

COLLEGE DEMOCRATS OF MISSOURI

FUNDRAISING GUIDE

2019-20

STEPS TO FUNDRAISING & FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR
CDMO CHAPTERS¹



REGISTER YOUR ORGANIZATION WITH THE IRS

527

Registering your organization as a 527 rather than a 501(c)(3) or (4) gives your organization more freedom to participate in political activities. While 501(c)(4)s may lobby and/or participate in campaigns, this cannot become their primary purpose, and these efforts must be related to their social welfare goals. Since 527s are political organizations, they have the freedom to act politically.

SET UP A BANK ACCOUNT

You'll want to set up a bank account for your organization to store its donations/funding. Both the President and the Treasurer of your organization should have access. You can use this bank account to set up your organization's Venmo & GoFundMe pages (among others) should you choose to utilize those platforms.

WRITE A FORM LETTER

Purpose

Your organization's form letter will be sent to friends, family, local donors, local politicians, etc., and it will be used to solicit donations. The term "form letter" itself just means a uniform template that is used for a certain type of letter. Since you'll likely be sending a lot of requests for donations, you'll want to have a template for those requests ready to go.

Content

- Who?

¹ Portions of this guide are adapted from College Democrats of Indiana's "FUNdraising Tips and Recommendations"

- Introduce yourself and your organization. What school are you from? Are you newly established? What are your goals?
- What?
 - What are you asking for? What is your organization's purpose? What do you plan on doing with the money?
- Why?
 - Why do you need their donation? How will their donation help with the functioning of your organization?
- Where?
 - How does a donor get the money to your organization? Are you using a GoFundMe page? Should they write a check? Where should they send it? To whom should they make it out?
- Notes
 - For these letters, you should use business format
 - Although paper letters seem more formal and more personal, you can also solicit donations through phone calls, mass emails, and social media platforms like Facebook (you may want to use something like GoFundMe for electronic fundraising efforts)
 - CDMO exec is working on comprising a running list of potential donors that chapters can use to identify possible funding opportunities & establish relationships with donors
 - If you've ever worked on a campaign, you probably know how to write a pitch—writing a donation request form letter isn't too different! You can even use current events/campus happenings in your “why” section to establish urgency for your request
 - It's unlikely that you'll meet the income threshold that requires you to report your income with the IRS, but be sure to read the IRS's rules to make sure your organization is compliant
 - Make sure to keep a **thorough and accurate** log of all donations made to your organization. Even if you don't legally have to report it, this will help keep your chapter's records in order, and it will help your chapter identify potential donors in future years

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Profit Shares

Businesses (typically restaurants) will often do profit shares with local organizations. Generally, businesses will put your organization's logo/information on a flyer and donate a certain percentage of the profits over a specific period of time to your organization. Some businesses will donate a flat percentage over a several hour period and others will only donate from transactions in which the customer showed the flyer. Shop around your local businesses to see which profit share setup is the right choice for your organization.

Tabling

You can table at orientations, activity fairs, and in many common areas around campus. Most college students probably won't want to donate, but you can consider selling something at your tabling events to raise funds. You could sell buttons, t-shirts, stickers, etc., and selling items with your logo on them will not only help solidify your brand but help market your organization.

Bake Sales, Karaoke Nights, Movie Nights, Mixers, Auctions, Raffles, 5Ks, etc.

You can also elect to host an event such as a bake sale, karaoke night, movie night, mixer, auction, raffle, 5K, bar crawl, social, banquet, etc. to raise funds for your organization. This is by no means a comprehensive list of possible fundraising events, but there are a few ideas to help get you started. Don't be afraid to be creative with your fundraising events!

MISC. TIPS & NOTES

- Having a well-designed, simple, and consistent logo can really help enhance your organization's image and lend an air of professionalism to your organization's fundraising efforts
- While it can't hurt to reach out to local politicians/candidates, if they're going through a campaign themselves, they may not be willing/able to donate to your organization, so be understanding of their circumstances



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