



Solve M.E.

Do It Yourself (DIY) Fundraising Handbook

Fundraising for Solve M.E. will help support our work with the scientific, medical, and pharmaceutical communities, advocacy with government agencies, and alliances with patient groups around the world are laying the foundation for breakthroughs that can improve the lives of millions who suffer from various “long haul” diseases.

By raising money for Solve M.E., you are helping us get closer to treatments and ultimately, a cure.

Thank you for mobilizing and engaging your family, friends and colleagues to support Solve M.E. We hope this handbook of best tips and online tools helps you in your fundraising journey.

Though our staff is small and the direct support we can offer is limited, we are here to help if you need guidance, support and brainstorming. Let's get started!

The biggest thing to remember in fundraising is the mission! The sooner you start sharing your "Why" story, the sooner you will see the donations come in!

Thank you, in advance, for all you are doing to support Solve M.E.

Introduction

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Checklist – Choose Your Fundraising Activity

There are endless ways you can fundraise in support of Solve M.E.

If you want something simple, an online fundraiser via Go Fund Me (formerly CrowdRise) or Facebook is the easiest way to go. If you'd prefer to do something bigger, then start by thinking about your hobbies, what interests you and your friends, and what you'd enjoy doing to raise funds. The sky is the limit!

If you choose to do an online fundraiser, simply set up your online platform

- More details under 'Create Online page'

If you choose to do an event, the key is to take what you know and love and leverage that into a fundraiser. For example: if you love to play Bunko, have a fundraising bunko night where people "buy in" to play and a portion of the buy in goes to your fundraising. If you love to knit, get friends to donate for how many scarves you can knit before winter, or sell your handmade scarves then donate the proceeds. Here are some additional ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- Chopped competition – Love to cook? Invite your friends to form teams and then host a cooking competition utilizing some fun and unique ingredients. They 'pay a fee' to play by donating to your event that benefits SMCI. Invite other friends to judge and be the audience. Open the night explaining how you are 'playing for charity', telling them all about your experience with and support of Solve M.E.
- A Walk – Gather your friends for a 5k or 10k. Participants pay a fee to enter the walk with all proceeds benefiting Solve M.E.
- Garage Sale – Get your neighbors together for a neighborhood sale to maximize your profit. Advertise that all proceeds go to Solve M.E. Post signs and have an information table.



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Checklist Cont.

- Jeans Day at Work – Ask your boss if your company can host a dress down day for ME/CFS with all proceeds going to Solve M.E. Participating co-workers pay \$10-\$20 to be able to dress casual on a given day.
- Car Wash – Just like in high school, host a carwash with all proceeds going to Solve M.E. Make sure your signs reflect this, point people to www.SolveCFS.org and have donation buckets. Hand out a small “facts about ME/CFS” card with each completed wash.
- Create your own! You are only limited by your imagination!

Create Your Online Page

If you choose to do an online fundraiser, simply set up your online platform

- For a Facebook fundraiser, simply create the fundraiser following the instructions listed on Facebook and let our development office know to expect the funds
- If you’re doing a Go Fund Me, create the page with all funds raised being directed towards Solve M.E.
- With both Facebook and Go Fund Me, they will cut a check to Solve M.E. at the conclusion of your fundraiser

If you’re doing an event, you can collect credit card information or checks directly and then send to Solve M.E., but the easiest way to collect funds will be through Go Fund Me. Visit GoFundMe.com to get started

Here are just some of the features you can use on your Go Fund Me page:

- Your page may be customized with a photo or video and your own text. This means that you may use your page to share your personal story, fundraiser information and more! Add a picture, a short paragraph on what you’re doing, include information about yourself and if you are doing this in honor of someone.
- You may create a customized URL for your page, allowing for easy sharing and marketing. Friends, family and community members may support your DIY for ...



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Create Your Online Page Cont.

Solve M.E. fundraising activity directly through your personalized page.

- Making a donation online is easy and secure. Your page features an honor roll of all your donors and a thermometer to help you track your progress.
- Funds will automatically be sent to Solve M.E. when the fundraiser has completed. There's no need for you to send a check or credit card information
- When donors make a gift to your page, the Go Fund Me platform will automatically send a tax acknowledgement email to the donor.
- Your donors will not be added to the Solve M.E. mailing list unless they specifically ask to be – so they won't get placed on our mailing list or asked for additional support. They are your donors and friends and we respect that!

Set A Fundraising Goal

Determine the overall goals and objectives of your online fundraiser or event.

