

Conference Fundraising Toolkit: 2017

Conference on Family Planning 2017

December 2-3

Philadelphia, PA

Open to all medical and health professional students and residents
interested in Family Planning

This December, medical students will converge for MSFC's Conference on Family Planning. In order to make this conference among the largest and most successful yet we are asking you to help raise funds to bring yourselves and your chapters to the conference!

Even if you expect to be able to cover your own costs, fundraising enough to subsidize the costs for a new member to attend the conference can help them be more committed and engaged. Fundraising is part of a long-term plan of leadership development.

Raising funds locally, through the grassroots, isn't as difficult as it is made out to be. It does take planning, patience and some amount of courage to actually work up the nerve to ask for money. Asking for money gives people an opportunity to directly support a specific and important project. Raising money gives a chance for friends in your networks to support a critical component of the fight for quality reproductive healthcare—you! If there are no providers, there is no choice and you are the future generation of abortion providers and pro-choice physicians.

This guide is your starting place for fundraising. It contains information on fundraising strategies, some tips and tricks as well as sample letters. Even one person with two hours can put together a small letter writing project that can raise hundreds of dollars. Will you commit to trying at least one fundraiser to bring more people to the Conference on Family Planning?

Please reach out to MSFC if you need help, advice or encouragement! Also, don't forget to send us any success stories!

Hope to see you in Philadelphia!

Principles of Fundraising

1

ASK: Fundraising is all about asking. It is the simplest, hardest part, and so important. You will not get what you do not ask for. Ask early, ask many people, and ask big.

2

AIM HIGH: You should ask for a number, and ask high. You may be surprised by what people give and you cannot always judge by their income or their political beliefs. If you ask for \$100 you might get \$50, but if you say you need \$50 you will never receive \$100.

3

TELL A STORY: what are a few recent accomplishments of your chapter? (Starting a chapter, recruiting a new member, or hosting a successful educational event are accomplishments!) What would going to the conference allow you to do? What would it mean for you personally? Talk about any of these when you are contacting a potential supporter.

4

GET PERSONAL: Face-to-face meetings with people you already know will always have the best success rates, so ask your friends, family, and other people in your life. For others, any way to connect your goals to the person and their interests will help you make a connection. Show how MSFC will make a difference for them or someone in their life.

5

START EARLY (START NOW!): December is approaching already! Starting early allows you to try several strategies and make sure you meet your goals. It also gives plenty of time to follow up on letters and for writing thank-you notes.

6

FOLLOW-UP: If you send out letters, make a note to phone people who have not replied in a week. Since people are busy, they may have set your letter aside. If you are hosting an event, ask two or three times for donations. Follow-up is an important piece of successful fundraising.

7

THANK YOUR SUPPORTERS: Send a prompt thank you note to any donors. If they live in the US and they sent donations to the MSFC national office they will have gotten a tax-receipt. If you hosted a party or received contributions directly in another way be sure to send us the donor's contact so we can send them this information.

Budgeting for the Conference

All good fundraising plans start by determining what you need. Having a goal both lets you know how many people you will have to ask and also lets your funders know how much you are looking for. Below are the costs of the registration fee and hotel rooms for the CoFP, with an average travel cost. You may be paying less or more than the model.

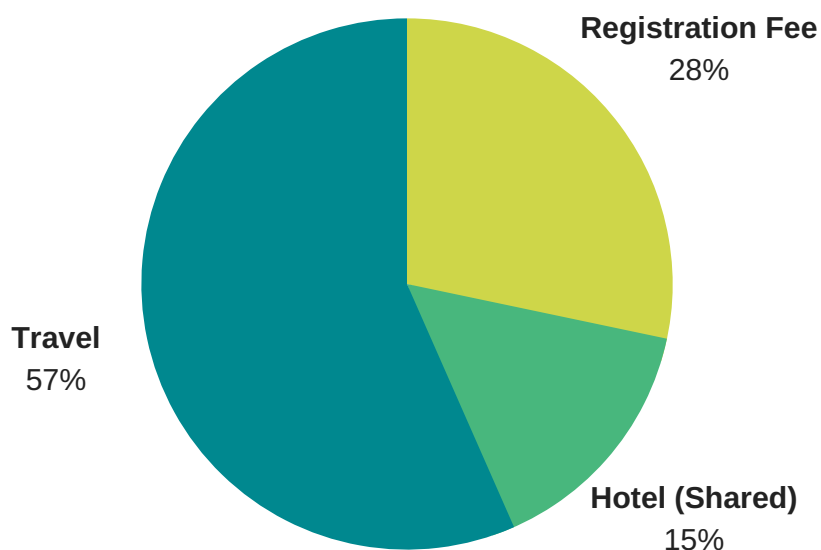
Conference Costs:

