



Community Fundraiser Toolkit



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Thank You



Dear Community Fundraiser,

Thank you for choosing to support Akron Children's! With the support of individuals and organizations like you, we are able to fulfill our mission to treat every child as our own.

The information in this toolkit includes guidelines, policies and procedures, and best practices which have been designed for assistance of both the fundraising group and/or individual. Please review the fundraising planning guide, as it provides important and helpful information for planning and executing a successful fundraising event or campaign.

To submit your proposal, fill out the Community Fundraiser Application online (<https://www.akronchildrens.org/files/859740/file/community-fundraiser-application-2026-fillable.pdf>). We ask that these be turned into us at least six weeks in advance of your fundraising effort. Approval will be granted per fundraising effort. If the event becomes an annual fundraiser, please contact the foundation office prior to planning each year. Please note that in an effort to protect our patients and our brand, all event hosts will be subject to background screening.

Should you have any questions while reading this guide or during any point of your planning process, please do not hesitate to contact us using the information below.

We look forward to working with you! Good Luck!

events@akronchildrens.org
Akron Children's
One Perkins Square
330-543-8340



Overview



Who is a community fundraiser?

A community fundraiser is any individual(s) or organization that raises funds for Akron Children's. Anyone in the community can become a community fundraiser – schools, businesses, private foundations, or grateful patients and families.

From bake sales to galas to golf outings and anything in between, any fundraising event can make a difference at Akron Children's and the hospital's Foundation team is available to help along the way.

How will Akron Children's patients benefit from the funds raised?

Funds raised through the Community Fundraiser program can benefit any of a number of areas at Akron Children's. If you have a specific area you would like to support, please let us know! If not, don't worry, we really appreciate and need general funds as well.

Community fundraiser considerations

- The hospital reserves the right to decline any application for any fundraising event or program that does not appropriately reflect the mission and values of Akron Children's or negates the image of the hospital.
- Akron Children's is not liable for any injuries sustained by event volunteers or participants related to an event benefiting the hospital and cannot assume any type of liability for your event.
- Contact Akron Children's with a list of potential sponsor organizations before you contact them. Due to their other commitments with the hospital, we may ask you to not approach the company.
- For questions regarding acknowledgements, tax receipts, tax deductions **OR** if you plan on raising more than \$25,000, please contact the Foundation for more detailed accounting guidelines.
- All event coordinators will be subject to screening prior to event approval.





Getting Started

The first step is to get organized!

Purchase a binder or folder and keep all fundraising-related materials together; including this packet.

Here are some more steps to get your planning process started:

Brainstorm

No idea is a bad idea! Give free reign to your imagination and remember that several heads are better than one. While brainstorming, write down all of the ideas suggested. By process of elimination, select the idea that would be best for you.

Select an event fundraising program

Study fundraising events and programs that have been successful in your community. If possible, talk to the organizers. How much work was involved? What made it a success? A small team would probably start with something like a bake sale or a car wash. A group with an interest in aviation might hold an air show or a display of antique planes, while a craft club might plan an auction of handmade items.

Determine your target audience

Who might be interested in attending or participating in this event, and what are the demographics of that group? Target your efforts to your specific audience.

Form a fundraising committee

The success of a fundraising event or program is determined by the enthusiasm and dedication of the people who plan and organize it. A fundraising committee should have members who possess a wide variety of skills and talents, as well as enough people to share the workload. The event chairperson will be the main person in charge of keeping committee members on task, setting meetings, and the overall planning of the event. Elect someone who has leadership skills, experience and the time to work on the event from start to finish.

Selecting a date & location

To see if similar events are being planned on or near your preferred date, check major sports and community calendars, check with large auditoriums, hotels and arenas in your area, and reach out to the Chamber of Commerce and/or Visitors Center for information on city or town events. Please also check with our team to see if that date will work with our calendar of events. Be sure when picking your date that you give yourself plenty of lead time to get organized. Once a date is determined, select an appropriate location based on estimated attendance and the type of event.

Establish goals

What results do you want? Do you want publicity? How much money do you want to raise? What are your priorities? Have measurable goals that are attainable. List things you want to accomplish and save that list to compare with the actual results after your event.

Will my event be approved?