- What is the fundraising goal amount?
 - If you're doing an online fundraiser, simply set a goal based on how much you want to bring in.
 - If you're doing an event, set your goal by determining how many people you will have at your event, what are you going to charge people to attend, what do you think your expenses will be and do the math.
- You can always add an incentive for people to donate. Make donating a contest for your friends and family. For example: Let people know that for every \$25 they donate, they will be entered into a drawing for a great prize. Be creative, offer to bake cookies, raffle off tickets to a game you can't attend, give away a bottle of wine you've been holding onto...
- If you have achieved your goal, think about increasing it to encourage more donations!



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Event Support

Create A Timeline

If you choose to do an event, keep these things in mind when determining the time and date:

- Choose a date far enough in advance to give you ample time to prepare.
- Look at a local events calendar - are there an event in your area that may conflict with yours?
- 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 on May 12th for World ME Day around Severe ME Day on August 8th or around Giving Tuesday in November.
- Set realistic dates and goals for when you will accomplish each of your goals to make the event successful.
- 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 and who you know that can donate them.
- Determine the overall cost per person and then how many people need to participate to ensure 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.



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A budget can be very simple:

Food & Drink – \$100	Guest "tickets" – \$10 x 50 people = \$500
Community Center Rental – \$150	Straight donations – \$200
Decorations – \$50	Extras (VIP parking, etc.) – \$100
Plates & Utensils – \$50	
Total Expenses – \$300	Total Income = \$800

Total amount made = \$500!

Remember, if you can get things donated, your profit/donation to Solve M.E. will increase!

Spread the Word – Tell Your Community How They Can Help

Whether it's an online fundraiser or an event, you need to let your community know about it.

You know the drill! Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Vimeo. We also encourage face to face invitations and traditional mailed invitations. Sending an email and/or text can also be a very effective way to let people know about your event. The bottom line, share your enthusiasm and folks will respond positively!

It is important to invite people to participate in more than one way and often. In today's world, most people have an attention span that is very short and full of distractions. People need to hear your message in a myriad of ways and multiple times (some studies say as many as 19 times!) in order to really hear it. Promote early and often!



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Who can I ask for donations/to participate:

- Friends
- Family members
- Co-workers
- Facebook friends
- Twitter Followers
- Instagram Followers
- Colleagues in Networking Groups
- Neighbors
- Businesses you patron

What Inspires You? Personalize Your Why!

Here are the biggest things to remember when asking for money/for people to join you.

1. Your Why/the mission of the organization. Find a personal connection/story. The sooner you start sharing your "Why" story, the sooner you will see the donations come in! People give to people so your story will help you connect to donors
2. People want to give and donate to causes that are important. You are not an imposition. You are helping people find a cause to support.

Sample E-mails/Letters

OPTION 1:

Greetings

I am excited to be raising funds to support the work of Solve M.E. Their mission is to make ME/CFS, Long COVID and other post-infection diseases widely understood, diagnosable and treatable.

They are important to me because XXXX

I am raising funds for Solve M.E. by doing XXXXX.

I have set a goal of \$XXX to raise from generous supporters like you.



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OPTION 1 Cont:

I am reaching out to you today to ask if you would consider supporting me!

I hope you will join us today and support our fundraising efforts. Thank you for your consideration! INSERT YOUR WEBSITE LINK HERE

With gratitude,
XXXXX

OPTION 2:

Dear _____,

I am excited to be raising funds to support the work of Solve M.E.. Their mission is to make ME/CFS, Long COVID and other post-infection diseases widely understood, diagnosable and treatable.

Today, I am reaching out to you with the request to support my efforts INSERT YOUR WEBSITE LINK HERE

All funds raised will be directed to Solve M.E.. This organization means so much to me because XXXX

I have set a somewhat ambitious goal to raise \$XXX, but believe that I can do it.

The mission is so important to me, and I hope you will consider joining us!

Warmly,
XXXXXX



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OPTION 3:

Hello Family and Friends,

Hope you are doing well! I would love your help with an event I'm doing. I have decided to do XXX to support Solve M.E. whose mission is to make ME/CFS, Long COVID and other post-infection diseases widely understood, diagnosable and treatable.

My goal is to raise \$XXX and I would GREATLY appreciate if you could help by donating TODAY. Even \$5 will help!!!

INSERT YOUR WEBSITE LINK HERE

Thank you for your support,
(Insert your name)

Branding Guidelines

Our logo is [linked here](#). Please feel free to use it to create a graphic that can be used on social media or online, printed on flyers, etc. but we ask that you not change the colors (no purple, bright blue, etc.)



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Branding Guidelines Cont.

