



WALK WITH US

TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Out of the Darkness™

Community Walks: Fundraising Toolkit



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



Welcome

Welcome to the Community Walks Fundraising Toolkit! This toolkit is just that - one place for you to find all the tools you will need to become a successful fundraiser! You will learn how to navigate your personal fundraising, as well as how your fundraising will help the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) at a local and national level.

We want you to be able to easily use these resources so that you can fundraise to the best of your ability, and have fun while doing it! We know that fundraising can take a lot of effort and hard work, and we are so thankful for everything you are putting into it. The contributions you are making to AFSP and your local community are truly immeasurably and does not go unnoticed. Hopefully, this toolkit will make your fundraising experience the best it can possibly be!

Always feel free to reach out with questions, and happy FUNdraising!

With Hope,
Out of the Darkness Walks Team

walks@afsp.org

This toolkit contains tips for:

- Setting up your walk account
- Creating a fundraising goal
- Using social media to fundraise
- Reaching out to donors
- Saying thank you
- Communicating the AFSP mission

Setting Up Your Walk Account

Registering for an Out of the Darkness Community Walk provides access to tools and resources that will help you kick start your fundraising!

- 1.Register for your Community Walk account [here](#). When you register, be sure to fill out your information, and start or join the team that you will be on!
- 2.Choose your goal! Remember, this is just a goal. Some people set their fundraising goal to a numerical amount that has emotional significance for them, and ties in to their personal story. Your goal can be updated at any time.
- 3.Once you have registered, there are many ways to personalize your fundraising page, including a profile pic, your personal story and photos, and a custom link.
- 4.You can also add milestones and incentives, stream, and log activity throughout your fundraising journey to help you reach your goal. See more about FUNdraising [here](#).
- 5.Don't forget to create a Facebook fundraiser through your account! **This is the only way money raised will go directly to your page!**

Creating a Fundraising Goal

Setting a goal can be a daunting task, especially for those walking for the first time. Your goal can be based on a number that has special meaning to you, or it can be based on a **recognition gift** level you want to reach. A great way to do this is by breaking down what you can do to reach your goal.

Fundraising roadmaps look different for everyone! Start by thinking about all the different ways you connect with people (on social media, over email, at in-person events, and more) and the different groups of people you can tap into (friends, family, colleagues, etc.). Breaking this down can help you come up with unique and creative ways to fundraise.

For example, the road to raising \$1000 may look like:

- 1 board or video game fundraiser: \$100
- 2 hours of canning: \$25
- 3 errands for friends or family: \$20
- 4 email donations: \$250
- 5 donations from a Facebook fundraiser: \$200
- 6 social media challenges: \$30
- 7 Venmo requests: \$25
- 8 custom-made items to sell: \$300
- AND a personal donation of \$50

Dividing your goal into steps will give you a roadmap to follow for the rest of the season, as well as an achievable number.

Remember, **FUNdraising** is all about having fun, so varying your roadmap to be tailored to your strengths and things you enjoy is key!

Using Social Media to Fundraise

Social media is a powerful tool, and a very cost-effective way to market your fundraising. Sharing both the AFSP story and your own personal experiences helps strengthen calls to donate.

- Spread the word about AFSP Community Walks using our promotional social media tools, including illustrative graphics, impact graphics, and more. Click [here](#) to explore and check out [Appendix A](#) for a preview of the tools!

- Share the AFSP story on social media to help donors understand the impact that their dollars have on saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. Social graphics featuring the AFSP mission and mental health messages are available [here](#), and to learn more about our organization and work, review the [Communicating the AFSP Mission](#) section below.

- Tell donors that their donation goes to the local chapter and will help bring programs directly to your community. It's a great way to make the donors feel more involved and willing to help.

- Include statistics from the [State Fact Sheets](#) in your posts to help contextualize the impact of suicide prevention in your community. This is another great way to make donors feel connected to the support and resources AFSP provides.

•An important addition to your fundraising posts is your “why”: your story or reason for walking in support of mental health and suicide prevention. The more connected to your personal story a potential donor feels, the more likely they will donate to you. For tips on how to safely share your personal story, review **our Speaking Out About Suicide Flyer**.

•Be sure to always re-share and update your Facebook fundraiser, go live on Facebook (connecting to your fundraiser) and Instagram, and always have your fundraising page link in your social account bios throughout the Walk season!

If you are not sure where to begin with social media posts, you can find templates for different platforms in the **Appendix B**. Remember, adding a personal touch to each post goes a very long way.

Reaching Out to Donors

The most important thing to remember is that most donors will be donating to you because they support the cause **AND YOU**. This is why reaching out to donors in a personal way is best when asking for donations.

Below, you will find recommendations for different methods of outreach, depending on your relationships.

