



Urban Resource Institute
Third Party Fundraising
Guidelines & Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

One of the most important first steps to take in order to have a successful fundraiser or event is to plan as much as you can in advance. A well thought out plan will save you headaches and hurdles and put you in the best possible position to succeed.

The purpose of this guide is to help you do just that. This is by no means is meant to serve as strict parameters to what you can and can't do, but rather provide you with the necessary tools to organize while hopefully inspiring you to become creative and make this your own! Your efforts and support will help URI continue serving survivors of domestic violence and their families, and for that we thank you!

Throughout this process, if you have any questions whatsoever, please don't hesitate to contact us at development@uriny.org or 646.588.0030. Good luck!

Getting Started

Now that you've decided you want to support URI and domestic violence survivors, it's time to figure out exactly what you want to do! Below is a list of successful fundraising events that have worked well in the past. If you already have an idea in mind, keep reading – there might be some helpful tips that you can use! Additionally, if you don't see your idea on the list, that doesn't mean it's not a great idea!

➤ **Restaurant or Bar Reception**

Have a local restaurant or bar that you go to regularly? Why not ask them to host an event for you to support URI! You can sell tickets, or take a portion of the door (some bars will charge a cover), and ask them to donate a portion, if not all, of their sales that night. They might be willing to offer discounted drinks and food specials to help you bring in a crowd. Make it extra special by seeing if a band or local DJ will perform for free to help attract more attention. They might even be willing to sell some merchandise with a portion of the profits coming back to URI.

➤ **Benefit Concert**

In a band? Or just love live music? Put together a day, or night, of live music and fun to support URI. Similar to a bar event, you can sell tickets in advance and offer raffle prizes and auction items. It can be one band/singer or a whole set, just depends on the space and how much time you have. Some artists might be inclined to donate CDs or merchandise for you to sell with all or some of the proceeds coming back to URI. Local vendors might even be willing to donate food for the day – maybe the local pizza shop will supply you with free pizza for 2 hrs.

➤ **Race, run or walk event**

5k races and charity walks have become very popular over the years. Folks in the community will be familiar with this kind of event and you might even be able to recruit some people who have run something like this before. This can be anything from a walk, cross-country bike ride, to a motorcycle rally – the point is to get people moving to support URI! You can set up teams and challenge them to each raise a certain amount before the event, and have a reception of sorts after. Alternatively, there are plenty of races already in place – why not sign up and participate, raising funds to support URI!

➤ **Backyard BBQ**

Who doesn't love a BBQ. Get a group of your closest friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and anyone you can find to come out and support URI. If you get the food donated, or make it yourself, you can charge an entry fee or encourage teams to sign up for a cook-off! Local restaurants might be willing to participate, or donate, in support of survivors of domestic violence – don't be shy to ask! This can be a great event around summer holidays like Memorial Day or the 4th of July.

➤ **Carwash**

We've all participated in one of these at some point in our lives and know how fun they can be! Find a parking lot, or open area near the center of town (talk with your local town hall to make sure you have all the permissions), and start washing! Don't forget your posters and excited friends to let folks know its happening!

➤ **Seasonal Events** (i.e. Super Bowl, Seasonal Holidays, etc.)

There are several special days throughout the year, which can each be a wonderful opportunity to engage your friends and neighbors to support URI. A simple backyard cookout, or a combination of any of the above can be elevated around any of these holidays.

Make a Plan

At this point, it's important to be honest with yourself as well as be realistic and practical about your timeline. Everything can't happen overnight, nor should it! Below are some simple steps to help get you off on the right foot, and on the path to success! Again, these don't have to be followed specifically, but it's important to try and layout a plan that covers everything. At any point during this process, don't forget you can always email us with questions or advice at development@uriny.org. We're here to help you!

➤ **Get Permission**

Depending on what your event is, it is important to make sure that you are within all legal parameters. Check with your town, city, or state (if not all) if you are unsure about anything. It's smart to check in with them anyways and make sure you have everything covered – there are sometimes specific permits you need, or rules to follow that might not be as well known. Most venues will be familiar with what you need, but if you're in a park or outdoor space it might not be as obvious.