Any Solve M.E. logo or adaptation of a logo must either be used in black and white, black/white/orange as created, or be shown in the official Solve M.E. colors:

- Primary Green - #85A18E
- Primary Orange - #E57545
- Primary Teal - #457984

When doing an event, it is important to be clear that it is a benefit for Solve M.E.. By declaring it is a benefit for Solve M.E.. Your donors should understand that it is your event not an official Solve M.E. managed event. It is unlawful to use the logos and materials available for personal gain. The percentage going to Solve M.E. must be declared and made clear, then all proceeds must be remitted to Solve M.E. in a reasonable timeframe.

We ask that you use the official logos and the tagline “a benefit for Solve M.E.”.

Please direct people to our website, www.SolveCFS.org to learn more about our organization and most importantly about ME/CFS.

Where The Money Goes

About Solve M.E.

Our Vision: A world free of ME/CFS, Long Covid and other post-infection diseases

Our Mission: Make ME/CFS, Long Covid and other post-infection diseases widely understood, diagnosable, and treatable

Our Strategies: Activate and engage our community to participate in research

- Accelerate discovery of safe and effective treatments
- Aggressively expand funding for treatment and cures

Our Core Values: To lead and collaborate with integrity, innovation, and purpose



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Where The Money Goes Cont.

\$31 million in initiatives to bring an end to the pain, disability and suffering caused by ME/CFS and Long COVID. Solve M.E. has directly funded or leveraged more than \$12 million in ME/CFS research studies in the past 5 years alone, all aimed at accelerating progress toward accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of ME/CFS.

Solve M.E. has a stellar record of keeping overhead management and development expenses considerably below the national average for non-profit organizations. Supporting services ratio is consistently under the 25% threshold of the best-run nonprofits. Solve M.E. maintains a high rating on Guidestar and among other agencies that rate non-profit effectiveness.

Some Frequently Asked Questions and the Fine Print

1. May I use the Solve M.E. logo?

Yes, but you must follow the branding guidelines mentioned above

2. Will Solve M.E. help me pay for an event space?

Unfortunately, we cannot help you pay for any of the event expenses, nor can we thank in-kind donors for the items they give, according to federal tax regulations. They are supporting you and your event, not directly giving to Solve M.E.. However, it is perfectly acceptable to take your expenses out of the proceeds as long as you clearly note on all materials that the NET PROCEEDS are being remitted to Solve M.E.

Should you choose to donate your costs, you may advertise that ALL PROCEEDS will be remitted to Solve M.E. accordingly.

3. Can funds already turned in to Solve M.E. or donated directly be used to pay for my event expenses?

No. Once funds have been donated to Solve M.E., they cannot be returned to you to pay event expenses.



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FAQs Cont.

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

Yes, but ensure the funds are kept in a safe location and these are not considered tax deductible. Also, it is best to explain to your donors that some donations will be used to cover expenses and NET proceeds remitted to Solve M.E.

5. When do funds raised from DIY Events need to be given to Solve M.E.?

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

6. Are donations made to a DIY Event tax deductible?

Solve M.E. is a charitable organization, so any contribution directly to Solve M.E. – either through a check, CC or via Facebook or Go Fund Me - 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 Solve M.E.. If the payments are made to this independent organization or person, and it is not a qualified organization, the payments will not be deductible for income tax purposes. If the donations are made to Solve M.E., then they qualify – to the extent by law. Please note: As stated above, please remember that when checks are made to the Solve M.E., they cannot be utilized later, or paid back from Solve M.E., for expenses of a DIY Event.

7. Does Solve M.E. provide tax receipts?

Receipts are provided for donations made through our website or via Go Fund Me. We are unable to provide tax receipts for any kind of in-kind donations given directly to you for your event (e.g. auction items or donated services).

8. Will a Solve M.E. staff or board member speak at my event?

Solve M.E. staff is very small and we work to keep expenses to a minimum, so travel is unlikely. However, we would be excited to zoom in to your event to thank those involved.



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FAQs Cont.

9. Will Solve M.E. help underwrite the cost of the event?

We encourage DIY fundraisers to self-fund all expenses related to an event and the SMCI will not reimburse for costs related to an event.

10. Will Solve M.E. pay for expenses of a DIY Event?

No. We are not financially liable for the staging of a DIY event. See also “Can funds already turned in to Solve M.E. be used to pay DIY Event Expenses?”

11. Why is our activity classified as DIY and not a Solve M.E. 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 Solve M.E.”. This will show our complete support of your event while clarifying that it is yours, run by an independent person outside of Solve M.E. staff.