Insider Guide for Your Most Successful Fundraiser

gofundme™

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We're here to help!

Thanks for choosing GoFundMe to support the cause you care about. We know between your day-to-day life and running a fundraiser, you've probably got a lot on your plate. That's why we've put together this guide–gathering our best tips and resources in one place to help you make your fundraiser as successful as possible.

GoFundMe is the easiest, most trusted crowdfunding platform, and we've worked with thousands of organizers just like you. After review and analysis, we've found that most successful fundraisers utilize some or all the tips we share in this guide. We're thrilled to share them with you, but we know there's a lot here, so feel free to skip around to whichever chapters resonate most with you.

$30 billion in help delivered

GoFundMe and Classy recently reached a record-setting milestone achieved by our community–$30 billion of help delivered. And that's not all we achieved. Check out some other stats for help delivered by amazing people utilizing GoFundMe and Classy.

$30 billion
and counting!

1/sec
a donation is made every second

$50
most common donation amount

Jan 2
most generous day on GFM in 2023

$106 mil
raised for natural disaster relief

94k+
fundraisers started for businesses

8k+
fundraisers started daily on GoFundMe

> "Once I committed and started my [fundraiser], my circle of friends and family thanked me for giving them a way to help.
> –GoFundMe Organizer

Glossary

Words commonly used on GoFundMe

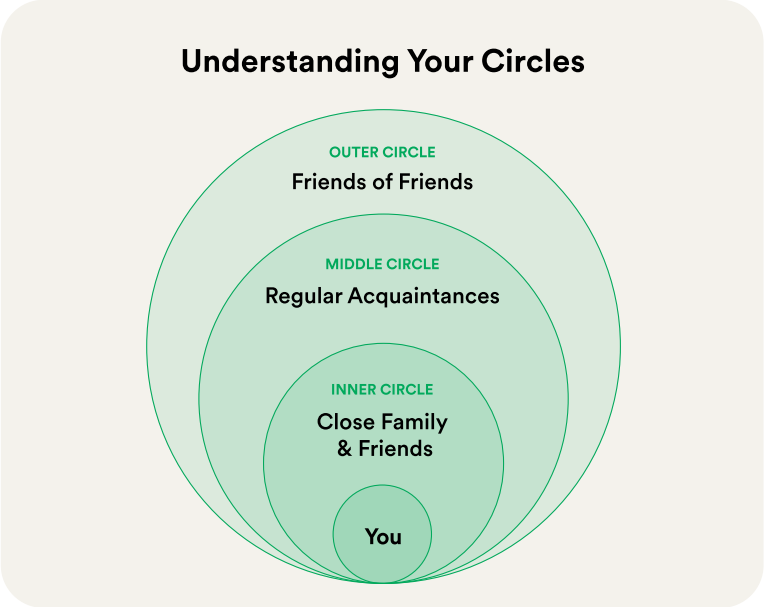
Term	Definition
Beneficiary	A person who receives funds from a fundraiser started on their behalf.
Crowdfunding	Asking for and receiving small donations from multiple people in order to reach a larger financial goal.
Custom URL	A GoFundMe feature that allows organizers to edit their fundraiser URL. **Ex:** gofundme.com/help-jan-find-a-home
Fundraiser	An event to help generate financial support for an individual, cause, or charity.
Share	Sending or providing your fundraiser link to other people and asking them to donate. Can be over social media, via text, by word of mouth, etc.
Transfer	Sending funds from your GoFundMe account to your bank account via electronic transfer.
Unique link	Allows donors and team members to see the donations they've brought to a fundraiser through sharing.
Use of funds	Details included in a story to let donors know how their donated funds will be used by the organizer or beneficiary.

Chapter 1

Sharing your GoFundMe

Share with your communities

Alert your inner circle



Your inner circle knows you best. They likely already know why you're fundraising and need little convincing to help. Let them know about your fundraiser directly: talk to them face-to-face, give them a call, or send a text.

You should also consider this group as partners on your fundraiser. You might send them team invites so they can actively participate. You can also enlist their help to share your fundraiser with people you might not know personally. Here are some ways you might ask your inner circle for help:

Ask them to share a personal story along with your fundraiser on their social media accounts.

Print QR code fliers and ask them to share with groups they're part of - like their book club.

Connect with your middle circle

For your middle circle, these are people you speak to often, but they might not know what's happening in your personal life. This is where

you'll start sharing on social media and in more public ways. You'll share more information as you explain what's happening and how people can help.

