

Fundraising Tips & Tools

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

You will be required to provide each refugee newcomer with basic financial supports during the 90-day sponsorship period, \$2,425 per individual. You will likely need to fundraise to generate the level of resources needed to support the refugee 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 tool.

We strongly encourage that you stay within budget to ensure that refugee newcomers understand the limits of the support you can provide. Staying within budget also helps refugee newcomers transition past the 90-day sponsorship period.

General Considerations

Unused funds: You may find that you have raised more money than you need. 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 the next refugee newcomer you sponsor 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 refugee newcomer family, you should determine whether the funds transferred will adversely affect the refugee newcomer's benefits by jeopardizing their stability and/or creating unwanted income tax implications that the refugee newcomer cannot anticipate independently at this early stage. You 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 refugee newcomer family. 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 [GoFundMe](#) 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](#).

Individual, Corporate or Faith Donors: Local businesses, faith groups, schools, and universities may be interested in supporting refugee newcomers with either money or in-kind donations. These requests are best made in person or over the phone. When making the request, be prepared and know how you will handle any offers, including non-monetary support, in-kind donations, or job opportunities.

Special Events

Special events can be rewarding means of connecting with people and raising funds, awareness, and support for a project, but can also be time-consuming and costly. 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; and/or (3) secure in-kind contributions for supplies rather than purchasing them.

Language Tips & Examples

Explain the urgency of your mission. Global displacement is at an all-time high, with 100 million people worldwide uprooted due to war, political or economic instability, and the impacts of natural disasters. During this extraordinarily challenging time for [nationality of refugee newcomer you are welcoming] people, we have decided to sponsor a refugee newcomer family by helping to provide them a place of safety and security.

Highlight community response. In response to this critical need, a group of neighbors and community members came together to welcome a [nationality of refugee newcomer] 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 funds raised. 100% of the received funds will be spent on supporting the family's start-up and living expenses during their transition to independence in our community. We anticipate that most of it will go toward housing-related costs.

Respond to questions regarding charitable deductions. 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 refugee 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, which are more thoughtful and artful than emails.
- Explain the impact of the donation.
- Provide an update on your efforts (**do not include personal information about the refugee newcomer family**).

Maintaining Fundraising Records

Keep an accurate record while fundraising, 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.

Keep any money raised in a secure account/location, such as in a GoFundMe account, a group bank account, 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 to the refugee newcomer family.