

SPONSOR FUNDRAISING TIPS AND TOOLS

Last Updated 05/03/22

The United States has a rich tradition of welcoming newcomers through sponsorship. This guide provides some best practices, drawn from this experience, to support you with your fundraising goals.

You will likely need to fundraise to generate the level of resources needed to support the newcomer(s) you are welcoming as they integrate into their new community. Often members of your community will be eager to give. This fundraising guide can serve as a useful support.

It is strongly encouraged that the sponsors stay within budget. This ensures that newcomers understand the limits of the support the sponsor can provide and helps newcomers transition past the support period.



General Considerations:

- **Unused funds:** Create a clear plan for any funds raised beyond your goal that you are confident will **not** be used. Communicate this plan to donors in your fundraising message. Excess funds may be held for your next newcomer sponsorship or donated later, if appropriate, to a community organization supporting the same population or a local refugee resettlement organization.
- **Before transferring any funds to the newcomer family,** sponsors should determine whether the funds transferred will affect the newcomer's benefits in a way that jeopardizes their stability and/or have income tax implications that the family cannot anticipate independently at this early stage. Sponsors can consult with a tax advisor (such as [VITA](#)) for any state specific or federal guidelines.

Fundraising Tools:

- **Promotion:** Create a one-page overview about your role in supporting and welcoming a newcomer family. Remember, people are far more likely to give to a person than they are to a cause. Once you have completed the overview, email/text it to your network, and link them to your online donation tools (see below).
- **Online Donations:** Online fundraising has become a common practice over the past decade. There are several fundraising sites (e.g. GoFundMe) and social media platforms that you can use to promote your fundraising. Visit <https://www.gofundme.com/c/fundraising-tips> for more tips on online fundraising.
- **Online In-Kind Donations:** You can use online collection and organizing tools to facilitate in-kind donations. One commonly used resource is Sign Up Genius (<https://www.signupgenius.com>).
- **Individual, Corporate, or Faith Donors:** Local businesses, faith groups, schools, and universities may be interested in supporting

newcomers but are unsure how to help. A request for money or an in-kind donation is best made over the phone or in-person. Be prepared and carefully consider how you will handle offers of non-monetary support, such as in-kind donations or job opportunities for the newcomers.

- **Special Events:** Special events can be time-consuming and costly forms of fundraising, however there are ways to make them manageable: 1) Consider your target group and what event would appeal most to them; 2) Create a budget in advance, anticipating what you will spend and what you will raise; 3) Secure in-kind contributions for supplies rather than purchasing them.

Language Tips and Examples:

- **Explain the urgency of your mission:**
 - *While we expect many Ukrainians will choose to remain in Europe close to family and their homeland, the United States announced plans to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainians fleeing the current conflict. We are grateful to sponsors who are able to provide a place of safety and security at an extraordinarily challenging time for the Ukrainian people.*
- **Highlight how your community has responded to the crisis so far:**
 - *In response to this critical need, a group of neighbors and community members came together to welcome a Ukrainian family to our area. With our collective knowledge and passion, we are confident in our ability to provide the support required for a family and then some, but **we need your help**.*
- **Explain how you will use the funds raised:**
 - *100% of the received funds will be spent on supporting the family's start-up and living expenses during a transition to independence in our community. Most of it will go toward housing-related costs.*
- **Respond to questions regarding deductible charitable contributions:**
 - *Sponsors are not able to provide receipts for charitable contributions. While you may not receive a tax benefit for your charitable gift, your generosity will greatly benefit the lives of newcomer(s).*
 - *If donors have additional questions, their tax advisor or [IRS Publication 526](#) can provide helpful guidance.*
- **Send "Thank You" notes promptly and keep donors informed:**
 - Consider a personal, handwritten note.
 - Explain the impact of the donation.
 - Provide an update on your efforts (do not include personal information about the newcomer family).

Maintaining Fundraising Records:

- While fundraising, make sure to keep an accurate record, tracking the donor's name, donation received/amount given, and date received. If the donor has any restrictions about how the money can/should be used, make sure to note this and honor it - *if you cannot honor it, then do not accept the money.*
- Make sure to hold any money raised in a secure account/location, such as in a GoFundMe account, a group bank account (if one exists), or a faith group or foundation that has offered to hold it.
- Develop an accounting structure: Track income, expenditures, and copies of receipts. This will help you monitor spending and provide transparency to donors and potentially to your newcomer family.