



Host a successful benefit with LEND A HAND UP!

With our Lend A Hand Up step-by-step planning guide and free crowdfunding tools, hosting a benefit or other in-person event can be a successful way to raise help and hope for someone facing hardship. Our guide includes tips, templates, and timelines to serve as a springboard for you to host your own unique event.

In addition to offering a crowdfunding and online auction platform, Lend A Hand Up offers *BOOST funding* to increase the success of fundraising efforts that help local, eligible families.

Lend A Hand Up [fundraising resources](#) and [boost criteria](#).

GETTING READY – Plan a Successful Benefit/Event

Step 1. Review Fundraising Strategies & Submit Request to Start a New Lend A Hand Up Fundraiser

- A. Review fundraising options with others regarding whether an online campaign - with or without a benefit - would be an effective way to rally help for a friend or family member. Gain input and approval from the individual/family who will benefit from the fundraiser.

Next, designate a *fundraising champion* to serve as a lead (communication link) between volunteers, the recipient/family and others involved with the fundraising effort. The fundraising champion should be someone who does not live in the same household as the recipient, nor will financially benefit in any way from the fundraiser.

- B. Review Lend A Hand Up criteria: give.lendahandup.org/start-a-fundraiser

If meeting criteria:

- The champion should submit a request to start a Lend A Hand Up online fundraiser for the individual experiencing a serious health issue, loss of life, and/or traumatic event. The champion should be prepared to share basic information about the fundraiser (*who, what and why*), along with their contact information. Benefit detail is not needed to start an online fundraiser.
- The champion will be prompted to forward the request to the individual/family receiving proceeds to gain their consent and information confirming their residency, type of challenge, and preference as to where donations will be deposited.
- When complete, the individual/family will submit the information to Lend A Hand Up.

Step 2. Designate a bank fund (checking account or benefit fund) for donation deposit

Review the advantages of setting up a benefit fund at a bank/credit union which allows donations to be deposited separately from personal income, versus the ease of using an existing checking account in the name of the individual/family recipient for donation deposits. Considerations:

- A benefit fund is a short-term, non-interest-bearing account that provides access for trusted individuals to assist a recipient/family with donation collection, bill payment and other transactions during a challenging time.
- A benefit fund allows donations to be deposited separately from personal income.
- An established checking account in the name of the individual/family recipient offers convenience.
- Gifts to benefit an individual/family are not considered tax-deductible gifts regardless of whether they are deposited into a benefit fund or private checking account.

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If setting up a new benefit fund, authorized signers should be prepared to provide:

- The title of the fund (for example, Joe Smith Benefit Fund)
- The purpose of the benefit fund
- Names and social security numbers for authorized title signers
- How deposits will be made and utilized/distributed, especially if funding has the potential to adversely affect the recipient's eligibility for assistance under Medicaid, SSI, or other programs. It may be beneficial to discuss how other family members may serve as account managers to oversee fund collection and distribution
- Consideration as to what would happen to funds if authorized signer(s) are no longer able to serve, or in the unfortunate event of the recipient's death
- What type of information will be made available/reported
- How long the fund will remain active

Step 3. Launch the Lend A Hand Up fundraiser. Brainstorm and organize fundraising activities.

Once a request is submitted and approved, Lend A Hand Up staff will establish a unique giving page on the lendahandup.org website for the individual/family fundraiser. Since Dakota Medical Foundation (DMF) covers all Lend A Hand Up administrative costs, 100% of funds raised through the online fundraiser will be deposited into the benefit fund/checking account designated by the individual/family recipient. The Lend A Hand Up boost grant will be made by check payable to this fund as well, but in follow-up to the fundraiser based on the amount of proceeds raised.

Note: Boost funding is made possible through the generous support of Lend A Hand Up boost donors (program supporters) in partnership with Dakota Medical Foundation (DMF).

A. Schedule a brainstorming meeting with other caring people to review and outline fundraising activities

As the champion, contact friends, neighbors, co-workers, family members, churches and other organizations connected to the person you are raising help for. Also contact individuals, businesses, and organizations you and other volunteers are affiliated with. Try to involve people with diverse talents who can help with technology, promotions, accounting, silent auction, raffle, food prep and event serving. Schedule a time and place to meet!

Helpful Tool: [Affiliation Worksheet](#)

B. Brainstorm fundraising activities based on expertise, affiliations, time, and space available

Gather input to determine the best fundraising strategy (activities) and to form a core team of volunteer leaders to ensure commitment and support for the event.

Review the advantages of a pancake breakfast at a church compared to an event at a school, community center or local business. Review the advantages of a theme or activity based on the recipient's interests such as bowling, golf, hockey, art, singing or dancing. Consider the pros and cons of a weeknight versus a weekend event, other community events and how time of year and weather may affect attendance.

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C. Determine whether you need a local permit for fundraising activities

- A local permit is not required to conduct a silent auction where the highest bidder secures the item, nor to sell food or other items at set amounts.
- A local permit is required to conduct a raffle or other game of chance.

