or team leaders to help with building excitement for the campaign, answering questions and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate . . . if they want to.

- Recruit a diverse team that includes people from different departments and levels (i.e., management, administrative, labor, etc.) within the workplace.
- Invite both new and previously involved committee members to participate.
- Set a schedule of committee meetings and distribute to members.

Promote & publicize

Education and information are keys to a successful effort. Create an atmosphere of enthusiasm as you inform employees about how their contributions improve lives in our community, locally and globally.

- Place information (posters, flyers, thermometers, etc.) in high traffic areas around your office such as entry ways and break rooms in the weeks leading up to the kickoff.
- Use multiple methods of communication to inform people about the campaign: post information on your intranet, announce the campaign at staff meetings, social media, etc.
Hold the campaign kickoff

- Start the campaign with your company’s leadership and campaign team.
- Make the kickoff event fun and engaging for employees and be sure to communicate campaign goals, timeframe, activities and incentives.
- Invite a member of the leadership team to the general kickoff meeting(s) to communicate management endorsement of the campaign.
- Invite local charity representatives to speak at the meeting(s)

Educate and encourage employees to consider participating

This is by far the most important step. The major reason people do not give is because they were never asked – or never given the opportunity to consider participating. Giving is a personal decision. Please allow everyone the opportunity to learn about the campaign and to care.

The number one reason people say they didn’t give is because they weren’t asked! Make sure that everyone is given the opportunity to contribute to the campaign. Use the campaign kickoff, department meetings, and one-on-one conversations to encourage participation.

- If possible, personally distribute and collect pledge forms.
- Show employees the impact their contributions can make. Giving goes up when people know their gift is making a real difference!

What not to do

- Do not ask if people have given or when they are going to give
- Do not require employees to give
- Do not post the names of people who have or haven’t given
Monitor and report progress

- Regular reporting allows the team to monitor the progress of the campaign, while keeping you from having to hold cash, checks and pledge forms.
- Send out reminders to encourage people to turn in their pledges.
- Keep a running total of dollars raised as pledges are collected.
- Provide regular updates to employees – send out email blasts, update thermometers, etc.
- Make personal follow-ups with individuals who have not turned in their pledge as the campaign nears the end.
- Ensure all pledges are turned in. Keep check or cash payments for those who opted to make a onetime gift stapled to copy of pledge form.
- Schedule a meeting with your SECC representative to finalize the campaign – pick up the envelope, extra campaign supplies, etc.
- Report your final campaign results to employees and leadership.

Say thank you!

The importance of thanking everyone who helped you accomplish your goals cannot be overemphasized.

- Recognize and thank donors! Show them the impact of their contribution on the community and encourage them to stay engaged to the work they helped fund.
- Plan a “Thank You” event and invite everyone to attend. Invite a charity representative to deliver a “Thank You” presentation.
- Send thank you emails, ask the CEO for a thank you message to communicate to employees, hang “Thank You” posters, give out “Thank You” pins, buttons, and cards.
- Don’t forget to thank your campaign team for all their help!

Have fun!
EASY AND FUN WAYS TO PROMOTE GIVING IN YOUR AGENCY

It is not always easy to make the ask so you might be more comfortable trying some of these ideas:

- Put up a thermometer showing either dollars or participation
- Make a tree trunk and every time someone gives add a leaf
- Ask to speak at a department meeting
- **Invite a charity/charity to speak** at a department meeting or special event
- Ask your leadership to speak at a department meeting
- Put something in your email signature reminding people to give
- Have a special event; make sure it within State rules and guidelines:
  - Auction
  - Bake Sale
  - Costume Contest
  - Director’s Breakfast
  - Kudos Sale
- Set a theme for your campaign. Themes help generate excitement and energy and can help drive results
- If applicable, use incentives; there are many free incentives that can be very effective:
  - Lunch with a manager, director or commissioner
  - Jeans/Casual Day
  - VIP parking spot
BOOKING A SPEAKER FOR AN EVENT OR FAIR

When booking a speaker or charity for an event or fair you can find everything you need on the secctexas.org/capital-area website.

