



do it yourself
fundraising



DO IT YOURSELF FUNDRAISING GUIDE



Introduction

Use your talents and interests to raise awareness and funds for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society! There are endless ways to get involved. Host a fundraising event, start a grassroots fundraising campaign with email or take on a personal challenge of your choice!

Fundraisers all over are planning fundraising activities. No matter what you choose to do, the National MS Society staff is available to help and support you. Please use this toolkit as a starting point to help organize your event. Depending on your event, many tips may or may not fit your needs. But, we hope this gets you started!

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Ways to Do It Yourself

Ask a Friend

DIY fundraising doesn't get any easier than just Ask a Friend – no event required. Simply send an email to friends, family, colleagues – anyone in your network and tell them why ending MS is important to you. If you give them the opportunity to donate, they can share in your passion for finding a cure. If you need help getting started, sample messaging is pre-loaded in your Participant Center.

Organize a Fundraising Activity (the options are endless, here are just a few!)

- Horseshoe Tournament
- Basketball, Softball etc. Tournament
- Battle of the Bands
- Chili Cook-off
- Benefit Dinner
- Bowling Tournament
- Car Show
- Car Wash
- Casino Night
- Concert
- Concession Stand
- Cycle or Triathlon
- Dodge Ball Tournament
- Dress Down Day/Casual Day at Work
- Flower Sale
- Golf Outing and Silent Auction
- Guest bartender/wait staff
- Holiday cookie bake-off/Bake Sale
- Holiday Gift Wrap
- Host a dance/Adult prom
- Motorcycle Ride for MS
- Office Olympics
- Pancake Breakfast
- Pig Roast
- Garage Sale
- Run for MS
- Talent Show
- Yard work for donation

Tips!

- Take advantage of the things you or your committee is already involved in: hobbies, interests, successes or experiences with certain types of fundraisers in the past.
- The more unique, the better. Try to find a fundraising event type that will not directly compete with other successful and long-standing benefit events in your area.
- You can plan a low-key event such as a bake sale, car wash, or yard sale. Or you can hold a large-scale event such as an auction, trivia night, or gala. The scope of your event should depend upon the amount of planning you are able to

perform, the amount of time available you can spend, and the availability of people willing to support your efforts.

Online Tools

A customizable “My Account” is available to each DIY supporter and organizer to help with recruiting and fundraising. Tools within My Account include:

- Update your personal or activity fundraising page
- Set your personal or activity page shortcut URL
- A progress bar at the top of the page provides an overview of your personal fundraising progress
- Send emails to friends, family and co-workers
- Enter “offline” gifts (credit, checks or cash)
- Group activity organizers can see the total number of supporters and the total activity fundraising progress
- Quick links for frequently used functions down the right side of the page

Note - My Account log in is located at the top of the DIY website.

Organizing a DIY Event

Committees

Recruit a few friends, peers, family members, or community leaders and create a committee to help you steer and organize the event. No one person can single-handedly run a successful fundraiser; it takes a group of motivated individuals who are passionate about supporting your efforts.

- By getting more people involved, you will be creating more awareness of the event, have access to more networks, contacts, and opportunities, and prevent yourself from becoming overextended.
- By dividing and conquering, more attention and focus can be put into multiple areas of the event planning. A good committee will help you delegate tasks and save you time. Make sure to hold regular meetings to monitor the group’s progress and communicate regularly between meetings.
- Most people are more than willing to help you organize your event and are just waiting for you to ask. Be bold and surround yourself with a great committee!

Goals and Objectives

Determine the overall goals and objectives of the event

- What is the fundraising goal amount?
- Will the effort increase awareness among others of MS and NMSS? Will it draw attention to our cause?
- Will the event motivate others to take action? Will the event motivate others to become volunteers?

Timing

Keep these things in mind when determining the time and date of your event:

- Choose a date far enough in advance to give you ample time to prepare.
- Consult with your local chapter and be aware of conflicting local and/or national events.
- Make sure to consider holidays and other busy times of the year for your attendees.
- You could coordinate your event with a significant date or time of year.
- Consider hosting an event in March during MS Awareness Week!

Develop Your Timeline - Create a specific timeline

- Set realistic dates and goals for when you will accomplish each of your goals to make the event successful.
- Make sure to record the name of the committee members or volunteers responsible for meeting specific goals.
- Remember, that it is better to finish your to-do list earlier than later so make sure that you allow enough time to complete tasks well in advance of the event.

