



GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

for campaigns

VOICE FOR REFUGE
ACTION FUND

Welcome to Grassroots Fundraising *For campaigns*

Welcome to a guide to Grassroots Fundraising for Campaigns written and published by Voice for Refugee Action Fund. This guide is intended to offer some insight, resources, and new ideas to help you raise grassroots donations for your campaign within your community.

If you're viewing this toolkit, it is probably because you've already filed to run, set up your social media pages and a digital fundraising site, and began drafting your policy platform. Maybe you're getting started on your website and meeting with the press or volunteers. Wherever you are in the process, you know it's time to start raising the money for literature, brochures, office spaces, phones, yard signs, staff, or maybe just drinks & snacks for volunteers.

How to Use this Guide

This guide offers insight into the beginning stages of grassroots fundraising and leaves space for you and your campaign team to ask questions, brainstorm ideas, and set goals.

In this guide, we offer topline starting points, suggestions, ideas, and resources. As much as possible, we have linked to other resources that go deeper into specific concepts or ideas. Save this guide as a digital copy, look through the linked resources, and compare your ideas

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to ones presented here to find new, creative fundraising methods to try. Or, print out this guide, work through it with your team by making notes as you go along. Use this guide as a workbook to begin your fundraising. And as you go through, if you find yourself already comfortable on some steps, skip to the areas where you have questions. While this guide is set up to go topic-by-topic, you and your team should feel free to skip to the pages you need the most! There is no one way to start fundraising!

Why FUNDRAISING MATTERS

Fundraising is important for many reasons, but there are two reasons why we want you to feel equipped to do it well. One, **your campaign needs financial support**. Even if you're running a very localized, small campaign, running for office can be a large expense to cover all on your own. Second, **people want a way to support you** and for some people, that will involve wishing to donate to your campaign and contribute to your success.

While fundraising can feel scary, tedious, or even self-centered, it doesn't have to be. Fundraising can be meeting with voters and groups of individuals who care about the issues facing your community just as much as you do. Fundraising can be making new connections with neighbors who fall in love with what you're doing and want to support you. Fundraising is about more than just your campaign, it is about your vision for a better community- a vision that many others are likely to share and also want to realize.

1 your campaign needs financial support

Question for Consideration:

If you have reservations about fundraising, what are they? Write them down and spend some time talking to your team about your reservations. Try to think through some solutions to stay focused on the positives fundraising could bring to your campaign.

2 people want a way to support your vision



The basics: **STARTING OUT**

Setting Budgets and Goals

Setting a campaign budget and then reflective fundraising goals is an important first step in any campaign. It involves researching potential costs, thinking through the various aspects of your campaign's needs, and anticipating your needs in the future. It is best to set a goal that considers everything and is realistic, rather than setting goals that are under what you might possibly need to raise or drastically over what you realistically need.

How do I know how much I need to raise?

A good place to start is to research how much money individuals running for this seat fundraised in the last election. Do you know how much that was? If not, take a moment and search. If you can't find information for your specific race, look at other similar campaigns. Maybe information on your council seat isn't available, but what about other council seats in your area? Find a campaign as similar in size to your own to compare.

What range have others fundraised?

\$0-\$2000	\$10,000-\$20,000	\$100,000-\$250,000
\$2000- \$5000	\$20,000-\$50,000	\$250,000-\$500,000
\$5000- \$10,000	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$500,000- \$1 mil.

How do people donate?

People can donate in a few ways. 1. By making out a check to your campaign and mailing it to your campaign PO Box or Campaign Office Address (or personal address if you wish). 2. Online through a campaign fundraising platform such as ActBlue or Anedot.

How do I make a budget and set goals?

There is no right or wrong way to build your budget plan and fundraising goals. Many examples exist. One of the most comprehensive sample budgets we've found is one created by the [National Democrat Training Center](#) and can be found here.

Other information that is helpful to consider:

What is your win number:

Do you need to hire staff:

Yes No

How much money do you plan to contribute personally?

**DOWNLOAD SAMPLE
NDTC PLAN**

DATA MATTERS

a lot

Why data matters

Data matters for so many reasons. Just a few: legal compliance, building healthy donor relationships, not calling too often, remembering when someone asked for you to call them back, not exceeding donation limits from an individual, ensuring you're raising enough money to cover expenses, reporting income & expenses to your state or other election board, not forgetting to contact someone who wants to hear about your campaign, ensuring your entire team is on the same page, etc.

Data management in fundraising is important. But, if you don't have a CRM (*Customer Relations Management) system or a way to track donors alongside voters, how do you manage data? Where do you even start?

**DOWNLOAD A
STARTING SPREADSHEET**

Step 1: Build a Fundraising Contact List

The first advice any campaign fundraiser would give you is to start by building a list of friends and family that you could call or text to ask to donate. But what does that look like in immigrant and refugee communities? This list might be small or non-existent. Or large, but full of people unable to offer you financial support. So what's the next step? Sit down with close friends and family and have them build a list of their colleagues, friends, and contacts with you. Build a list of second degree contacts and set up meetings or give them a call to introduce yourself and make the ask.

Step 2: Track Who You've Contacted, When, and How it Went

For a small campaign without a CRM and with a small budget: Spreadsheets. Spreadsheets shared with fundraising and compliance staff is where to start. Tracking asks and donations via a spreadsheet is completely possible for a small to medium campaign as long as everyone is being very careful to not miss a thing.

Step 3: Track you Income & Expenses

Be sure you are familiar with all the legal requirements in your state or through the FEC around reporting your campaign income and expenses.

*Note, you are responsible for tracking contribution limits in accordance with State and Federal law.