If you're having an event where alcoholic beverages are offered, it is imperative you identify those who are of age. Most bars/restaurants will do this for you, but if you're running the event on your own – this responsibility falls to you.

➤ **Set Your Timeline**

Give yourself plenty of time to set up for a great event. It can be useful to work backwards from the event date, rather than starting from "today." For example, if you're having a reception on January 30th, you know you want to give people 2 weeks notice, which brings you to mid-January for invites/emails, and in turn means you need to find a venue by early January (the latest). You can add in the details from there, i.e. when you want your fundraising page up, any raffle items to be included, contracts signed, etc. Remember, there's no need to rush!

➤ **Build Your Framework**

Now that you have your event date set, and venue secured (if needed), you can start building the framework for your event. This is not as necessary for events that will only have onsite collections, but important for folks who are fundraising leading up to and after an event.

There are hundreds of crowdsourcing websites that you can use for your event, but at URI we have found Rally.org to be one of the best. They have the lowest fee* and allow for great creativity and interpretation. Regardless of which platform you use, it will be much easier on you if you can direct everyone to one site where they can donate or purchase tickets. From here, it would be smart to link the page to your personal Facebook page or a specific event page. Note, if you use your personal Facebook page, you're

opening up your personal life to the community – make sure you have your ducks in a row, if you know what we mean!

Twitter and Instagram can also be very helpful leading up to and during your event, to create a buzz and excitement around it. We've found it helpful to have a specific #hashtag people can use – that way you can also document pictures and videos, we'd love to see them!

**Most sites will charge a fee anywhere from 5-10% of each donation, or the whole amount when donating to an organization. Be sure to check the fine print on this, Rally.org has the lowest fee at 5%.*



➤ **Share With Your Networks**

Now that you're all set up with your websites and social media pages, it's time to get the word out! The best way to start is with a personalized email to your network (see appendix on how to map this) explaining why you're involved and what it means to you. At URI, when we ask staff or members to support and/or help share information, we like to include sample language – this makes it quick and easy for folks to copy and paste it into their Facebook or Twitter page. The easier it is, the more people will do it!

Again, people will be more inclined to support you if they feel as though they're involved or invested. Share with them your progress and experiences in setting up. If you're doing a walk or ride, try and share pictures of you training, or during the event.

The biggest challenge people face when fundraising is not making the “ask.” It's important you feel comfortable doing this, so don't be afraid to practice on family and close friends first. You might have the best story or email about your event, but if you don't make the ask for people to donate, or support, or share, it won't happen. Don't be shy here and don't be afraid to be persistent.

Some great examples of a direct, but respectful ask are:

- Hi Sharon, my name is Nick Smith. We're holding a fundraiser to support survivors of domestic violence in October, can you join us? Tickets are on sale at www.yoursite.com for \$x, all proceeds go to Urban Resource Institute to help them continue to help those who have suffered at the hands of abusers.
 - Yes? Great, thank you so much! We really appreciate it. I'd be more than happy to send you some language to share with others too, we're trying to raise \$XX (Goal) for URI – we could really use your help!
 - No? Thanks so much anyways, here's the information if you change your mind. Hope to see you on January 30th.
- Hi John, my name is Tom Smith, I'm hosting a fundraiser in January to support survivors of domestic violence who are trying to put their lives back together. Would you be willing to donate pizzas for a few hours during the event? We'd be more than happy to acknowledge you from the stage/on fliers at the bar/on our facebook page/etc. – and it would really help elevate our event.
 - Yes? Fantastic – I really appreciate it! We'd love to have you and your family join us as well, it's going to be a great night.
 - No? Thanks so much for considering it. Do you know anyone else in the community that might be interested in something like this?

- Uncle Kevin, I'm having a fundraiser next month to support survivors of domestic violence. Can I count on you to buy a ticket? And share with your friends? It would really help us reach our goal of \$XX.
 - Yes? Great, thank you so much! Would you be willing to share the information with your colleagues? I can send you all the information you need; it would really mean a lot.
 - No? That's okay, I'll hold onto your Christmas gift this year (lol).

