

With our Lend A Hand Up planning guide and free crowdfunding tools, hosting an online campaign can be an easy and effective way to raise help and hope for someone facing serious medical challenges. Our step-by-step planning guide includes tips, templates, and examples to serve as a springboard for your own unique campaign.

In addition to fundraising (crowdfunding) tools, Lend A Hand Up also offers *BOOST* funding to increase the success of fundraising efforts that help local, eligible families.

Learn more about Lend A Hand Up fundraising tools and boost criteria: [Start a Fundraiser](#)

GETTING READY – Plan a Successful Online Campaign

Step 1. Review Fundraising Strategies

Review fundraising options with others to determine whether an online campaign - with or without a benefit - would be the best way to help a friend or family member. Gain input and approval from the recipient/family. Designate a Fundraising Champion to serve as a leader and communication link between volunteers, the recipient/family and others involved with the fundraising effort.

Step 2. Set up an Individual/Family Benefit Fund

Establish a benefit fund at a local bank or credit union to ensure that donations are properly managed and accessible to the recipient/family. A benefit fund is a short-term account to assist volunteers and the recipient/family with collecting donations, paying bills, and distributing funds. Banks rarely charge to establish a benefit fund and usually set them up as short-term, non-interest-bearing accounts. Gifts made to a benefit fund are generally not considered to be tax-deductible gifts, nor reportable income.

A. Determine a benefit fund name

Generally, the title of the fund includes the name of the person experiencing a medical challenge – the recipient of the fundraising campaign. For example, John Doe Benefit Fund.

B. Carefully choose benefit fund title signers (authorized account managers)

The recipient and fundraising champion should carefully determine who will serve as authorized signers for the benefit fund and how the account will be used.

To qualify for Lend A Hand Up boost funding, a benefit fund must be established at a local bank or credit union with at least two title signers. One signer must be the recipient or a family member. The other signer should be the fundraising champion or another trustworthy individual who is not an immediate family member nor lives in the same household as the recipient. (Additional signers may be requested by the financial institution or recipient.) If the individual receiving proceeds is receiving assistance through Medicaid, SSI, or other programs, it is recommended they review how being an authorized signer on the account may affect benefits.

C. Set-up a benefit fund at a local bank/credit union

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

- The title and purpose of the benefit fund
- Names and social security numbers (or other tax identification) for authorized title signers
- How deposits will be made
- How funds will be utilized/distributed (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 who oversee that funds are distributed to medical providers, insurance companies and others directly)
- 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
- Whether the account should be interest-bearing (it's generally recommended that the account be NON-interest bearing to eliminate reporting requirements)
- What type of information will be made available and/or reported. For example, will deposit records include donor names and addresses for tracking and sending thank you letters?
- How long the fund will remain active

Step 3. Review criteria & submit request to start a Lend A Hand Up fundraiser.

If interested in hosting an online campaign and/or benefit with Lend A Hand Up to help someone experiencing financial hardship due to a serious medical condition:

A. Review Lend A Hand Up criteria: <https://lendahandup.org/start-a-fundraiser/>

B. If meeting criteria, complete 2-part request form to *Start A Fundraiser*

- a. Part 1 – Info about person hosting fundraiser (fundraising champion)
- b. Part 2 – Sign off & validation of recipient/family receiving the funds

Step 4. Start a Lend A Hand Up fundraiser to raise financial help and hope for an individual/family

Once a request is submitted and validated, Lend A Hand Up staff will guide you to 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 LendAHandUp.org giving site will be directed to the individual/family benefit fund at the bank/credit union, along with boost funding awards.

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).

Promote your Online Campaign

Step 4. Choose Your Tools & Inspire Others to Give

Consider one or more of these tools to share information and engage support.

A. Facebook Page. (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/>)

Purpose: Reach a wider audience of community support

A Facebook page can be followed by anyone who has an interest in helping - they don't need to be Facebook friends with the family. Updates are public and can be easily shared by anyone on Facebook.

Add info about Lend A Hand Up boost funding and their give page at [LendAHandUp.org](https://www.lendahandup.org)

B. Facebook Event. (<https://www.facebook.com/events/>)

Purpose: Build awareness and invite others to support your online fundraising campaign

When hosting an online fundraiser (versus a benefit event with a date, time and place), Facebook will generally allow a limited timeframe to host and promote the fundraiser (example, two weeks).

Add info about Lend A Hand Up boost funding and their give page at [LendAHandUp.org](https://www.lendahandup.org)

C. Facebook Group. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/>)

Purpose: Rally connectors or provide a private space for interaction

An option for groups who prefer to share on social media using a closed or private group to connect.

Add info about Lend A Hand Up boost funding and their give page at [LendAHandUp.org](https://www.lendahandup.org)

D. Email

Forward group email messages to shared contacts to build awareness of your fundraiser. Request others to help you spread the word by forwarding your email. Include flyers and links as available.