Most events are typically approved. However there are rare cases, like those listed below, that the hospital cannot support or participate in:

- Fundraising events or programs that compete or conflict with an already established or scheduled event to benefit Akron Children's.
- Fundraising events or programs that require any financing from the hospital.
- Fundraising events or programs that involve a professional fundraiser, telemarketer or door-to-door solicitation of any kind.
- Fundraising events or programs that involve an agreement to raise funds on a commission, bonus or percentage basis.
- Fundraising events or programs that require hospital endorsement, marketing or participation in the direct sale of a product or service. This includes vending machines of any kind.
- Fundraising events or programs that fail to comply with any municipal, county, state and/or federal law.
- Fundraising events or programs that involve the promotion of a political party or candidate or the endorsement of political issues.
- Fundraising events or programs that are sponsored by a company or distributor of tobacco product.

Planning Your Event

The Budget

The budget can be the most overwhelming part of the planning process.

Identify and discuss expenses that might be associated with holding your event, gather estimates on projected costs, and determine how expenses will be paid.

- Are all the costs going to come out of event proceeds?
- Do you need some seed money to get the fundraising event or program going?
- Will sponsorships be used to underwrite the cost of the event?
- All expenses are to be paid by the community fundraiser.

Identify possible sources of income

Many fundraising events or programs have several opportunities for fundraising. Be creative! If you are having a dinner with decorations donated by a florist, sell the decorations at the end of the night. After you have identified all possible sources of income, estimate how much you might raise from each source.

Try to keep costs down by getting as much as possible donated or covered by sponsorships. Many businesses will contribute merchandise or money to an event in exchange for the advertising and publicity of the event. Have a set idea of what types of recognition sponsors will get for their contribution.

Some recognition ideas would be:

- Name them on the invitation, tickets or program
- Have a sign made that lists the major sponsors or contributors of the event
- Use their name in all publicity as much as possible
- Announce contributors' names throughout the event
- Offer complimentary tickets for your larger contributors

Prepare a timeline

Now that you have decided on all of the details for the fundraiser, create a calendar with the specifics of exactly what needs to be accomplished and a deadline date for the task. Allow time to deal with unforeseen roadblocks or delays.

Assign the workload

Start assigning major task areas to other people on your fundraising team. If a committee specializing in a specific area needs to be formed, appoint a committee chair to be in charge. Some areas of your event may need a committee; others may just need one person assigned to it.

Suggestions for special event committees and responsibilities:

- **Finance Committee:** Handles financial matters, including budgeting, approving expenses, handling ticket sales and/or auction purchases.
- **Publicity Committee:** Works with local media to get coverage for the event. In addition, committee members prepare news releases, public service announcements, posters, flyers and any other means of promotion and publicity, including social media pages. If an event program is necessary, the publicity committee would be responsible for printing it.
- **Location Committee:** Secures the location for the event and works with the various committees to arrange the details of the setup and cleanup of the event.
- **Entertainment Committee:** Arranges entertainment, stage setup, scheduling of the program, etc.
- **Decorating Committee:** Decorates the location the day of the event. We recommend that this committee either makes decorations or tries to have them donated.
- **Refreshments Committee:** Arranges for food donations, menu selections, food stations, beverage options and serves food if necessary.
- **Donations Committee:** Contacts businesses to solicit auction items, door prizes or raffle items. This committee would also be responsible for keeping track of donations, running the auction or raffle, and properly recognizing and thanking all contributors.

Publicizing Your Event



Make a timeline

Working backwards from the date of your event is a great way to lay out a plan for publicizing your fundraiser. Here are some suggestions:

- **3-4 months before your event:** Think about your target audience and the best way to reach them. Is it through newspapers, social media or radio? Create a list of media targets based on that audience. Most media outlets have contact lists available on their websites.
- **4-6 weeks before your event:** Create a press release for your event and distribute it to your target media list. This is also a great time to create a Facebook event that you and your team can share with friends and family.
- **2 weeks before your event:** Make follow-up calls or send follow-up emails to the media outlets you reached out to.
- **1 week before your event:** Send out a media alert with the basic information (who, what, when, where and why) to the assignment desks at your local TV stations and newspapers.

Social Media Tips

Social media is a great tool to spread the word about your event! Here are some quick tips to get you started ...

