

Sponsor Circle Fundraising Tips and Tools

Sponsor Circles must raise a minimum of \$2,275 per individual welcomed to support newcomers as they integrate into their community. Sponsor Circles in certain locations may raise and spend more than the \$2,275 per newcomer. It is strongly encouraged that the Sponsor Circle stay within budget, this ensures that the newcomers understand the limits of the support the group can provide and helps newcomers transition past the sponsorship period

Considerations

- **Unused funds:** Create a clear plan for any funds raised beyond the \$2,275 per newcomer 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
- **Application not approved:** Create a plan for funds in the event that your Sponsor Circle application is not approved. Funds may be donated to a community organization supporting the same population or a local refugee resettlement organization
- **Before transferring any funds to the newcomer family,** Sponsor Circles must 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. Sponsor Circles can consult with their Sponsor Circle Umbrella and/or with a tax advisor (such as [VITA](#)) for any state specific or federal guidelines

Fundraising Tools

Promotion: Create a one-page overview about your Sponsor Circle and 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 to your network, linking 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 that can be used, such as GoFundMe, and social media platforms that you can use to promote your fundraising. Visit [GoFundMe Tips](#) for more

Online In-Kind Donations: You can use online collection and organizing tools to facilitate in-kind donations. Once commonly used resource is [Sign Up Genius](#).

Individual, Corporate or Faith Donors: Local businesses, faith groups, schools, and universities may be interested in supporting newcomers but are unsure how to help. You can give them the opportunity. The "ask" to support newcomers by providing financial or in-kind donations 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 Sample Language

Explain the urgency of your mission

Currently, there are tens of thousands of Afghan refugees living at various military bases in the US, awaiting resettlement. The Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans is an emergency response launched to expand the United States' capacity to welcome newcomers to our community and provide them with initial reception and integration services.

How has your community responded to the crisis

In response to this critical need, a group of neighbors and community members came together to form the **[YOUR NAME] Sponsor Circle** and to welcome an Afghan 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 90-day period of transition to independence in our community. Most of it will go toward housing-related costs.

Respond to questions regarding deductible charitable contributions

- Our Sponsor Circle is not able to provide receipts for charitable contributions. While you may not receive tax benefits for your charitable gift, your generosity will greatly benefit the lives of Afghan newcomers(s).
- "Your donation to [organization], a partner in welcome, is tax-deductible and you can be provided with a receipt. Please note, according to charitable contribution guidelines, your contribution is for the use of [organization] and is not indicated for a specific person."

If your Sponsor Circle partners with a qualified organization providing receipts in accordance with state and federal tax law requirements. If donors have additional questions, their tax advisor or IRS Publication 526 can provide helpful guidance.

Send "Thank You" notes promptly & 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 your newcomer family)

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 the GoFundMe account, a group bank account (if one exists), a faith group or foundation that has offered to hold it. Please note, if you are working through another group, make certain to draft an agreement regarding the holding and release of the money

Develop an accounting structure: Track income, expenditures and copies of receipts. This will help your SC monitor spending and provide transparency to members and potentially to your newcomer family

ACCEPTABLE PROOF OF FUNDS

For purposes of the application, proof of funds can be:

- A screenshot or link of an online fundraising campaign (e.g., GoFundMe);
- Bank or financial institution account statement, showing the minimum financial requirement or more in funds. The account(s) may be in the name of an individual(s) or organization