Budget

- Set realistic goals for attendance, revenue and expenses. Make sure to consider any up-front costs or significant fees.
- Estimate attendance, cost of decorations, refreshments, printing, mailing expenses, food/drink, location, giveaways, supplies etc.

- Determine what items could be donated.
- Determine the overall cost per person and then determine the ticket prices to ensure attendance and a profit.
- Consider significant up-front costs and deposits that may be required to reserve the location, caterer, DJ or other service provider.
- Have a plan for paying expenses until sponsorship money is received.
- Start to create incentives for committee members and volunteers to encourage tickets sales, secure donated items, and sponsorships.

Make It Memorable

Most DIY activities are successful because they are unique and memorable beyond the day of the event. Ask yourself these questions:

- Will attire be casual or black tie?
- Will the event be held on a significant date or in a month that could help determine a theme?
- What will the flow of the event require - a speaker, video, live entertainment, someone living with MS to share their story, etc.?
- Will there be an auction, raffle, just socialization, etc.?

Location

Find a venue that will help you meet your goals and objectives, is within your budget, and will give the event the atmosphere that you are looking for.

- Tap into the committee's or volunteers' networks.
- Explore opportunities to get facility fees fully or partially donated since your event is benefiting a charity.
- If appropriate for your specific event, contact local Lions Club, American Legion, town halls, galleries, schools, and churches for large spaces that may be available for little or no cost to you.
- Book the venue as far in advance as possible to reserve your desired date.
- If charging an admission fee, consider facilities that make it easy to control entrances/exits.
- Remember that outdoor venues can become expensive if additional lighting, tents, barricades, portable toilets, etc. are required.

- Make sure to inquire about any restrictions on occupancy limits, bringing in outside food/drink, sound, decorations, etc.
- Ensure the location is accessible and sufficient accessible parking is available.

Getting The Word Out

There is a wide variety of ways to let people know about your activity from flyers and brochures to email and Facebook. Be sure to utilize all available avenues to promote your event.

- Create your guest list. Exhaust all of your networks in addition to volunteer networks.
- Create and send out 'Save the Date' postcards or e-mails to those people that you absolutely want to be at your event.
- Create flyers, posters, invitations, and brochures for the event.
- Any honoree names should be prominent on the invitations and committee members should be listed in addition to a description of the Society, sponsors, and major donors.
- Mail out invitations no later than two months prior to the event.
- Market event through social networks, online calendars, grassroots, etc.

Sponsors and Volunteers

- Create comprehensive sponsorship packages that provide benefits that are appealing to local companies.
- Don't be too afraid to ask, remember your passion and that you are supporting a great cause.
- Make sure to follow-up with each potential sponsor with a professional proposal, phone call or visit.
- Identify areas where additional volunteer help is going to be needed for planning and executing the event.
- Encourage committee members to recruit both sponsors and volunteers.

Details

- Reserve any services, technical or other, that will be required for the event (sound system, sound professional, projector & screen for pictures or videos, valet parking, coat check, security, etc.)

- Contracts or agreements are a necessity in order to ensure that the service provider is aware of the date and time of the event, in addition to their identified obligations. Contracts or agreements are especially helpful for service providers who are donating services.
- Analyze potential safety and security hazards and create a plan to help eliminate any risk.
- Identify whether additional liability insurance is going to be necessary to cover injuries due to high-risk activities (rock climbing, sky diving, etc.).
- Create a weather contingency plan if the event is outside. What will happen if inclement weather strikes?
- Confirm venue, food, drink, services, speaker, etc. and that contracts and agreements have all been signed and received.
- Start to organize volunteer needs for day-of roles and responsibilities.

Day Of The Event

All of the prep-work is done and it's the day of the big event. It's a good idea to create a checklist of things to do and vital items you'll need.

- Schedule a meeting with your volunteers well in advance of guest arrival.
- Communicate any last-minute changes or additions to your volunteers, as well as identifying and troubleshooting any problem areas.
- Ensure event is running on time and that all speakers have arrived and understand their role for the event.
- Identify a designated volunteer, whom you trust and can be relied upon to make good decisions, to troubleshoot any problems or answer any questions that volunteers may have.
- Make sure to greet your guests - let the volunteers focus on their roles while you thank guests for attending and encourage them to participate in the event's activities.