Registration Fee*: \$150

Hotel Room*: shared between for 4 people \$40 each night.

Travel: ~\$300, depending where you are travelling from.

Total: \$530/average



*The registration fee includes breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday as well as all conference activities.

*A single hotel room is \$160 a night, but can fit four people who can share the cost. If sharing a hotel room your hotel cost for the CoFP will be \$80. We can help you find someone to share a room with.

Finding Your Fundraising Goal

To figure out your fundraising goal you need to determine how many students you'd like to bring, how much travel would likely be from your city, and how much you can each individually contribute. When you add up all the costs and subtract how much you can fund for yourselves then you have your fundraising goal! Fundraising goals could be anywhere from \$50-\$5,000 depending on the chapter.

Sources of Funding

You can find funding for conferences through a variety of sources, all you have to do is ask! Here are some places which can usually help you out with fundraising. You can focus on a couple different strategies or a bunch!

School Government

Some schools will have funding set aside for students to attend conferences. If your school is able to fund your MSFC chapter, ask if they have conference-specific funding as well.

Departments

Some departments have funding to send students to relevant conferences. Ask the department chair or secretary.

Alumni

Are you in touch with any alums of your chapter? Many alums remember how important going to the Conference on Family Planning (previously called the annual meeting) was to them and would be willing to support current MSFC members.

Local Organizations and Businesses

Some local pro-choice organizations, like a local Planned Parenthood or NARAL, are able to make a direct contribution to you group. Other businesses could donate in-kind gifts like food to be sold to help you fundraise. Your city may also have a local women's fund or similar organization.

Local Medical Providers

Pro-choice doctors, nurses and other staff have a direct stake in growing the community of pro-choice medical providers. You could ask your professors or advisor if they have any contacts.

Friends and Family

Do not exclude anyone based on what you know of their political leanings. Many people will be willing to support YOU.

Fundraising Tactics

You can pick one or several tactics for fundraising. If you start early, then you have a chance to supplement with another strategy if you do not make as much as you expected.

Personal Asks

This is probably the most psychologically difficult way to fundraise for many people, but is without a doubt the most effective way of raising lots of money quickly. Asking people who you know who do not live near you is also a great way to keep in touch and allow them an opportunity to support you and the MSFC mission.

COMPILE YOUR LIST Write down names for people you could contact. Friends, family, past professors, local doctors, neighbors and coworkers are all good places to start. Once you have your list compile all their contact information in one place so it is easy to access.

ASK

There are 3 basic ways of doing a personal ask: face-to-face, letters and phone calls.

- **FACE TO FACE:** In the general fundraising world 50% of people who are asked by someone they know will donate money. In MSFC's experience, we have had a nearly 100% success rate. Make a phone call to ask if you can meet, practice a pitch that is aimed at their interests and ask away! If you're getting started early, ask family and friends this summer.
- **LETTERS:** Letters are an easy way to contact lots of people in a short period of time. You can use the sample letter at the end of this document to draft your own more personalized letter and MSFC headquarters will give you supplies to send it out, process donations and send thank you notes with tax receipts when they are needed (contributions are tax-deductible for American donors).
- **PHONE CALLS:** A simple phone call is another way to contact someone you know to ask for their support. Phone calls are also highly recommended as a follow up a week after sending letters. Since people are busy they may set your letter aside and forget about it even though they intended to donate!

THANK

Don't forget to send a personal thank-you note promptly to any people who donate! You should also send them a note again after the conference, especially if you or your chapter hope to ask this person for support again.

