



Self-Fundraising Playbook

Thank you so much for volunteering to join Alliance for Smiles on a medical mission to change the lives and smiles of children for the better forever, and improve access to quality healthcare in the places that need it most!

As you can imagine, there are many costs associated with getting a mission team to an area in need (flights, transportation, hotel, food, medicines & medical equipment/upkeep, luggage fees, visas, etc.), and while some of our volunteers are able to contribute to help cover the costs, we realize that many cannot.

So, we've compiled this "playbook" of effective self-fundraising approaches, to help folks raise the funds to cover any costs they might not be able to out-of-pocket.

Remember: Alliance for Smiles can share any/all of our volunteers' fundraisers with our community via our social media channels and hopefully, the friends/family/community/networks of our volunteers can help as well.

We hope this helps. Thanks so much again! - the AfS team

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Online Fundraising (ex: GoFundMe, Birthday Fundraisers, etc.)

Online fundraising platforms such as [GoFundMe](#), [Kickstarter](#), [Fundly](#), [MightyCause](#) and others have become a cornerstone of modern fundraising. These platforms allow individuals to create a fundraising page for personal, medical, educational, or charitable causes, providing a space to share their stories with a global audience. The key to successful crowdfunding lies in crafting a

compelling narrative that resonates with potential donors, complete with updates and engaging content to keep supporters informed and motivated to contribute.

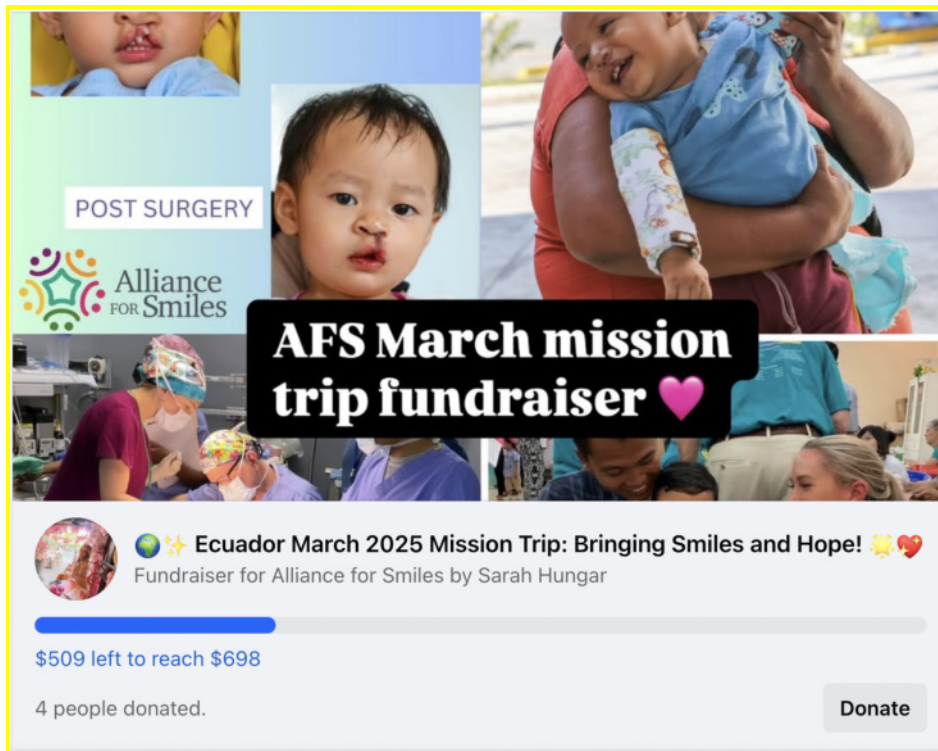
Best Practices for Online Crowdfunding:

- Clearly articulate your fundraising goal and what the funds will be used for - craft a powerful story by sharing why this cause matters and who it helps.
- Use engaging visuals and videos to tell your story - Faces and real stories create stronger emotional impact.
- Use urgency to encourage immediate action (e.g., "Help us reach \$2,000 by Friday!").
- Share your campaign widely across your social networks:
 - Start with friends & family: A campaign that already has donations looks more credible.
 - Leverage ambassadors: Ask supporters, volunteers, and influencers to spread the word.
 - Use personalized outreach: A direct message or call often works better than a generic post
 - Use hashtags: Increases reach (e.g., #DonateForSmiles #CleftSurgery).
 - Shoutouts on social media for donors (unless they prefer to be anonymous)
- Regularly update your supporters with your progress and express gratitude (progress, milestones, testimonials).

Examples of Successful Campaigns:

<https://www.gofundme.com/c/crowdfunding-lessons/follow-by-example>

<https://www.gofundme.com/discover/travel-fundraiser>



In-Person Events (ex: Meal-Focused Events/Dining for Smiles, Individual/Community Yard Sale, Bake Sale)

Meal-Focused Events/"Dining for Smiles"

Meal-focused events provide a unique dining experience, creating an intimate setting for storytelling and community building around your cause. Themes can range from cultural

cuisines to popular movies or historical periods, offering a creative twist to traditional fundraising dinners.

Hosting Tips:

- Choose a theme that resonates with your target audience or relates to your cause.
- Collaborate with a local chef or enthusiastic cook/restaurant team to plan the menu; be sure to ask if anything can be provided at a reduced/discounted/pro bono rate.
- Secure a venue that complements your theme, such as a community center, outdoor garden, or private home.
- Promote the event through social media, local networks, and press releases, highlighting the exclusivity and unique aspects of the dinner.
- Offer additional fundraising opportunities during the event, like silent auctions or pledge drives.

