



THE LONGER TABLE INITIATIVE

Fundraising Guide for Groups Interested in Community Sponsorship

Amnesty International has long history of creating communities of individuals who care passionately and act fiercely. At AIUSA, we are exceedingly proud to be met in solidarity with steadfast supporters like you, who make our work possible.

Community sponsorship is a unique form of engagement that pairs AIUSA members with refugees to the United States to give them a warm and supportive welcome. Community sponsorship will look different depending on the case and individuals involved. Some financial factors include: the requirements of the partnership Resettlement Agency, size of the refugee family being assisted, cost of housing and other in-kind resources.

Financial support is crucial for the success of sponsoring refugee families. There are lots of ways to get creative in your fundraising, and we've put together some helpful information to help you succeed:

A few guiding principles:

- Depending on the area with where you are working, the more needed in-kind contributions you can secure, the less cash you will need raise.
- People are far more likely to give to a person than they are to a cause. This means that while you may have had trouble raising money for your group in the past, the experience of raising money for a family will likely be different! If you have a photo of your family and permission to use it, this will help to make the cause more real.
- Communicate the urgency. If your family is expected to arrive soon, make this known.
- The more specific you are about how the money raised will be used, the better. (However, do not provide information that will jeopardize client confidentiality.) For example, you might say:
 - This money will cover the family's rent until they are employed and self-sufficient.
 - We are helping an Afghan family of six arriving.
- While not every person will want a tax-deductible receipt for their contribution, some will - especially those who are giving larger amounts of money. You can provide this receipt through your local chapter and we can help you to do this. Letting them know of this possibility increases the legitimacy of your efforts and may result in more donations received.

Some means of fundraising:

- **Online:** Online fundraising has become increasingly popular in the last few years and there are many tools that can be used. The most popular are Facebook and GoFundMe. Tips on how to raise funds through GoFundMe can be found [here](#).
- **Individual, Corporate or Faith Donors:** Businesses, faith groups, schools, and universities may have interest in supporting refugees, but may not know how. You can give them the opportunity. The ask is often best made over the phone or in person. Be prepared that they may not offer you funds, but instead will offer in-kind goods or job opportunities for the case. Consider carefully how you will handle these offers. With this model, you may wish to coordinate with your local affiliate as they may be in communication with some of these same groups.
- **Special Events:** While special events tend to be the most time-consuming and costly forms of fundraising, there are ways to make them manageable:
 - 1) Consider your target group and what event would appeal most to them.
 - 2) Make a budget in advance, anticipating what you will spend and what you will raise.
 - 3) Secure in-kind contributions for supplies rather than purchasing them. For example, say you want to host an evening of coffee and conversation about refugee families. A great way to further engage your local community is to inquire with coffee shops about donating goods for your event. A great way to say thank you to a business is take a photo at your event and include it a handwritten thank you letter or card!

You're raising money. Now what?

- Keep an accurate record of the donations received with donor name, amount given, and date received. If they have strict restrictions about how the money should be used, note this and be sure to honor it. (If you can't honor it, don't accept the money.)
 - Hold the money raised in a secure location. This can be in the GoFundMe account, a chapter bank account (if one exists), a faith group or foundation that has offered to hold it.
 - If you're working through another group, make certain to draft an agreement regarding the holding and release of the money. Be sure to thank you donors!
 - If the family is comfortable, get them involved! The kids can draw a picture, or they can sign post-cards that you provide.
3. If the donation helped to provide housing, take a picture of the housing to shared. (Again, be certain not to jeopardize client confidentiality by revealing the location of housing.)
 4. If you're providing receipts of tax-deductible contributions, be certain to do this in a timely manner.

Still haven't raised all that you need, but are eager to start?

- Depending on the availability of funds, AIUSA may be able to match up to 25% of the money that you've raised. To access this money, you will need to complete the application form found here. This form will be reviewed, and a decision shared within two weeks of its submission.
- AIUSA will offer no-interest loans to groups interested in sponsorship. To learn more, contact:

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