- **Share your story.** Tell your friends and followers the “why” behind your event, your personal connection to the cause is what makes your fundraiser special. Don’t forget to include event details, your fundraising goal and the difference their support will make to Akron Children’s patients.
- **Create a Facebook event.** Facebook events are an easy way to invite your friends and family to your fundraiser, and encourage them to invite their friends and family, too. It also provides you with a platform to post event updates.
- **Post consistently.** Make sure you’re sharing updates with your followers before, during and after your event so they know where you’re at in your fundraising journey.
- **Start a social media conversation.** Encourage your event attendees to take and share photos and post on their social media channels while they’re at the event! Creating an event hashtag (i.e. #KDDradiothon) will help capture everyone’s photos and social media posts.
- **Say thank you.** Social media is a great place to thank your sponsors, donors and attendees. They’ll appreciate the shout-out, especially if you tag them or their company in your post.
- **Tag us!** If you’re sharing on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram, tag us in your posts using @akronchildrens or @akronchildrensfoundation.



Wrap It Up



Have a wrap-up meeting

Meet with your committees one last time within a month after the event to discuss the areas of strength and opportunities for growth for the fundraising event or program. You can start to plan next year's event or discuss possible changes for next year.

Thank EVERYONE!

Everyone likes to be recognized when they are donating their time, service or merchandise to a charity. Send personalized notes or letters to everyone who volunteered, sponsored, or donated items for your event. Also, be sure to thank the people that supported your fundraiser by attending the event. If you do not have a way to capture addresses or participants, leave thank you cards at the door or verbally thank your guests at the event. Taking this extra step will ensure continued support.

Balance your finances

How much did you raise? Track your final income and expenses. Expenses should be limited to 25% of the total raised by the fundraising event or program. You are responsible for payment of all event expenses. If the event expenses are greater than the total collected, the group holding the event is responsible for payment of these additional expenses. Please turn in the entire donation amount to the hospital within 45 days of your event.

Please contact events@akronchildrens.org to arrange a drop-off date and time.

You can also mail your donation in to:

Akron Children's Foundation
Attn: Community Fundraiser
One Perkins Square
Akron, OH 44308

When mailing in donations, please indicate:

- Event name
- Date
- Your contact information
- The fund the donation is supporting





How Can Akron Children's Foundation Help You?



What Akron Children's Foundation can provide to make your event a success

- Approved use of our logo, when appropriate. All items containing the Akron Children's benefiting logo or name must be submitted for review prior to printing and distribution.
- If scheduling permits, hospital representation and/or patient families may be available for the event; however, all requests should be made well in advance of the event on the proposal form. We cannot guarantee hospital/Foundation staff presence at your event.
- Send thank you letters when we are provided with names and addresses. This is an acknowledgement only and cannot be used as a tax receipt.
- Provide instructions to create customized online donation and team fundraising pages.
- Promotional support through Akron Children's online event calendar
- Internal promotion through employee e-newsletter and hospital flat screens.

Services we are unable to provide

- Sell tickets
- Provide volunteers for your event or project
- Advance monies or pay expenses
- Solicit sponsorship
- Celebrity endorsement or appearances
- Liquor licenses, permits, or certificates of insurance
- Mailing lists of patients or supporters
- Publicity (newspaper, radio, television, etc.)
- Hospital photos (i.e. photos of patients or staff)
- Hosting events at any Akron Children's location
- Guarantee hospital/Foundation staff presence at your event (details will be discussed directly with event coordinator prior to the event). Refer to following page for more details
- Promotion of external direct fundraising links/QR codes



Resources

As a Community Fundraiser, all organizations and individuals who fill out the application and are approved receive support from a liaison through the Akron Children's Foundation. After a fundraising event is submitted and approved, all will receive the following support:

- Instructions for setting up an online fundraising page
- Branding guidelines and the benefiting Akron Children's logo
- Regular communication with Hospital Foundation representative for advisement on events, donations, online fundraising and other campaign details
- Plastic banners and other collateral that promote the hospital and provide awareness to the community
- Event added to the hospital's online event calendar
- Event promoted to more than 7,000 hospital employees
- If a check presentation occurs, inclusion in a quarterly social media post for check presentations under \$10,000 on the Foundation handles

Other services may be provided based on the event's history and longevity with the hospital, as well as the fundraising potential of new events, including the idea, proposed expenses and sponsors.