Community Yard Sale

A community yard sale not only helps raise funds but also brings neighbors together for a common cause. It's an opportunity for individuals to declutter and for shoppers to find treasures, all while supporting your fundraising goals.

Tips for Organizing a Community Yard Sale:

- Choose a date and secure a large enough space to accommodate multiple sellers, such as a school parking lot or a community park.
- Advertise the yard sale in local newspapers, online community boards, and social media to attract both sellers and buyers.
- Encourage people to donate a portion of their sales to your cause, suggesting a specific percentage as a guideline.
- Provide logistical support, such as tables, chairs, and signage, to ensure a smooth experience for sellers.
- Create a festive atmosphere with music, food, and perhaps a small booth about your cause to engage shoppers.

Bake Sales

Bake sales are a traditional but inexpensive fundraising idea, beloved for their community feel and the mouth-watering selection of homemade treats they offer. Whether it's cookies, cakes, pies, or bread, a bake sale can cater to all tastes, drawing in a crowd eager to support your cause.

Success Tips:

- Engage volunteers to contribute a variety of baked goods, ensuring dietary options like gluten-free and vegan treats are available.
- Choose a high-traffic location such as a community event, school, or church.

- Price items clearly and offer deals to encourage bulk purchases.
- Promote your bake sale in advance through social media, local community boards, and word of mouth.
- Consider packaging some items as gifts or for special occasions to attract more buyers.

Virtual Events

Virtual events have gained popularity in recent years as an effective fundraising idea, especially when physical gatherings were not possible/advisable. Webinars, virtual concerts, and online classes can attract attendees from anywhere, expanding your fundraising reach beyond local supporters.

Organizing Successful Virtual Events:

- Choose a format that aligns with your target audience's interests (e.g., educational webinars, entertainment, fitness classes).
- Utilize platforms like Zoom, YouTube Live, or Twitch to host fundraising events.
- Set a reasonable entry fee or suggest a donation amount for attendance.
- Promote the event through social sharing, email campaigns, and community forums.
- Provide value to attendees through quality content and engaging presentations.
- Thank participants post-event and update them on the fundraising outcome.

Online Auctions

Online auctions offer one of the most engaging and big-money fundraising ideas to raise money by selling items or services to the highest bidder. Utilizing web platforms like eBay for Charity, individuals can auction off anything from artwork and collectibles to experiences and services, with proceeds going to their designated cause.

Tips for Hosting an Online Auction:

- Source appealing items or services that will attract bidders.
- Use detailed descriptions and high-quality photos to showcase the items or services.
- Promote your auction widely across social media, email, and other online channels.
- Set clear terms and conditions for bidding, payment, and delivery.
- Engage with your audience throughout the auction to encourage higher bids and more participation.

Social Media Fundraising Challenges

Social media challenges have proven to be an effective fundraising idea to engage a wide audience and encourage donations for various causes. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and

Facebook enable individuals to launch challenges that can quickly go viral, leveraging hashtags, tags, and shares to spread the word. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge is a prime example of how a well-executed social media challenge can lead to significant fundraising success.

Steps to Launch a Successful Challenge:

- Identify a unique, simple activity that people can replicate.
- Choose a catchy hashtag to track participation and spread the word.
- Tag influencers, friends and family to participate and donate.
- Incorporate a clear call-to-action, directing participants to where they can donate.
- Share updates and highlight participants to maintain engagement and momentum.

Email Campaign

Email campaigns are one of the best fundraising ideas to reach out to potential donors within your network directly and personally. This easy fundraising idea has the ability to connect with the reader and convey the urgency and importance of the cause. Crafting a compelling message that resonates with your audience can significantly increase the likelihood of receiving donations.

Key Elements of Successful Email Campaigns:

- Personalize your emails to create a connection with the recipients.
- Be clear and concise about the purpose of your fundraising and how donations will be used.
- Include a strong, easy-to-find call-to-action that directs readers to your donation page.
- Share stories or testimonials that highlight the impact of contributions.
- Segment your email list to tailor messages for different groups within your network.

Local Business Partnerships

Collaborating with local businesses can create mutually beneficial partnerships that boost your fundraising efforts and support local businesses. Whether it's a local café, bookstore, or retail shop, businesses can pledge a portion of their sales for a specific day or event to your cause.

Strategies for Successful Partnerships:

- Identify businesses that align with your cause and have a strong community presence.
- Clearly communicate the benefits for the business, such as increased foot traffic and positive publicity.
- Collaborate on promoting the event through social media, local press, and in-store signage.
- Organize activities or special offers to attract more customers during the event.

- Show appreciation by publicly thanking the business and sharing the event's success with the community.

Is there a local business that might benefit from some good PR and be willing to partner with you for a little while, whether donating 10% of the proceeds for one of their goods/services to your cause or even 100% of something specific for a short time? Does someone you're close to run a business that might consider this, just to support you because of how awesome you are? Ask around to see what's possible.

Side Hustling

Do you have a skill, hobby, or other interest that you might use to raise funds? Maybe you're a photographer and you could offer to sell prints of your favorite pieces to friends/family/colleagues/the public. Maybe you're an incredible baker and your contacts or community would gladly buy some of your goods and support your fundraising efforts. Maybe you are the best teacher of ukulele/woodworking/pie baking, etc and you could offer a workshop (whether in person or online) or one on one lessons to folks to raise funds.