Fundraising Tactics

Events

If you are willing to put in some up-front work on design and logistics, events can be an effective and fun way to raise money. Events can offer education or networking while also bringing in some funds! Here's a list of past successful events to get the creative juices flowing:

- Host a provider appreciation dinner and invite local community supporters.
- Host an evening lecture with a well-known speaker and ask for donations.
- Organize a raffle or a silent auction. Have local businesses donate prizes
- Host a Champagne for Choice fundraiser.
- Hold a happy hour at a local bar: you collect admission, the bar collects drink money

Have a goal and plan the event around that. If you are planning a lecture and want to raise at least \$150 and expect each person to donate an average of \$5, you will need 30 people to come. If you get 30 people and are also selling refreshments, you will easily make your goal. Remind people several times how to give and have an easy place to do it!

Sales

The bake-sale is a fundraising classic and still can be effective. However, fundraisers on school campuses are often a dime-a-dozen. Be creative and be realistic. Do not spend 20 hours of prep time and \$100 in supplies on an event that might only net \$150. For sales, try to find a niche that no one else at your school is filling yet. Here are some MSFC focused sales opportunities:

- Sell pro-choice buttons or stickers.
- Sell MSFC T-shirts, get designs approved by HQ.
- Sell coffee before 1st and 2nd year morning lectures.
- Sell candy and condom-grams
- Organize a scrub sale

For both events and for sales it can help a lot to get a business to donate the supplies like food or drinks to an excellent cause in exchange for free advertising. See the end of this packet for an example in-kind donation letter. (If you have Trust Account Funds, you may use them to buy supplies for fundraisers, but you may not use any MSFC funds to buy alcohol.)

Sample Letters

Date

Name

Address

City, State

Dear <NAME>,

As you may know, I am a proud member of Medical Students for Choice (MSFC)! MSFC is an international non-profit dedicated to improving reproductive education at medical schools and increasing access for women to physicians who are well-trained in abortion and contraception. This December, hundreds of medical students will gather in Philadelphia for MSFC's Conference on Family Planning. This conference will offer sessions on the latest contraception and cutting edge techniques, hands-on sessions on surgical procedures, and information about legal issues that will impact my future practice.

I am excited to attend the conference to gain critical knowledge and skills in reproductive healthcare that are inaccessible to me otherwise. Our chapter at <SCHOOL> hopes to send <number> representatives to the conference this year. We are each contributing what we can towards the cost of registration, airfare, hotel and food costs, but in order to meet our goal we need to raise an additional \$<AMOUNT>. Would you be willing to make a tax-deductible gift of \$<AMOUNT> to help sponsor my chapter's attendance?

Many medical students do not get basic education around contraception and family planning techniques, let alone abortion procedures and pregnancy options counseling. The Roe v. Wade decision was critical to guaranteeing women the right to choose, but without abortion providers- there is no choice. You can make your gift today, quickly and easily through one of these easy options:

- Online, securely, at www.msfc.org/donate
- By check, made out to Medical Students for Choice

Please include <SCHOOL> in the memo line on either of these options.

Thank you so much for helping me become a well-trained pro-choice physician.

Sincerely,

Student Name

Chapter

In-Kind Sample Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State

Dear <CONTACT NAME> or < MANAGER AT X COMPANY>,

My name is <NAME> and I'm writing to request an in-kind donation of <ITEM REQUESTED> to support the success of <NAME OF EVENT>. Medical Students for Choice (MSFC) works to improve access to quality reproductive health care for all women by improving medical education. The <YOUR SCHOOL NAME> chapter of MSFC works in our community to spread awareness for reproductive choice and justice issues, and advocates within our school to improve curriculum. We also actively work to provide education on campus that is not available to us in the curriculum. In-kind gift to support <NAME OF EVENT> will help us continue our work.

We are able to offer NAME OF BUSINESS visibility at our event. During the event, we can either display a sign thanking you for your generous donation or an announcement will be made to let everyone attending the event know that <NAME OF BUSINESS> provided the <ITEM REQUESTED>.

As a member of the business community in <NAME OF TOWN>, you have a stake in the health of our community. Medical Students for Choice is dedicated to ensuring that women receive the full range of reproductive health-care choices, both here and around the globe. I hope we can count on your support.

I will be in touch in the next week to follow up on my request.

Best wishes,

YOUR NAME

CONTACT INFORMATION