

# FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT

RIDE CINCINNATI



# WELCOME!

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By registering for Ride Cincinnati, you've committed to much more than a bike ride.

You are now a part of a movement and a member of a community that is unlike any other. We are pumped that you're here.

**Together, we will Defeat Cancer!**

This fundraising toolkit is designed to provide you with the tools and information necessary to achieve your fundraising commitment. We are confident that if you follow the steps laid out in this toolkit, you'll meet and exceed your commitment this year and have fun in the process.

Thanks for all you do!

**The Ride Cincinnati Team**

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# WHERE THE MONEY GOES

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100% of every dollar raised by Ride Cincinnati riders, virtual riders and volunteers goes directly to fund cancer research and care at hospitals and health systems in Greater Cincinnati.

To date, Ride Cincinnati has been responsible for funding more than 44 research grants that have made significant advancements towards life-saving cancer treatments.

With your help, we continue to attract new faculty and innovative research concepts to make Cincinnati a leader in world-class cancer care.

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# FUNDRAISING COMMITMENTS

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What is my fundraising commitment?

Depending on which route you choose to ride, you will also have an accompanying minimum fundraising commitment. There is no minimum fundraising requirement for virtual riders or volunteers, but we encourage all participants to set personal fundraising goals in support of Ride Cincinnati.

Remember, you have **60 days after the ride** to continue raising funds to meet your fundraising commitment.

We invite you to set a stretch goal on your rider profile. This feature allows you to share a goal above and beyond your fundraising commitment with your family and friends.

# TIME TO PARTY!

## A FOUR-STEP FUNDRAISING METHOD

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Now that you've decided to participate in Ride Cincinnati, it's time to **shout it from the rooftops!**

It's also time to think ahead about how you'll meet your fundraising commitment. To alleviate any concerns you may have about reaching your commitment, we've developed a four-step method (PARTY) to help you meet—and likely exceed—your goals:

**01 Practice**

**02 Ask**

**03 Remind**

**04 Thank You**

## STEP 1

# PRACTICE

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As you begin the process of fundraising, we recommend that you **practice clarifying your audience and your story.**

When you make a fundraising commitment, you have to think BIG about your potential audience. From the moment you sign up for Ride Cincinnati, everyone becomes a potential donor. Take some time to sit down and brainstorm a list of people who might donate to your efforts this year.

### We recommend starting with:

- Friends and family.
- Current or former colleagues and classmates.
- Neighbors.
- Your professional, volunteer or religious network.
- Your social media connections.

Don't be afraid to ask people who live outside of your community to support you.

**Think global — remember almost everyone has been affected by cancer in some way.**

After you brainstorm your list of potential donors, practice telling your story. To get started, **ask yourself the following questions**, and be sure to jot down your answers—your personal story may help inspire your donors to give!

- What does Ride Cincinnati mean to me?
- Why did I make the commitment to participate in Ride Cincinnati?
- What are my goals this year?
- How has cancer impacted my life and why do I believe it's important to fund cancer research?
- If a friend told me that her donation wouldn't really make a difference, what would I say to her?

## STEP 2

# ASK

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The most successful fundraisers have one simple thing in common: **they ask as many people for support as possible, in very personal ways.** Don't procrastinate—from the moment you sign up for Ride Cincinnati and complete Step One, it's time to start communicating to your potential donors!

Start by creating an email or mailing list of the people you identified in Step One, and then sit down and write your first communication.

**An excellent fundraising email or letter should address the following questions:**

- What is Ride Cincinnati and where does the money go?
- Why am I participating?
- What is my fundraising commitment and how much progress have I made?
- How can a donor support me?

**Once you have drafted a fundraising letter, it's time to send it out!** We recommend sending at least **four communications** to your donors throughout the year, using this format:

- 01** Announce that you've decided to participate in Ride Cincinnati, share your story and why this movement is so important/personal to you, and ask for support.
- 02** Share an update on your training/progress to your goal. Be sure to thank everyone who has already donated to your efforts, and offer a gentle reminder to those who haven't yet done so.
- 03** Following Ride Cincinnati weekend, share details about what your experience was like along with some photos from the ride or Opening Celebration. This is a great opportunity to thank everyone who has supported you and remind others who haven't yet donated.
- 04** After the fundraising deadline, Ride Cincinnati will announce the total amount raised for this year's ride. Share this extraordinary total with your donors and remind them that it wouldn't have been possible without their support.

### STEP 3

# REMIND

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Every fundraiser encounters a donor who pledges their support online or says, “I’ll give you a check next time I see you!” but may forget to follow through. This is why it’s important to **send reminders to the people who’ve pledged to support you.**

Remember, you have until **60 days after the ride**, to meet your fundraising commitment—so we suggest sending a final reminder after you finish your ride. This timing will lend a sense of urgency to your request and allow you to share the story of what you have accomplished.