In some states, a raffle is permitted only if the recipient is a nonprofit organization. The process to gain a permit may take up to 30 days and involve a fee. Check with your city office/auditor or town council. In Fargo, 701-241-1304.

D. Develop a timeline

Determine how often you will want to meet as a core group to review accomplishments and maintain momentum. List major tasks and target completion dates for each.

Helpful Tool: [Timeline Worksheet](#) (review and update regularly)

E. Develop a budget (optional)

Prepare a spreadsheet with anticipated expenses. Costs may include a facility charge, entertainment, food, and promotional items such as printing flyers and signs.

Helpful Tool: [Budget Worksheet](#) (review and update regularly)

F. Secure site, date, and time

Check community calendars for awareness of major events before securing a date. Book a facility as soon as possible for planned fundraising activities based on what is most likely to draw the most support from friends and family of recipient. Review possible contributors for food, entertainment, and other activities.

Step 4. Develop promos

Develop flyers and other promotional items to build awareness and secure volunteers, silent auction items, financial gifts, and other forms of support.

A. Develop a flyer

Flyers should include:

- Brief overview of the individual/family experiencing a crisis, along with a picture
- Details about fundraising event to include date, time, location, and activities
- Donation options – including boost funding perks through lendahandup.org
- Major sponsors and contact information for fundraising champions/others

To view examples of other benefit flyers, go to give.lendahandup.org/fundraisers

Helpful Tool: [Flyer Template](#)

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Step 5. Organize Activities

Assign volunteer leaders to form teams and complete tasks as needed to gain support, as well as prepare and host fundraising activities at the event itself. It is recommended that volunteer leaders meet routinely to share updates and review future 'to dos.'

A. Organize volunteers - Develop a plan for volunteer involvement including who, what, when and where.

- Determine volunteer categories (promos, pick-up/delivery, decorating, food prep, serving, clean up)
- Determine the number of volunteers needed for each category
- Develop timeframes for volunteer help
- Contact potential volunteers to coordinate their help by task and timeframe
- Make volunteer reminder calls 2-3 days prior to activity to confirm location, times, and tasks

Helpful Tool: [Volunteer Assignment Worksheet](#)

B. Organize food, music, supplies, and other items

Determine pick-up and delivery of donated items and coordinate preparation/set-up of food, entertainment, and other items.

C. Develop donation collection process

Determine a process for collecting financial gifts, tickets, food, and silent auction donations. Donations made to benefit an individual/family are not considered by the IRS to be tax-deductible gifts, so it is not necessary to receipt donors. You may, however, send personal notes acknowledging gratitude.

Helpful Tool: [Donation & Auction Tracking Form](#)

Helpful Tool: [Silent Auction Template](#)

Things to consider:

- Will you sell tickets at a set price or request a free will offering? Add a suggested gift amount?
- Will you have a welcome area with a free-will offering box and QR code signage leading to the online giving site/online auction platform for ease of credit card transactions?
- How should checks be written out? Example: Payable to John Doe Benefit Fund.
- Do you need to be present to win raffle or auction items? If not, what information must be included on bid sheets or tickets for later contact and delivery? Where will items be stored until pick-up?
- Is there a cut-off time for bidding on items? Will this be staggered?
- What process will you use to collect, track, and distribute items per finalized bids/transactions?
- What will you do with leftover food and auction items designated for later pick-up?
- Will you need a microphone and/or other process to inform and thank guests?



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PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Step 6: Promote Event/Activities

Develop and distribute flyers and other promotional items to build awareness and request support.

A. Distribute/Post Flyers

Forward group emails to key contacts with the flyer attached. Ask them to help you promote and/or support the event. Post/share flyers everywhere you go!

Use the Affiliation Worksheet (step 1) and expand upon it as a contact list for flyer distribution.

B. Develop an appeal letter if soliciting support by mail

Consider adding a cover letter along with a flyer if using direct mail to request support. A donation form may be attached to the appeal letter and/or flyer to make it easier for the donor to document information about the value and description of the donated item, along with their information.

Helpful Tool: [Appeal Letter](#)

Helpful Tool: [Donation Tracking Form](#)

C. Promote through Social Media

Use social media to promote the fundraiser using content, images and videos that engage others to support your event.

- Develop post/event on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
- Develop a video and share on your Lend A Hand Up page in place of the main image or as an update.
- Develop a video and share on YouTube, Tik Tok and other sites.

Helpful Tool: [Host an Online Fundraiser Guide](#)

D. Contact local media/news sources

Forward the flyer, a news release and/or other promos to local print and broadcast companies to request their help to build awareness of the upcoming event. Be sure to include a contact person for interviews.