\$1,000 level

- Onsite check presentation at the hospital after the event (scheduled based on event specialist and hospital availability)

\$2,500 level

- Check presentation at the hospital or a location of the event coordinator's choosing after the event (scheduled based on event specialist and hospital availability)

\$5,000 level

- Includes same services as \$2,500 level
- Hospital-branded giveaway items for participants/attendees upon request and pending availability
- Hospital Public Relations department assists with a post-event social media post on the Foundation Facebook and Instagram accounts

\$10,000 level

- Includes same services as \$5,000 level
- Foundation representative and/or benefiting department speaker present at event, pending availability
- Event coordinator and key planning members invited to the hospital for a facility tour
- Hospital Public Relations department assists with a pre- and post-event social media post on the Foundation Facebook and Instagram accounts

\$25,000 level

- Includes same services as \$10,000 level
- If Akron Children's online fundraising platform is used, the event coordinator will receive weekly fundraising reports during pre-determined campaign timeline
- Foundation liaison or other staff may assist with event-related media opportunities, pending availability

\$50,000 level

- Includes same services as \$25,000 level
- Hospital Public Relations assists with editing a pre-event press release (Akron Children's does not distribute the press release)
- Event coordinator and key planning members may receive additional stewardship opportunities through Akron Children's Foundation

\$100,000 level

- Includes same services as \$50,000 level
- Hospital liaison will assist with hands-on event planning

\$150,000 level

- Includes same services as \$100,000 level
- Hospital Public Relations will create marketing materials for the event

Resources

Community Fundraiser Support Matrix

Benefit / Service	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000
Onsite check presentation at the hospital after the event, scheduled based on event specialist and hospital availability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Check presentation may instead take place at a location chosen by the event coordinator		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospital-branded giveaway items for participants or attendees, upon request and pending availability			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Facebook and Instagram post-event social media support			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospital Foundation representative present at the event, pending availability				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facility tour for the event coordinator and key planning members				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation liaison works with the benefiting department to supply an event speaker, pending availability				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Facebook and Instagram pre-event social media support				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weekly fundraising reports during the predetermined campaign timeline when Akron Children's online fundraising platform is used					✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation liaison or other staff may assist with event-related media opportunities, pending availability					✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospital Public Relations assists with editing a pre-event press release; Akron Children's does not distribute it						✓	✓	✓
Additional stewardship opportunities through Akron Children's Foundation for the event coordinator and key planning members						✓	✓	✓
Hospital liaison assists with hands-on event planning							✓	✓
Hospital Public Relations creates marketing materials for the event								✓

Note: Benefits are cumulative; each fundraising level includes the services offered at the levels below it.



FAQs



Can I use Akron Children's tax exemption number?

Because Akron Children's is not hosting your event, it is considered a third-party event. For this reason, you will not be able to use the hospital's federal tax ID number or tax-exempt certificate.

Who will obtain permits for my fundraising event?

The event organizer is responsible for obtaining any necessary permits and following the guidelines outlined for each permit. This includes, but is not limited to liquor permits, selling permits and road permits. It is also the responsibility of the organizer to communicate with local police for any outdoor event or large gathering.

Who will provide insurance for my event?

Akron Children's cannot provide insurance for third-party events. The event organizer is responsible for obtaining insurance for the event.

Will each of my donors receive a receipt?

Akron Children's will not issue receipts for donors or sponsors who make payments directly to your fundraiser. However, Akron Children's can provide an authorization or approval letter indicating the organizer's intent to raise funds on behalf of the hospital.

If a donor requests a receipt, please ensure the check is made out to Akron Children's Foundation. In the event that participant checks are written directly to Akron Children's, a written acknowledgement of their participation in your fundraising event or program will be sent, but it will not constitute as a tax receipt unless proper accounting procedures are followed according to IRS tax regulations. All donors should check with a tax professional regarding all tax deduction questions.

Tax receipts **CANNOT** be sent by you on behalf of Akron Children's.

How long does it take to get my Community Fundraiser Application approved?

Proposals will be reviewed and you will be contacted within two weeks of receipt. Please note that in an effort to protect our patients and our brand, all event hosts will be subject to background screening.

Can I fundraise online?

Yes! Please visit <https://give.akronchildrens.org/fundraise> or contact the Foundation office for more information.

What can I expect after my fundraiser is approved?

Event coordinators of approved events will receive an acknowledgement letter and tools to aid in event planning and execution, including an event welcome kit and general Akron Children's materials.





Your event welcome kit will include:

- Two (2) Akron Children's banners
- Thank you cards and giveaway items
- 'Benefiting Akron Children's' logos and usage guidelines
 - Akron Children's Facts & Stats
- The latest issue of Children's Progress
- Foundation social media account handles for tagging