#### Here is an example of a great pledge reminder:

Dear Grayson,

I wanted to send you a quick note today to share that I DID IT—I completed my first ever 100-mile bike ride last week in support of Ride Cincinnati! It was one of the most difficult but also most rewarding things I’ve ever done. The best part of the ride was crossing the finish line next to so many loved ones.

I am also excited to share that I am 95% of the way to my fundraising goal of \$1,000 this year. If you are able to support me as I close out my fundraising efforts this year, I would be so grateful! While I am so proud to have finished the ride, I know the real work doesn’t stop until we reach our goal to defeat cancer.

Remember, 100% of your donation goes directly to cancer research. You can donate to my fundraising page at **[www.ridecincinnati.org/janesmith](http://www.ridecincinnati.org/janesmith)**.

Thank you so much for all of your support this year! I couldn’t have done this without you!

Jane

*See page 10 for a sample fundraising timeline.*

## STEP 4

# THANK YOU

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Congratulations, you're well on your way to reaching—and likely exceeding—your fundraising commitment! Now it's time for the fun part: **thanking your donors.**

As time-consuming as it can be, nothing is more important than taking the time to say thank you to the people who supported you this year. Whether you create your own postcard or write a heartfelt note, always take the time to send a personal thank you note.

**Here's a sample message you can use when thanking your donors:**

Dear Layne,

Thank you so much for your gift of \$50 to my Ride Cincinnati fundraising goal! I am proud to share that 100% of your donation will go directly to cancer research. Thanks to you, I was able to raise \$500 for cancer research this year.

Your support carried me across the finish line and I could not be more grateful for your donation!

With love,

Kennedy

# SAMPLE FUNDRAISING TIMELINE

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Fundraising for Ride Cincinnati should be fun and fulfilling—not stressful. So give yourself plenty of time to fundraise by registering early and following the PARTY fundraising method.

Check out this suggested timeline to set yourself up for success.

## FEBRUARY – MAY

- Register for Ride Cincinnati!
- Create your personalized Rider profile on **RideCincinnati.org**.
- Gather contact information for your family and friends, and send out your first fundraising communications!
- Submit any matching gift forms.

## JUNE

- Send an update to your donors, sharing photos from your training rides.
- Post on social media, letting your followers know you're participating in this year's ride.

## JULY

- Upload training pictures to your Rider profile.
- Post on social media.

## AUGUST

- Send follow-up letters or reminder emails to your potential donors.
- Post on social media.

## SEPTEMBER

- **Ride Weekend!**
- Post on social media.

## OCTOBER

- Send reminders to pledged donors.
- Send thank you letters to donors with pictures from the Ride.

## NOVEMBER

- Final push to reach your fundraising goal before the fundraising deadline, which is 60 days after the ride.

# FUNDRAISING MILESTONES

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There are endless opportunities to tie fundraising to major events, seasons and holidays that you and your potential donors interact with. We've included a breakdown of some creative, seasonal fundraising ideas below.

## YOUR BIRTHDAY

Consider asking for donations to your fundraising in lieu of birthday gifts this year. Use your social media profiles to spread the word!

## FEBRUARY

**Valentine's Surprise**—Ask your loved ones to skip the chocolate and flowers this year and make a donation to your profile to show how much they care. Because what could be a better gift than making an impact on cancer research?

**World Cancer Day**—Take to social media February 4 to raise awareness for World Cancer Day and update your friends and family on your training progress. This is a great opportunity to remind your donors how important their contribution is to defeating cancer.

## MARCH

**March Madness**—Ask your friends and co-workers who toss in donations for a tournament pool if they would consider matching the same donation for your ride. If you're lucky, the winner might end up donating some of their winnings, too. Bragging rights and a donation to cancer research seem like a win/win to us.

## APRIL

**Spring Gardening**—Ask your local schools, community centers, hospitals, etc. if they would donate an amount to your ride equal to what they would normally pay a landscaping company to plant new blooms for spring. A few hours of planting could result in a sizable contribution.

## MAY

**National Cycling Month**—Invite friends and family to support you on training rides, or by making a donation in celebration of National Cycling Month. Many of our gear sponsors will be offering special event opportunities during this month as well.

**Garage Sale**—Before the summer heat kicks in, pick a weekend morning to sell those old clothes and forgotten treasures sitting around your home. Ask a local coffee shop to donate hot drinks and/or pastries to sell. Bonus points if you ask other neighbors to join, too.