METHODS

of grassroots fundraising

Recurring vs. One-time Donors

For some donors, a single, one-time donation will be easiest and most convenient. For others, small monthly donations will be most feasible. Either form of donation is helpful to a campaign. The one benefit to a recurring donor is that those small donations add up! And sometimes, a donor giving small amounts each month contributes more to your campaign over time than some of your large donors.

Introducing Yourself to Prospective Donors



Meeting individuals in 1:1 meetings provides the opportunity for someone to get to know you on a personal level. Meet for coffee, tea, or lunch- or have a mutual friend set up a meeting. This is a valuable way to build relationships with large donors and leaders of groups.



House parties or meet & greets are a great opportunity for candidates to meet with larger groups of friends or colleagues in a casual setting. Chat, introduce yourself to the group, answer questions, and make time to ask for support. And be sure to follow up!



Joint campaign events with like-minded candidates in other races can bring your two, preferably overlapping, constituent groups together. Support one another, build name recognition, and inspire people to support both/all included campaigns.*



Fundraising events, in-person or virtual, can provide you the opportunity to build support and raise funds. Whether its a larger event like a political rally or a smaller scale event like a picnic in a park, these events can help you support your community while engaging your supporter base.

*Note, Federal races and State/Local races are unable to do joint events together due to federal regulations.

Other Notable Ideas for Fundraising

Send letters
Text-to-Give campaign
Donation QR code on campaign content
T-shirts, Stickers, & Other Merch
Social Media Asks (pg 6)

In-Kind donations of support
Emails (pg 6)
Cold Calls (pg 7)
Private Messages on Social Media (pg 6)
\$37 for Candidate's 37th Birthday

the keys to DIGITAL FUNDRAISING

Emails

- Build a healthy list
- Send emails consistently
- **Always** include a donate button

To **build an email list**, start with personal contacts from the candidate and staff members. Be sure to include an opt-in message and always include email opt-in language to everything you do so that you maintain a healthy email list.

Curious how to **craft a winning email**? Sign-up for emails from other major candidates to see how they do it and what you like about their style.



If someone on your team hasn't completed the Facebook Identity Verification to be allowed to run **political ads**, have them start the process now.



Try sending messages to accounts when they first follow you:

"Hey, this is [name]. Thank you for following me along this campaign. I'm running for [race] to ensure a stronger future for everyone in [city or state]. We know we can win this race and fight for [issue you care about] and [issue you care about], but only if we have the resources to compete. We need to raise [number] by [date] and I know we can do it if everyone chips in.

Could you contribute to our vision by donating [\$x] or [\$y] today?



Social Media

- Explain why your message matters and why donations support your vision
- Share updates that **show donations going to work**: buying yard signs, passing out literature, purchasing ad spots



Not a video pro? Find someone on your team that is and **utilize video content to fundraise!** Share your story, talk about important issues, and make the ask!



Tips for CALLING DONORS

Who to call when you've already called everyone on your personal contact list?

Begin building a list of major party donors, key leaders, or politically active supporters in your community. Do some prospective research to be sure to set appropriate ask amounts and identify any mutual friends who might connect you. Then, make the call.

Tips for a Successful Phone Conversation

Keep your introductory script short.

- 1 Write a script- it will be helpful. Introduce yourself, your campaign, and your vision. At the end of your script, include a call to action (i.e. "can I count on your support?"). From there, if the individual wishes to know more about you, your campaign, or why they should donate, they'll ask questions and the conversation can begin.

It's an introductory conversation. Build in time to follow up.

- 2 Unlike longer meetings or connections to mutual friends, calling donors means sometimes **cold calling**. That means the conversation might not end with a donation- though it certainly can. Regardless of the outcome, schedule time into your day to send follow-up texts or emails to answer any lingering questions the donor may have or to make a new ask.

Remember, you're building a relationship.

- 3 The people you're calling are people you want to get to know and they should want to get to know you. While a fundraising call shouldn't take a lot of your time, it's okay to have a longer conversation with someone to build a good relationship that will last for years to come.

Offering to meet, texting a link, and sending a follow up email

Following-up is an important best practice. Thank someone for their time, for speaking with you, and for their questions, then be sure to include the link to your campaign website or donation page. Even if you felt the conversation wasn't particularly great, ending on a positive, grateful note can go a long way.



LEGAL & COMPLIANCE

Ensuring that your campaign follows State and Federal laws around campaign fundraising and finance is critical. You and your team are responsible for ensuring legal and regulatory compliance. Be sure that you and people on your team understand the ins and outs of reporting requirements, legal language, and compliance.

Who Cannot Contribute

A few basics of who cannot contribute: Foreign nationals, individuals with a felony on their record, religious institutions or organizations, 501(c)(3) non-profits. Please be sure to research your own state's laws as well as federal regulations to ensure legal compliance.

Contribution Limits

Ensure you are up-to-date on all the requirements surrounding contribution limits from individuals, groups, elected officials, and businesses. Be in touch with your Secretary of State's office or the Federal Elections Commission to find current information.

Reporting Income and Expenses

More than likely, your state requires candidates to report all campaign income and expenses on a regular basis. If you are running for federal office, the FEC requires this. Be in touch with your Secretary of State or the Federal Elections Commission to find current guidelines.

This is another reason why data matters a lot!

Legal Language to Include on Campaign Materials

Campaigns are required to use specific language on campaign materials, including fundraising notices and statements designating the committee that paid for the item. Campaign committees may solicit contributions over the internet as long as the solicitation includes the proper disclaimers. Be sure to be familiar with all legal requirements around legally required language.



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Voice for Refuge Action Fund is a first-of-its kind organization created to advance pro-refugee policies at the national, state, and local level, to hold elected leaders accountable and to support the election of pro-refugee candidates at all levels of government.

[CONTACT US](#)

