

The Keys to a Successful Fundraising Email/Letter



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society
Oregon Chapter

Once you register for Bike MS you can begin fundraising. All participants must raise at least \$250. However, you'll find that if you start early, use our proven tools and resources, be creative and have fun, it is easy to meet and beat your fundraising goals! A great way to raise money is through a personal email/letter. Send a note to everyone you know – your extended family, current and past friends, neighbors, old college roommates, your favorite teacher from fourth grade and just about anybody else that you can think of.

Start Now

The key to a successful fundraising campaign is starting early!

Writing a Good Letter

The key to a successful letter campaign is writing a good email/letter. Please take advantage the examples provided on the website, and call the special events staff for our advice and suggestions! Here are some additional suggestions for writing a successful fund-raising letter.

Make it personal

We all love to get personal letters, so make your letter personal. Let them know what else is going on in your life other than this event. Then slide into what the event is about and why you are personally involved.

Use humor

Everybody loves a chuckle, so use humor where appropriate. Start your letter with something like "Have you heard that (your name) has gone off the deep end again? She is thinking about riding 150 miles..."

Short and sweet

If it is too long, you will lose the reader's interest.

Share your connection to MS

Let people know that you are not just training, but that you are training for someone. Let them know your personal connection to the cause or why you've decided to do something about it.

Ask

Very important! What separates this letter from any other letter is that you are asking them to act. Don't just tell them you are doing this, but remember to tell everyone that you need their help.

Suggested giving levels

We recommend giving your donors suggested giving levels. Include your total fundraising goal to help your recipients to gauge what size donation they think is appropriate. Or you can use examples of ways to sponsor you. You may ask them to donate \$1 for every mile that you ride, or ask them to be a jersey sponsor (donate \$60+ and their name will be

written on the jersey you wear at the starting line.) Be creative. Finally, think about setting at least one high giving mark (\$250 - \$1,500). Go for it! You may be surprised by what people are able to contribute.

Set a deadline

We give you a deadline for your own fundraising, but we recommend you set a deadline earlier than that. People are always motivated by deadlines. This way you can assess your fund raising progress before the real deadline.

Let them know how to donate

Tell them the procedure for making a donation. If they are confused, they are not likely to send a donation, so walk them step-by-step through the procedure. Be sure to include your URL address for your online donation so that people can easily donate. If you send snail mail letters, think about including a self addressed, stamped envelope with your letter so that it's simple for the donor to return to you.

Keep a list

Keep a list of all the people to whom you send letters. You can then compare this list to the list of those who've donated so you can follow up. This is important for the next step.

Be prepared to send a reminder

A lot of people will get your email/letter and say, "What a terrific idea. Sure I'll help out," but then set the letter aside or move on to another email - only to forget about yours. The best way to send a reminder is to give training updates. Write to your donors and tell them, "Training is going well and I'm going farther this weekend (40 miles) than I've ever gone before." Let them know that fundraising is going well, but you still have a bit farther to go. Ask them nicely if they would consider making a donation in honor of your training. We have seen reminder emails/letters that have been more successful than original notes for bringing in the money. You can also send an email reminder through your personal fundraising website to remind people to donate or thank them for donating.

Send a thank-you card.

It is really nice to receive a note that says that your donation was important, not to mention that your donors probably want to know how you did. A good thank you card will set you up well for the next event you do with us!

These are just suggestions of things we have seen work over the past few years. Of course, the final email/letter needs to come from your heart and hand. Please call the Oregon Chapter office at 503.445.8340 if you need additional help.