*continued on next page...*

## FUNDRAISING MILESTONES

### JUNE

**National Cancer Survivors Day**—The first Sunday in June is National Cancer Survivors Day. Post a message on social media asking your friends and family to donate \$10 in honor of each cancer survivor in their lives.

### JULY

**Fourth of July Parades**—It's not fun being patriotic if you're parched. Keep cool on Fourth of July weekend by making some patriotic beverages at your neighborhood block party and asking for donations in return!

### AUGUST

**Back to School Bash**—Host an end-of-summer gathering for friends and family. Ask your neighbors, friends or even a local restaurant to donate food and beverages for the party, then charge admission to eat and enjoy some fun and games! Adding in yard games like corn hole or can jam can create fun competitions and opportunities for additional donations for entry.

### SEPTEMBER

**Labor Day**—Host a backyard barbeque or end-of-summer pool party. Encourage friends and family to bring donations as their entry to the party!

**Virtual Ride**—Have friends and family who can't make it to Cincinnati to participate in Ride Cincinnati weekend with you? Have them join together at a local spin studio to do a virtual ride and raise funds in your honor.

### OCTOBER

**Octoberfest**—Bring together your neighbors, family and friends to host a fall-themed bash!

# CREATIVE FUNDRAISING

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We advise that you choose at least one creative way that you can supplement your fundraising letters and emails. Here are examples of the most fun and creative fundraising ideas we've seen over the years. We've ranked them from easiest to most involved.

## EASY AS PIE:

- Enlist your friends to host a bake sale, pancake breakfast or car wash.
- Deliver homemade goods in exchange for donations.
- Think about ways you can help people in your neighborhood or network—like mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, organizing closets, baking cookies, taking down holiday lights, addressing invitations—and exchange a service for donations.
- Don't wait for your donors to think of it—encourage your friends and family to get their donations matched! Many employers offer matching gifts programs. The earlier they can submit their request, the better!

## REQUIRES A LITTLE BIT OF LEGWORK:

- If your employer allows solicitation at work, ask if you can have a "jeans day" where employees who donate to your fundraising can wear jeans.
- If you have a donor who is willing to give \$500 or more to your fundraising, leverage that as a "matching" gift. Pick a time frame and tell your friends that every dollar they give during a certain week will be "matched" by that anonymous donor, up to a certain dollar amount.
- Rent a movie projector and invite friends over to your backyard movie theatre. No tickets accepted, just cash donations.
- Find a favorite bar or restaurant willing to donate 20% of sales and invite your network for a night on the town.
- Ask a sports facility or fitness instructor to donate their space and/or time and host a tournament or class you can sell tickets for.
- Accept donations to tune up your neighborhood bikes before the weather warms up. Bike maintenance skills required.

## BIG EFFORT WITH A BIGGER PAYOFF!

- Throw an event like a St. Patrick's for Ride Cincinnati Party and get green—green attire, green drinks and green cash donations.
- Look for sponsors and print their name on the jersey you'll wear during the ride.
- Take on a freelance project and donate the proceeds you earn.
- Ask friends and local businesses to donate items and services that can be auctioned off for donations.

## TIPS & TRICKS

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Once you've started putting your social networking skills to use, don't forget about your social media skills!

Consider using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, a blog or any other platform when prepping and participating in Ride Cincinnati. These are great channels to recognize your donors, ask for donations, share your story, provide training updates and actually show your friends what Ride Cincinnati is all about. Feel free to use the promotional graphics available on the Ride Cincinnati Facebook page, as well.

**Here are a few suggestions. Don't forget to use the hashtags [#UnitedAgainstCancer](#) or [#RideCincinnati](#) in your posts!**

### TWITTER

- 01** Thanks to @kjerstinjean for making a donation to my @RideCincinnati profile! [#UnitedAgainstCancer](#)
- 02** I'm in for [#RideCincinnati](#)! Please consider making a \$10 donation to defeat cancer (insert link here)
- 03** This Saturday I'm heading out on a 50-mile training ride. Anyone want to join? [#RideCincinnati](#)

### INSTAGRAM





**14**

RIDES

**44**

RESEARCH GRANTS FUNDED

**10,000+**

RIDERS SINCE 2007

**\$4.5 MILLION**

RAISED

We're proud of this journey  
and you should be, too.

Thank you for joining us!



# SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

If you've read this guide in its entirety, it's a pretty safe bet that you've got some ideas about how to be successful in your fundraising efforts.

However, if you're still struggling or have any other questions about fundraising and how to reach your goal, please contact us!

We're here to help!  
[info@ridecincinnati.org](mailto:info@ridecincinnati.org)