Phone Calls and Emails	Larger donations from people you know well
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Discord, Twitch, etc.	A much larger reach - you never know who will want to support you!
Texts and Direct Messages	Family, friends, and acquaintances

Recommendations for who to ask:

- Immediate family
- Extended family
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Bosses

Saying Thank You

Two Words That Go A Long Way

A simple thank you is all you need to do to let your donors know you appreciate them, and make them feel seen. You can also do a two-fold thank you: one quick thanks via social and/or text, etc. and then a personal note after the walk has ended.

Below are a few examples of the many ways you can reach out:

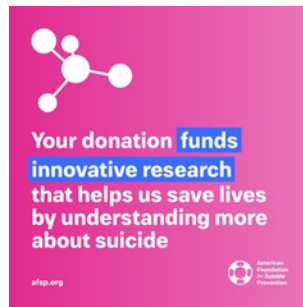
- Send personalized emails and texts
- Write handwritten thank you cards. Branded AFSP stationery is available for purchase [here](#).
- Give small, tangible tokens of appreciation
- Make shout-outs on social media
- Raise awareness of what their donation helped fund by bringing an AFSP program to your community, or showing your involvement as a volunteer

Communicating the AFSP Mission

Established in 1987, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death.

Our mission is to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide.

Click each graphic below to find out more.



We fund research to improve interventions, train clinicians in suicide prevention, and advocate for policies that will save lives. We work to find better ways to reach those who suffer, support those who've lost loved ones, and encourage schools, workplaces, and communities to make mental health a priority.

Whether you've lost someone or struggle with suicidal thinking, you are not alone. We bring people who have been affected by suicide out of the darkness, and give them opportunities to help others.

Below are helpful resources to learn more about AFSP, so you can share our story when you fundraise:

- In general, exploring our [AFSP website](#) is a great place to start.
- Read our [AFSP Brochure](#) to gain an understanding of the organization at a high level.
- Review our [Annual Report](#) to dive deeper into our mission and annual impact.
- Check out our [Impact Messages Flyer](#) to further your understanding of the impact AFSP has in suicide prevention.
- Read our [Programs Priority Booklet](#) to get to know our program offerings.

Need Help?

Feel free to contact the Walks team at walks@afsp.org or your local Walk chair if you have any questions.

Appendix A: Social Media Tools

Below is a sample of the social media tools you can use to promote Community Walks. Explore all of the tools [here!](#)



Appendix B: Templates

Email

The easiest way to fundraise on email is through your walk account, because your page link is automatically added to the email.

Dear Friend [OR FIRST NAME],

This fall, I will be walking to prevent suicide in the [WALK NAME] Out of the Darkness Community Walk. I've set a fundraising goal of \$[INSERT GOAL], and am writing today to ask for your support.

[IF YOU HAVE A PERSONAL STORY TO SHARE, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR STORY HERE, TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE.]

Your donation will help the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) fund research, create educational programs, advocate for public policy, and support survivors of suicide loss.

Donating online is safe and easy! To make an online donation, click the "Donate" link in this email and then click the "Donate" button on my fundraising page. If you would rather donate by check, please make the check payable to AFSP and mail it in with the offline donation form. Any contribution will help the work of AFSP, and all donations are 100% tax deductible.

IF YOU ARE USING ACTIVITY TRACKING, INCLUDE:

I am also tracking activity as a way to stay motivated and to make it fun! You can also pledge your donation based on how many minutes I log in! Just click "Pledge" at the beginning of the donation process. Thank you!

IF YOU ARE USING MILESTONES AND/OR INCENTIVES, INCLUDE:

Check out my fundraising page to see the cool (milestones and/or incentives) I have included before you donate!

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Your Name

[INSERT FUNDRAISING PAGE LINK, IF NOT SENDING THROUGH WALK ACCOUNT]

Social Media

Reaching out on social media can be done through your walk account.

Hello Friends and Family,

I am currently raising funds for the [INSERT NAME] Community Walk, supporting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. My goal this year is to raise \$[INSERT GOAL], but I need your help! The funds I raise will help bring AFSP's important work to my community. If you would like to support me, I ask that you go to my page or my Facebook fundraiser, linked below. If you cannot donate monetarily at this time, I'd ask if you would please share this on your page!

Thank you for your support!

[FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER LINK]

[DONORDRIVE LINK]

Text

Reaching out on social media can be done through your walk account.

I am currently raising funds for the [INSERT NAME] Community Walk, supporting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. My goal this year is to raise \$[INSERT GOAL], but I need your help!

The funds I raise will help bring AFSP's important work to my community. If you would like to support me, I ask that you go to my page, linked below. Thank you for your support!

Thank you!

[INSERT PAGE LINK, IF NOT THROUGH WALK ACCOUNT]

afsp.org/Walks



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