This is a good time to take stock of what communities you're a part of. We interact with more people than we might initially think. Some examples of community groups that might fall into your middle circle are coworkers, extended family in other states, high school or college alumni groups, sports leagues you take part in, faith-based groups, etc.

Take advantage of group forums (Facebook pages, Slack groups, Newsletters) and call on the connection you have with them. Leaning into your connection and shared experiences is what will inspire potential donors to learn more about your cause and lead to more donations.

Let's look at two different ways to share with different communities:

Your high school alumni group

"Hi all, it's been a while since I've talked to some of you, but I wanted to take a moment to share the fundraiser I've started [Insert Link]. I've already felt a great deal of love and support from the generous people who've donated, but we're still working towards reaching our goal. I always felt our graduating class had a strong connection, so if you're able to spare a moment to read through my story and consider donating, I'd deeply appreciate it. Hope you're all doing well, and go Tigers!"

Your faith-based group

"Hello. Some unforeseen circumstances have led me to need to lean on my church family for support. I've chatted and volunteered with many of you, and I feel so welcomed by this congregation. If you're able, please read more about why I'm raising funds and consider making a donation: [Insert Link]. I'd also greatly appreciate it if you could share my fundraiser with your friends and family. Please feel free to reach out and ask questions at our next service."

Reach your outer circle

If you've already had some success, it's time to start focusing on your outer circle. Keep in mind that repetition is important for connecting with people in your outer circle and beyond. They might need to hear about your fundraiser a few times before they fully understand and connect to your need. Let's look at some specific ways to share off social media with your outer circle. We'll cover tips for sharing your fundraiser on social media in a later chapter.

Tips for extending your fundraiser reach offline

Take advantage of the QR code flier GoFundMe provides within your account. Print a few copies and post them on bulletin boards and other (legal) public places.

Test it out!

Talk about your fundraiser. Word of mouth works, so be sure to bring your fundraiser up in conversation.

Donate now

If you operate another website or a blog, you can embed a styled widget that links to your fundraiser.

Put together a pitch for your local news outlet. If it gets picked up, you'll reach donors you've never met before.

Chapter 2

What to do when you have a small community

Fundraising with a small community

Family and friends are our best go-to for donations and support, but pushing beyond close connections can help you reach your goal.

Expanding communities

Try to think broadly and creatively about the communities you belong to. We typically think about our friends and family as our only community, but with a little thought, we can expand those circles. Here are just a few ideas:

- **Faith-based:** Consider contacting your Pastor, Father, Rabbi, or Iman. They may be able to share your fundraiser with the faith community beyond your social group.
- **Local businesses:** Are you friendly with the staff of any local businesses? Could your fave cafe or restaurant put your flier up?
- **Alumni groups:** Alumni groups often have access to email lists or bulletins where they can post the fundraiser. High school, college, Greek life, etc. all have groups of people they might be able to contact.
- **Local news:** Sometimes local news is interested in picking up stories about people in their area. Depending on where you live, you might also consider a community newspaper.

Reaching out to expanded communities takes a different approach than reaching out to family and friends. For success, be sure to prepare your story and resources. You want to make it as easy as possible for them to copy and paste your information into their bulletin, sermon, or email.

It's also a good idea to cater your story to the group you're reaching out to. A high school alumni group will be interested in the connection to the school. A local news group will be interested in your connection to the town or city.

Social media communities

There might be online communities that focus on things related to your cause who would be interested in helping you. Some examples to inspire you:

- Organizations celebrating specific dog breeds
- Cancer support communities
- Support organizations of families with special needs

Charities & organizations

Sometimes thinking outside of your communities also means thinking outside of your GoFundMe fundraiser. Organizations and nonprofits may be able to share the fundraiser, provide you with direct financial support, or provide non-financial support.

Some organizations you can look into are The Salvation Army, CORE, World Central Kitchen, All Hands and Hearts, and other local groups that support what you're fundraising for.

Chapter 3

Sharing well on social media

Sharing well on social media

Social media is a powerful tool to get your fundraiser message out, and we have some tips on how you can do it well.

1. Post a caption, picture, and link to your fundraiser to build trust and confidence.
2. Share a variety of pictures and stories in your post to keep your audience engaged.
3. Post in multiple ways. Use traditional posts as well as Stories and Reels. Stories are great because they refresh daily.
4. Post on weekday mornings whenever possible.