Post Event

You pulled it off, but yet, there's still more to do -

- Thank attendees and volunteers through an email or personal note.
- Thank sponsors through a personal note.

- Host a wrap-up celebration with your volunteers where you can discuss what worked and what didn't.
- Ensure all expenses are paid and that proper documentation is retained to support use of revenue.
- Organize the attendee list in order to make sure they are invited to next year's event.
- Submit proceeds to the Society.
- Be proud of the great work you did to help families affected by MS... Thank you!

Do It Yourself FAQ's

As you are putting together all of the details of your DIY Fundraising activity, you will have many questions. Our hope is that the following will be able to answer most of those for you.

Why is our activity classified as DIY and not a National MS Society Event?

This is YOUR activity, which means you get to do it your way, with all of your own ideas, adding all of your own flare! So, when promoting your event, title is as "Event Name, benefitting the National MS Society". This will show our complete support of your event.

Can the National MS Society Logo be used?

A special logo has been created just for DIY Event holders! This logo can be downloaded online under digital downloads. See the promotion and branding guidelines below for additional information.

Is it okay to have alcohol at our DIY Event?

Alcohol is highly discouraged at an event unless it is believed to be important to the success of the event. But, we do recommend that if your event includes alcohol, try to limit the number of drinks each participant gets for "free" by providing drink tickets, or hire a licensed bartender to consider a participant's level of consumption and age.

Will The Society pay for expenses of a DIY Event?

No. The Society is not financially liable for the staging of a DIY event.

Can funds already turned in to The Society be used to pay DIY Event Expenses?

No. Once funds have been donated to The Society, they cannot be utilized to pay expenses.

Can funds be kept to pay expenses of the DIY Event?

Yes, but ensure the funds are kept in a safe location and these are not considered tax deductible.

When do funds raised from DIY Events need to be given to the Society?

The Society asks that you deliver any proceeds raised from a DIY Event within 30 working days after the event has taken place.

Are donations made to a DIY Event tax deductible?

The Society is a charitable organization, so any contribution to the Society qualifies as a deduction under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. Difficulty could arise when an independent, outside organization wishes to raise money for the Society. If the payments are made to this independent organization, and it is not a qualified organization, the payments will not be deductible for income tax purposes. If the payments are made to the Society, then they qualify – to the extent by law. Please note: As stated above, please remember that when checks are made to the Society, they cannot be utilized later, or paid back from the Society, for expenses of a DIY Event.

Promotions and Brand Guidelines

- The activity will be promoted and conducted in a manner to avoid the appearance of the Society endorsing any product, firm, organization, individual or service.
- The Society reserves the right to decline association with any third-party when it believes that such association or DIY activity may have a negative effect on the reputation of the Society.
- Any use of the name, National MS Society and logo must be approved by the Society before promotion begins.
- The official name, National MS Society logo and DIY logo should be appropriately used in conjunction with such an activity, but may not be altered in any way.
- The Society operates under the Better Business Bureau guidelines for charitable giving. In compliance with these guidelines, the Society requires full disclosure on all packaging, advertising or promotional materials when funds are raised

through a consumer purchase or promotion (e.g. \$1 from the sale of each item). All DIY fundraisers must comply with this requirement if applicable.

- Similarly, advertising, promotion and associated materials must state that the proceeds of an activity will benefit the Society, but should not imply or state that the Society is the host, sponsor or endorser. Any sponsor of the activity should be clearly identified and the amount or percentage of proceeds to be provided to the Society as the beneficiary should be stated: (i.e. The Elks Club, Bob's Variety, The Smith Family, is hosting X activity, "with 75% of net proceeds benefiting the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.")
- Promotional materials and/or advertisements cannot be purchased with Society funds and are the responsibility of the organizer.

About the National MS Society

Please feel welcome to use the following content describing the National MS Society in marketing/promotional materials:

MS stops people from moving. We exist to make sure it doesn't. The National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person affected by MS by funding cutting edge research, driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with MS organizations around the world, and providing programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward. We are people who want to do something about MS NOW, and are dedicated to achieving a world free of MS. Join the movement at nationalMSSociety.org.

Early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can make a difference for people with multiple sclerosis. Learn about your options by talking to your health care professional and contacting the National MS Society at nationalMSSociety.org or 1-800-FIGHT-MS (344-4867).