Add info about Lend A Hand Up boost funding and their give page at [LendAHandUp.org](https://www.lendahandup.org)

E. CaringBridge Journal. (<https://www.caringbridge.org/>)

Purpose: Keep people connected to the story as it unfolds; share how they can help.

Use to create an online journal (along with sharing updates on your Lend A Hand Up giving page.)

Donations made to CaringBridge in honor of an individual/family are not counted toward boost funding since the gifts go directly to CaringBridge (not to the individual/family).

Add info about Lend A Hand Up boost funding and their give page at [LendAHandUp.org](https://www.lendahandup.org)

F. Other tools.

Consider how the development of a flyer, video, billboard, shirt shop or other promo may assist you in building awareness and support for your fundraiser.

Example of a 90-day Online Fundraiser/Activity Timeline

<p>Week 1</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Set up your online fundraiser Work in partnership with Lend A Hand Up staff to establish a unique fundraising page on lendahandup.org. Share content, picture(s), video(s), bank information, links.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Add <i>Ways to Help</i> content to your page including volunteer opportunities, event items (food, auction items, gift cards), and links to other sites such as Meal train. Be sure to add your name and contact information as a helpful resource.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “Like” the Lend A Hand Up Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/lendahandup.org/</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Create/share a post on your own Facebook page about your fundraiser. Be sure to add the link to your LendAHandUp.org fundraiser within your post.</p>
<p>Week 2</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider creating your own Facebook campaign page and/or event.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify social media connectors. Determine a key person within each professional and social group of the recipient/family. Identify a key person within your own professional and social groups.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Determine how you’ll communicate with these key connectors. Determine the best way to reach these individuals to let them know how they can help. Review Facebook, email, texting, and face-to-face communication options. Include links to lendahandup.org, Facebook pages, etc. Attach flyers/other promos.</p> <p><i>Please consider Lend a Hand Up as one of your key connectors. Send us the link to your Facebook page, Twitter account, Caring Bridge Journal...and we’ll be happy to share.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage key connectors to share Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other posts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Create & share information through group emails</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set up and/or Post updates on CaringBridge & other sites. Include comments/updates about the health journey. Offer ways to help. Be sure to include a link to your fundraiser and content highlighting that gifts made through Lend A Hand Up are boosted 20% and directly help the recipient/family.</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider developing a flyer, small card, or other promo to inform and inspire. This provides a new reason/tool to inform and engage others.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider contacting local print and broadcast media with a story idea.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep sharing posts from Lend A Hand’s Facebook page</p> <p><i>Please consider Lend a Hand Up informed as one of your key connectors so we can help you boost awareness and support!</i></p>

<p>Weeks 4-6</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Posts Continue to share fundraising updates. Be clear about how donations will help the family with non-covered medical bills, insurance premiums, travel/lodging expenses, medications, equipment, etc. Encourage others to stay updated on fundraising progress via their give page located at LendAHandUp.org</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Post Updates on their Lend A Hand Up give page. Continue to share health updates, stories, upcoming events, pictures and pressing needs. Refer to the <i>Ways to Help</i> link as applicable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review and discuss the opportunity to host an online auction, promo sale (t-shirt shop) and/or in-person event (community benefit) to rally support in a new way. Gain input from others as to how you can increase your fundraising results and provide emotional support by hosting an event that encourages individuals to rally around the individual/family. Review activities, places, dates. Be creative!</p> <p>Note: If you host a benefit or other activity in addition to an online fundraiser, contact Lend A Hand Up staff in advance of the event and before the online fundraiser closes to review if/how the boost may be applicable. Note: Lend A Hand Up boost funding is limited to one boost grant per year/family fundraiser.</p>
<p>Weeks 6-10</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Posts. Lend A Hand Up updates/posts. CaringBridge Updates. Continue sharing health and fundraising updates, pictures, and videos. Consider categorizing updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thankful Thursday – Do a shout-out to one or more people who have come together to show support. Share a positive note to uplift the individual/family. • Throwback Thursday – Share a photo or story from the past • Monday Movies – Share short video clips • Midweek Update – Share an update midweek every week <p><input type="checkbox"/> Last chance to plan a benefit and coordinate with Lend A Hand Up Boost funding! If an additional event/benefit is scheduled, invite additional volunteers to join you and reach out to Lend A Hand Up to “regroup” to discuss additional ways we can help.</p>
<p>Final 2 weeks</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Final call to action! Send out emails, posts, tweets. Let others know that the online fund will be closing soon. Include a last date to give. Extend gratitude for support already shared.</p>

After the Online Campaign – Extending Gratitude

Step 5. Acknowledge generosity! Post a final public shout-out. Extend personal thanks. Write a community letter to the editor of a local newspaper. Be sure to acknowledge support in multiple capacities to include financial gifts, cards, transportation, food, volunteers, and personal care.

Note: If you want to showcase your fundraising success by taking/posting a “big boost check” picture, just ask us. Lend A Hand Up staff love celebrating successful campaigns that help our neighbors!