➤ **Promote**

It's important to find the line between sharing regularly and not flooding your friends and family. Use your judgment here, but one – two updates every 10-12 days has worked well. If you secure anything exciting (auction items, venue, bands, etc), feel free to send an update off schedule – but then hold off on updating them again for a few days.

Don't be afraid to reach out to the local radio stations and news outlets to see if they'd be willing to promote or cover the event. If this happens, don't forget to thank everyone who has donated – including vendors!

If you do confirm any type of media, please let us know so we can get you some talking points and share with everyone!

➤ **Track Everything, Yes Everything**

Rally.org will help you keep track of donations, but it's important you also keep track of any cash donations leading up to and during the event. It's easiest if you have one person, or list, that you're collecting information from. That way we can provide them with a thank you letter and all the necessary tax-deductible information they might need.

Additionally, during the event we strongly encourage you to have someone running the donation table/booth/jar at all times. You don't want to miss out on anyone, and you also want to make sure everything is secure.

➤ **Wrap Up & Thank You's**

It goes without saying, but thank you's go a long way, so be sure to thank everyone who has supported the event – from donors, to vendors, to supporters. It costs you nothing and will help you the next time around.

URI will accept cash, credit cards, checks or cashier's checks. While most will be done electronically, we ask that you mail any donations you receive in person within 15 days of the event. Furthermore, mailing cash isn't always the safest and we recommend transferring the cash into a cashier's check. As long as you tell us who gave what, we can still thank everyone after the fact.

More Information

Who we are

Founded in Brooklyn, New York in 1980, URI's mission is to provide quality, compassionate, and innovative client-centered services to victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable populations so that they may lead the safest and fullest lives possible. Services include domestic violence programs, services for the developmentally disabled, services for homeless families, advocacy initiatives to raise awareness of domestic violence and best practice interventions in our focus areas. Safe housing, educational support, employment training and mental health services are core components of URI's programs, which annually serve approximately 1,600 individuals living in New York City's poorest communities.

Can I use URI's logo for my event?

Yes! We are all about expanding our visibility and welcome your help with this challenge. The first step is signing our Third Party Fundraising Agreement, which will authorize you to use our logo on marketing materials and fundraise on our behalf. If you have plans to have t-shirts made or any type of clothing, please email designs or mockups to development@urinyc.org for approval. While we encourage you to embrace the brand and make it your own, we do want to make sure that nothing violates our values.

Can I accept donations and then write Urban Resource Institute one check from my personal account?

No, you should not use this method. If you deposit donations into your account, the IRS will consider that deposit income in your account and tax you on it. Also, because the check is from your account, we will not be able to issue your donors tax receipts for their donations.

What should I do with cash donations?

It is never safe to mail cash. Have cash donors (or yourself) fill out a sheet of paper with the donor's contact information, the donation amount and the donor's signature. Transfer the cash into a cashier's check and mail both the cashier's check and the cash donation sheet to Urban Resource Institute.

Can URI refund or reimburse me for some of my expenses?

To remain fiscally responsible, URI cannot refund or reimburse any expenses related to externally instigated and managed fundraising events.

Can URI help promote my event?

URI will do our best to share as much as we can but cannot guarantee any social media posts or emails on your behalf. However, depending on timing, we are more than happy to add your event to our quarterly newsletter.

Can URI send a representative to my event or function?

While we would love to join you at every event, it's impossible for us to be everywhere at all times. We will do our best to try and accommodate each event, but we cannot guarantee you will have an URI representative on site. However, we're more than happy to provide you with talking points on the organization.

Can URI issue a receipt for purchases of admission tickets, drawing tickets, and auction items?

URI will provide a tax-deductible acknowledgement for donations made directly to URI. URI cannot issue a receipt for purchases of admission tickets, drawing tickets, and auction items, as there is a good or service exchanged.

Can I organize a raffle or an auction for URI?

Regulations governing raffles differ from state to state. Please check with your local attorney or state official's office for your state regulations. An auction to benefit URI is permissible however we are unable to provide our federal tax ID # for permissions to hold this type of event.

Can I partner with URI?

We welcome your support as a Third Party Fundraiser but if you would like to establish a formal partnership with URI, please reach out to URI's Development Department at 646.588.0030.