What to post:

1. **Introduce your fundraiser:** What are you fundraising for and why?
2. **Goal updates:** Are you a quarter, halfway, or close to your goal? Does new info mean you need to increase it?
3. **Requests to share:** Donors sharing the fundraiser with their own communities is one of the best strategies to reach your goal. It also lets donors help beyond donating!
4. **Stories and memories:** Share new stories or memories about those involved with your cause.
5. **Gratitude:** Thank the people who have donated to your fundraiser already. Consider tagging them for extra recognition. You can do this multiple times throughout your fundraiser.

A note on frequency:

You aren't spamming your community by posting daily or every other day. In fact, you really should post this often. First, social media algorithms don't show posts to everyone in your feed. Second, donors may need a reminder if they see a post at an inconvenient time to donate.

- Use Instagram Stories where links are clickable. They're the first thing people see on Instagram and disappear after 24 hours.
- Add your link to your bio and reference it when posting.
- Post a few times to your grid and then reference those posts in your stories.
- Choose a variety of encouraging and uplifting photos to inspire donations and keep posts engaging.

- Be short and sweet. Share why you're raising funds, your link, and ask people to share.
- Ask people to leave comments. They're highly favored in TikTok's algorithm and can help boost your post.
- Keep your posts fresh. Week old posts aren't likely to show on feeds, so post at least once a week.
- Post at the right time. The best time for TikTok is usually in the afternoon to evening when people are scrolling.
- Use trending hashtags related to your fundraiser. This will help TikTok surface your video to interested people.

- Share to Facebook groups. This can reach more people compared to just posting on your timeline.
- Post at the right time. Studies suggest that the morning, between 9am-12pm on weekdays, tends to be best.
- Create a Facebook event, include your link in the description, and invite your Facebook friends to it.

Chapter 4

Keeping your community engaged

Engaging your community

As your fundraiser moves forward, you can stay engaged with your current and potential donors by keeping your fundraiser updated. There are several ways to keep your fundraiser up-to-date:

1. Edit your fundraiser

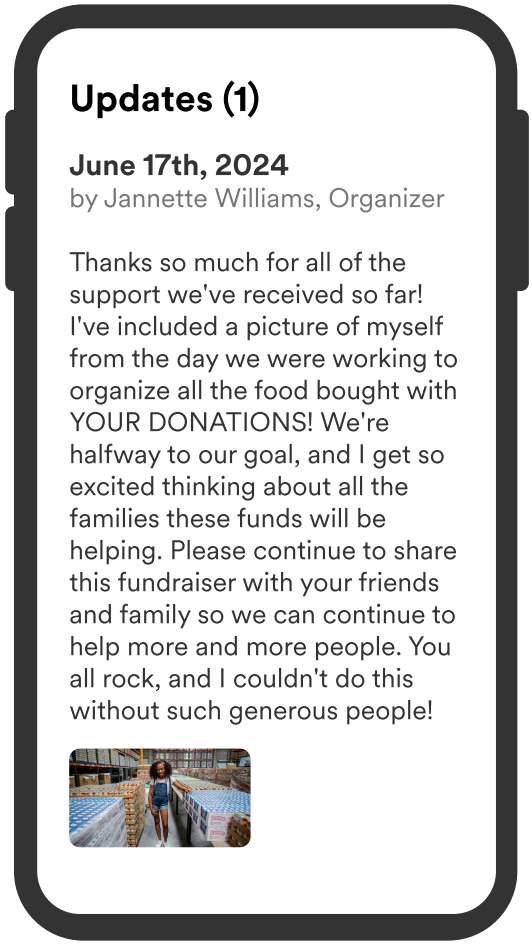
You can edit your fundraiser at any time. Reasons why you might edit your fundraiser:

- **Change your goal:** You're need has changed in some way, and you want your goal to reflect that.
- **Story:** You noticed a typo (happens to all of us) or you want to share more information about how you'll use the funds.
- **Picture:** You found a new, high-quality photo you want to make the main image or share in the story.