Helpful Tool: [Press Release Template](#)



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AT THE EVENT

Step 7: Conduct Activities

- **Oversee fundraising activities**
- Allow adequate time for set-up and food preparation.
- If many volunteers are involved, consider a volunteer “check in” table with posted duties and shifts.
- Determine in advance whether volunteers will have name badges or specific attire to identify them.
- Throughout the event, maintain at least two volunteers at the ‘welcome area’ to welcome guests and oversee the secure collection of donations.
- If hosting an auction, baked goods, or other sale, make sure volunteers are spread out to facilitate bids/sales. If there are many silent auction items and/or the event covers a wide timeframe, it may be best to stagger the closing of tables. If so, identify or announce when tables are closing.
- If using an online auction platform, provide volunteers to help guests with login, bidding and check out of winning items. Be sure to check for an email/text receipt before extending winning items.
- If using a paper auction format, be sure to highlight winning bids immediately!
- Determine in advance what you will do with remaining food and auction items for later pick-up.
- Remember to take pictures!

At the close of the event, have two volunteers work in tandem to count the funds raised to assure accountability. Determine in advance who will oversee depositing cash/check proceeds.

Note: if hosting an online auction with Lend A Hand Up, work with program staff in follow-up to the event as necessary to validate winning bids, credit card processing, item pick-up, and reporting.

AFTER THE EVENT

Step 8: Make deposits and payments

- **Deposit donations**

Deposit cash/check proceeds into the individual/family benefit fund at the bank as soon as possible.

- **Pay any remaining expenses**

Pay outstanding expenses and update the budget spreadsheet (Step 3) to determine proceeds.

Step 9: SECURE BOOST FUNDING

You will receive the Lend A Hand Up boost check in follow-up to your fundraising activities. Boost awards of \$100 per every \$500 raised up to a max boost of \$5,000 will be based on the total amount of online gifts processed through lendahandup.org for the fundraiser to coincide with the campaign timeline (3-6 months.). A \$1,000 maximum boost per individual donor applies. Gifts and money transfers made by the recipient/family, as well as deposits made through cash/check or other crowdfunding platforms are not eligible (not counted) toward the Lend A Hand Up boost.



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A. Close the Lend A Hand Up Online Fundraiser

Work with program staff to determine the optimal time to close the Lend A Hand Up online fundraiser. Note: the maximum length of a fundraiser on the website is 6 months.

Note: The benefit fund/bank fund used for donation deposits should remain open until the Lend a Hand Up boost check is presented.

B. Coordinate a Lend A Hand Up boost/big check presentation

The fundraising champion will be contacted when the Lend A Hand Up boost check is ready. The check will be made payable to the individual/family bank fund/benefit fund.

If interested, work with program staff to coordinate a day, time, and location for the check to be presented to the recipient, champion and others who want to take a moment to celebrate fundraising success. A picture with a 'big check' may be taken – or not (based on personal preference). The check may be presented at: Dakota Medical Foundation, the bank holding the benefit fund, the home of the family, the volunteers' meeting spot, the place where fundraising activities were held, a worksite or another location chosen by the family. Note: Lend A Hand Up will provide the big check for photos.

C. Deposit boost check/additional donations

Deposit the boost awards check into the benefit fund at the bank in a timely manner.

D. Update the budget spreadsheet with final expense and donation totals

An example of a Budget Worksheet is included at the end of Step 3.

E. Distribute/Utilize funding

The management and distribution of fundraising proceeds will vary based on the unique medical and financial situation of the recipient.

Some things to review:

- How funding may affect the recipient's eligibility for medical assistance or other programs.
- If using a benefit fund, how long the fund should remain active.

F. Close the benefit/bank fund when funds are depleted or transferred to another account



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EXTENDING GRATITUDE

Step 10: Acknowledgment

A. Acknowledge contributions and other forms of support.

Show appreciation to individuals, businesses, organizations and all who supported the success of the fundraising effort. Or consider a more public thank you via:

- Letter to the editor in local newspaper
- Print advertisement
- Church bulletin announcement
- Company or association newsletter
- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and/or other forms of social media

Helpful Tool: [Community Letter/Thank You Template](#)

B. Share feedback with Lend A Hand Up and others.

Fundraising champions are asked to complete a follow-up survey to share results, challenges, ideas, and successful strategies. They are also asked to evaluate Lend A Hand Up fundraising resources.

C. Stay connected to help future families!

There are many ways to stay engaged with Lend A Hand Up to help your neighbors:

- Attend or support a fundraiser for a local family.
- Refer others to Lend A Hand Up.
- Make a contribution to Lend A Hand Up on Giving Hearts Day, at year-end, as a memorial – any day.
- Lace Up for Lend A Hand Up as a charity runner in the Fargo Marathon or another athletic activity.
- Attend/support a fundraiser for the program.
- Purchase a PushSave mobile coupon book, choosing Lend A Hand Up as your favorite charity.
- Ask Lend A Hand Up staff to present to your service club, school, business, or other organization.
- Open a door to a new sponsor.
- Coordinate your own fundraiser or service club event.

Contributions to the Lend A Hand Up program to boost help for families are tax-deductible gifts. Since Dakota Medical Foundation covers all administrative expenses, 100% of gifts help families.

At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished...It's about who you've made better. It's about what you've given back. Denzel Washington