

# FUNDRAISING BASICS



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**Autism Science Foundation**  
searching. solving. sharing.

Wondering how you're going to complete the fundraising? Have you said to yourself, "Can't somebody just put it all on one page for me?" Well, here it is! Use this page and the checklists on the back to get you started with your fundraising strategy. If you want to learn more, call your rider coach for more information.

**1. Set Your Goals** — How much do you want to raise, and when would you like to be done? You are required to raise a minimum of \$500 (with at least \$350 by the day of the Ride), or \$250 if you are doing one of our family-friendly options, but how much do you think you can raise? \$1,000? \$5,000? Write it down on the back of this page. When do you want to be done? Write that down, too.

**2. Set the Bar High** — You've made a big commitment. You're putting a lot of energy into training and fundraising. Ask your friends to match your commitment. Shoot for the moon! Make a list of EVERYONE you know, consider what you think they could donate and ask for that amount. Remember, it's not for you — it's to help fund autism research. The awareness you raise is also incredibly important, so please tell everyone what you are doing.

**3. Develop a Strategy** — A well thought-out plan is the most important part of successful fundraising. (Sticking to it is number two). Call your coach to set up a consultation to create a detailed plan. Your coach will help you decide what fundraising tools will work best for you. A party? Letters? Email? Soliciting corporate donations? Asking in person? You'll probably want to do a combination of these. Your coach will help you strategize the most effective plan for you.

**4. Sharpen Your Tools** — Whether you are writing emails/letters, throwing a party, asking for corporate donations, or doing something completely different, successful fundraising is all in the details. For instance, asking for a \$500 donation from your brother — instead of asking for an unspecified donation — will get you a \$500 donation instead of \$20. Ask if his company matches charitable gifts and you can turn that \$500 into a \$1,000 donation. Again, contact your coach. She will be glad to take a look at your letters/emails, help you plan your fundraiser, brainstorm ideas, and help in whatever way you need.

**5. Close the Deal** — *Asking* for donations and *getting* donations can be two very different things. You need to close the deal. Always have your donation forms or something with the URL to your fundraising page with you. However, the key to receiving donations is to follow up. About half of the people you ask for donations will put your request in their "To Do" pile, where it will sit (and sit some more). Be ready with a reminder about three weeks after your initial request. A simple email, call or note will work magic.

**6. Incorporate Social Media** — Posting on social media is very effective for some things (reminders, updates and reaching people on the periphery of your social circle) and equally detrimental to others. People will donate more from a personal ask (be it an email, in-person ask or at a fundraising party) than they will clicking on a link in a post.

An important note: It is much harder to ask someone for a substantial donation if they already gave a small donation because they saw your link on social media. Hold off on social media fundraising until you have already asked everyone for donations, and then talk to your Rider Coach about how to maximize its potential and avoid pitfalls.

**7. Say Thank You** — It's only polite and your donors will be more likely to contribute again next time.

Those are the basics. The hardest and most important step is the first one. You can do it!

*Now, go call your coach at 212-989-1111 and let's get started!*

# FUNDRAISING WORKSHEETS

I want to raise \$ \_\_\_\_\_ no later than \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2022.

## Create Your Personalized Timetable

Break your fundraising down into manageable tasks and schedule time to do them. Add these items to your personal calendar, whether on your computer, your iPhone, or an old-fashioned calendar.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Compile a list** of everyone you know. Note your possible major donors.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Schedule individual meetings** with major donors. Have a conversation with your coach to learn how to structure the meeting.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Schedule a house party** with your coach.\* Schedule the party at least six weeks in advance, if possible.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Draft email/letter.** Send it to your coach to review.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Send emails/letters.**

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Send follow-up.**

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Incorporate social media.** While it is not the most effective way of asking for a donation, it can be a useful tool for follow-up, thanking people and reaching a broader audience.

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Send thank-you notes.**

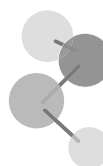
\* Hold your house party before you send out your big mailing. The average party attendee donates five to six times more than the average letter respondent. Hold the party first, then send a letter or email to anyone who didn't attend.

## Checklist for Your Fundraising Email

Your fundraising letter or email should include the following:

- What you're doing.** "I'm riding \_\_\_\_ miles to raise funds and awareness for autism research."
- Why you're doing it.** You will motivate donors when you tell them why this is important to you.
- Where the money goes.** Pick out one or two highlights of Autism Science Foundation's programs that speak to you.
- Ask for their support.** It is very powerful to say, "I need your help."
- How to donate.** Include a hyperlink to your personal donation page. People who prefer to donate by mail can download a form.
- Matching gifts are welcomed.**
- Donations are tax-deductible.**
- Donations can be made over time.** This increases the chances of receiving larger donations.
- Your personal deadline.** You want to create a sense of urgency so that the donors respond quickly.

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