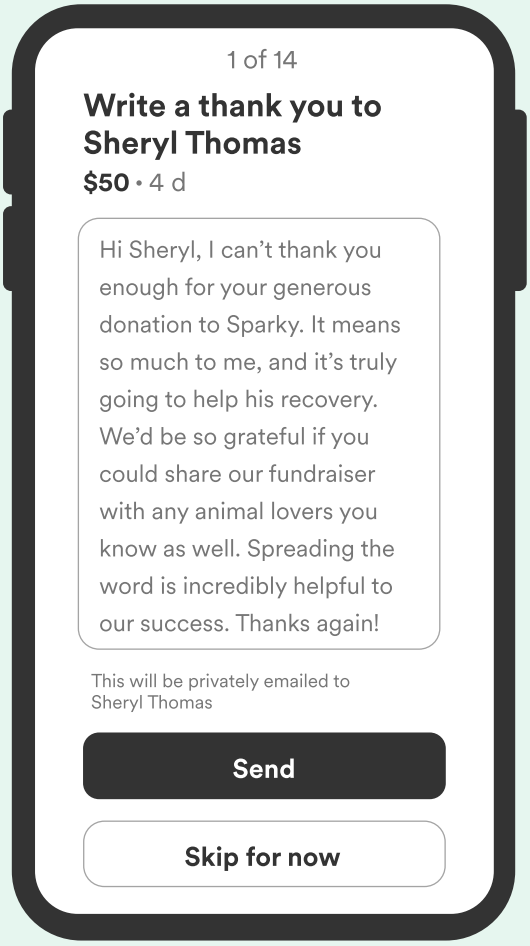
2. Add an update

Successful fundraisers typically post an update (or more) a week. Updates will be emailed to donors and be visible for visitors to your fundraiser page. Consider including the following:

- **A photo or video:** Images create a connection with your cause. Donors can see who they're helping and how their money will be used.



- **New information:** Updates can share status updates or changes to how funds will be used.
- **A share request:** Kindly ask donors to share with their friends and family if they're able.
- **Gratitude:** Donors support you emotionally as well as financially. Let them know how much you appreciate their good vibes and thoughts.
- **Words from supporters:** Highlight words of encouragement from a supporter.



3. Send thank-yous

Thanking donors shows your appreciation and can help build the momentum of your fundraiser. Based on your time and emotional bandwidth, you can send virtual thank-yous to either large groups of donors or to individuals.

Try drafting your own!

Update

Thanks for...

I've reached X% of my goal...

We updated our goal because...

We were able to use the funds for...

Thank you

Hi [Name],
Thank you so much for your generous donation. With your donation, I'll be able to...

Knowing that you're supporting me through this makes me feel...

If you have a minute, it'd be great if you could share my fundraiser with your [social media/work group/friends group/family].
Looking forward to [seeing you soon/seeing you at work/chatting in person].

Chapter 5

Transferring funds & closing your fundraiser

Important steps for transfers

1. Decide whose bank will receive the funds

If the funds are going to:

- Your own bank account, select Personal bank account.
- An organization's bank account, select Business bank account. (Learn more about transferring funds to a business account.)
- Someone else's bank account, select Someone else's bank account. This is called a beneficiary. If you select this, the beneficiary will be the one who adds banking information.

What's a beneficiary?

A beneficiary is a person who will receive the money raised on the fundraiser. This is a great feature to quickly get money to the person who needs it. The beneficiary will be responsible for entering their personal banking information. The process is simple, but if they're going through a tough time or don't have a bank account, it may be best for you to receive the money for them.

2. Add personal and bank information

Our payment partner will use the information you enter to verify who you are. Your information must match your government-issued ID, so please don't use an abbreviated version or nickname. This name won't be displayed publicly on the fundraiser.

You can connect your bank account by logging into your online bank portal or manually entering the information. The

name you entered in personal information must match the owner of the bank account. *Do not enter someone else's banking information.*

3. GoFundMe verifies your information

We want to ensure the funds are sent safely to the correct recipient. It may take a few business days to verify your information, and if additional information is needed, we'll contact you via email.

4. Share supporting documents (if necessary)

In order to ensure that funds reach the right place, we may ask for a copy of your bank statement, government-issued identification, or information on your relationship to the fundraiser.

5. Receive money to your bank account

Once your bank information has been verified, the funds will be transferred from GoFundMe to the bank account. Here are a few things to know about transfer timelines:

- You can transfer funds anytime after receiving donations. You do not need to reach your goal to be able to transfer.
- Once started, transfers initiate daily, unless you change to weekly or monthly frequency.
- Individual donations process in 1 - 14 business days before being included in a transfer.
- It takes 2 - 5 business days for transfers to reach the bank account after leaving GoFundMe.

Good luck on your journey!

Whatever your cause may be, we hope this guide has provided you with some actionable next steps to make your fundraiser more successful. Remember, we're here to help, and if you'd like to check out some additional resources or get in touch with our team, be sure to check out our Help Center.

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