- There are two separate forms to be filled out; charity fair request and charity speaker request.
- Requests must be made 10 business days in advance of your event.
- Once the charity/speaker has been confirmed all information will be given to the ambassador.

MONEY HANDLING PROCEDURES

These may vary by agency, but special events money and one-time gifts are handled separately. Here are some best practice suggestions:

- Always have a minimum of 2 people with the money.
- Collect all the money at the event; no IOUs.
- Separate and total currency, coins and checks. This makes it easier to verify with the campaign manager.
- Have 2 employees count the funds before turning in to the local campaign manager (LCM).

The local campaign manager will hold regular “office hours” at two locations to facilitate drop-off of funds and paper pledge forms. See SECC website for dates, locations and times. At that time the funds will be counted by the LCM and the Ambassador will receive a receipt. The LCM will deposit the funds into a Capital Area SECC bank account, at which time a scan of the bank receipt will be emailed to the Ambassador.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are the charities approved?
The Local Employee Committee (State employees) verify that each charity is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization, and that these charities are authorized to do business in the State of Texas.

Why is it better to give through payroll contributions?
• Payroll contributions allows your gift to be conveniently contributed in small amounts from each paycheck.
• Payroll giving allows you to give more generously, because the contribution is spread over an entire year.
• In addition, payroll contributions give charities a steady income through the year.

Who decides how my donations are distributed?
You do! Each employee is encouraged to designate his or her gift to the charity or charities of his or her choice.

Are contributions tax-deductible?
Yes. SECC donations are fully tax-deductible. The final pay stub of the year may serve as verification for the IRS.

What is a federation?
A federation is an affinity group of charities that have combined their resources to participate in workplace giving campaigns. Federations work closely with the Local Campaign Manager to ensure that charities are properly screened, and to ensure that all charities are fairly represented in the campaign.

Who does the day-to-day work of managing the campaign?
The State SECC manager selects a Local Campaign Manager, based on an application process. This year’s campaign manager is EarthShare of Texas.

How does my contribution reach the intended charities?
After your contribution is made, it is forwarded to the campaign manager, who also serves as fiscal agent. The manager/agent distributes all contributions according to each contributor’s instructions.
How do I know my money is going to be well spent?
Every approved SECC charity must meet strict eligibility requirements.

In the brochure, what does the percentage listed after each agency mean?
The percentage listed represents the total administrative and fundraising costs for that agency. The percentage is determined by a standard formula based on IRS reports.

If I pledge today, when will my contributions begin?
The effective date is December 1, 2019.

May I be acknowledged for my gift?
Yes. The participating charities love to thank you for your support. You can select to be acknowledged on your pledge form or in the online giving tool.

If I ask to be thanked, who will see my name?
Payroll, the fiscal agent, the federation representing your charity, and the charity or charities.

Will my name be added to mailing lists?
No, the only thing the charities will do with your name and information is acknowledge your donation should you choose to be acknowledged.

May a department or employee specify which agencies will receive contributions collected through campaign special events?
Yes, the charity can be designated on the special event form.

How are undesignated funds distributed?
At the end of year’s campaign, the percentage of funds pledged to each charity is calculated. Each charity then receives that percentage of what is collected. Undesignated pledges are shared on the same basis.

Can a check be written to the individual agency or federation that the contribution will go to?
No. Checks should be made out to SECC.

There are too many charities listed in the brochure…I cannot make up my mind.
The SECC is a combined campaign and includes multiple federations and many charitable choices. If you cannot decide, look for charities that have had the most positive impact on you and your family. Please be assured that your undesignated gift will be divided among all the charities in proportion to the choices made by your fellow employees.

**The pledge form is too complicated!**
Your department Ambassador or the Local Campaign Manager would be more than happy to help you complete the form.

**If I have a question about my gift or about a charity, may I contact the campaign manager directly?**
Yes. The best way to reach the Local Campaign Manager is through email: capitalsecc@earthshare-texas.org