



INDEPENDENT FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT



HOSTING YOUR OWN DSACO FUNDRAISER

Thank you for your interest in supporting DSACO through your own fundraiser! These fundraisers are organized by supporters like you, not directly by DSACO, but they help raise awareness and vital funds for programs, advocacy, and families in our community.

This toolkit is designed to give you ideas, tips, and guidelines to make your event fun, safe, and successful.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Host your own event, invite your own guests, cover costs, and raise money for DSACO.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Provide you with materials and resources to make it a well-packaged DSACO event and take care of acknowledging and stewarding your donors.



FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Get creative! Here are some tried-and-true options, plus ways to take them further:

- **Concerts or Talent Shows:** Host a performance where ticket sales support DSACO.
- **Golf Outings or Sports Tournaments:** Organize a friendly competition with entry fees and sponsorship opportunities.
- **Garage Sales or Craft Fairs:** Donate proceeds from sales or booth fees.
- **Walks, Runs, or Bike Rides:** Set up a local route and encourage participants to fundraise through sponsorships.
- **Themed Parties or Movie Nights:** Invite friends and community members, charge admission, or suggest donations.
- **Art or Bake Sales:** Showcase your talents while raising funds.
- **Online Challenges or Virtual Events:** Host social media campaigns, livestreams, Super Bowl squares, March Madness bracket, or contests with donation links.
- **Service-Based Events:** Offer classes, workshops, or lessons with proceeds benefiting DSACO.

***Third-Party Fundraiser**

Often, one of the easiest ways to raise funds for DSACO is by partnering with a third party, or business/organization. This is third-party fundraising. For restaurant give-back nights or corporate/organization sponsorship where the business will be providing direct support to DSACO, you are welcome to pursue, but please complete the registration form so DSACO staff can be aware and perhaps pursue larger corporate partnerships.

PLANNING YOUR FUNDRAISER

Step 1: Set Your Goal

- Decide how much you hope to raise and how you'll track donations.
- Keep it realistic and inspiring.

Step 2: Choose a Date & Location

- Make sure the timing doesn't conflict with other major DSACO events.
- Public locations may require permits — check city or venue requirements.
- Complete the Fundraising Event Registration Form (at least 30 days prior to event)

Step 3: Promote Your Event

- Once approved, DSACO will provide you with a resource packet that includes:
 - » DSACO logo files
 - » Brand guidelines
 - » Sample script/impact language
 - » Sample invite and ask
- For events with the goal of raising \$2,500 or more, DSACO will help set up your own event website through our platform to make event management even easier.
- Social media, local bulletin boards, and email lists are great tools.
- Include the DSACO story and mission. Help people understand what their support means.

Step 4: Collect Donations Safely and Share Results

- Online donations should go through approved platforms (like dsaco.net or PledgeIt).
- Cash or checks should be tracked carefully; DSACO can provide a donation form to ensure transparency.
- Share results and any donor lists with DSACO so that we can properly thank and steward these donors.



GUIDELINES

To ensure safety, legality, and alignment with DSACO's mission:

- Use DSACO Name & Logo Appropriately: Only use with prior approval.
- Insurance & Permits: You are responsible for insurance and any required permits for your event.
- Financial Responsibility: DSACO cannot cover expenses or reimburse costs for third-party events.
- Event Safety: Organizers must ensure a safe environment for participants, volunteers, and attendees.
- Communication: Share event details with DSACO for review; we can help provide guidance, marketing tips, and materials.
- Donation Submission: All proceeds should be submitted to DSACO in a timely manner using approved channels.

HELPFUL RESOURCES & DSACO SUPPORT

Once your event is approved, you'll receive the following:

- Event Planning Checklist – Guide to planning your fundraiser.
- Sample Press Release & Social Media Posts – Ready-to-use messaging to promote your event.
- Fundraising Tracking Templates – Keep track of sponsors, donations, and expenses.
- DSACO Contact – We're here to answer questions, provide guidance, and cheer you on!

NEXT STEPS

1. Decide your event type and set a date.
2. Complete the Fundraising Registration Form
3. DSACO will review your plan, approve it, and provide support where possible.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DO I NEED DSACO'S APPROVAL TO HOST A FUNDRAISER?

Yes! Please complete our Fundraising Event Registration Form. This ensures your event aligns with DSACO's mission and allows us to provide support, logos, and promotional guidance.

I'VE HOSTED THIS EVENT FOR MANY YEARS. DO I NEED TO GET APPROVAL NOW?

Yes, please, as we roll out these new processes, it's important for us to better understand all of these events and provide additional support moving forward.

CAN I KEEP PART OF THE PROCEEDS FOR MY OWN COSTS?

You are responsible for covering event costs. DSACO asks that all net proceeds after expenses be donated to support our programs.

CAN I USE DSACO'S LOGO OR NAME?

Yes, but only with prior approval. This helps protect our brand and ensures your event materials are accurate.

WHAT TYPES OF EVENTS ARE ALLOWED?

Most events are welcome, from casual bake sales to large concerts or sports tournaments. We do not allow events that are illegal, unsafe, or inconsistent with DSACO's values.

CAN DSACO PROVIDE INSURANCE OR LIABILITY COVERAGE FOR MY EVENT?

No, organizers are responsible for their own insurance, permits, and safety measures.

WHAT IF I DON'T GET APPROVAL?

If DSACO discovers an unapproved event, we will ask that you complete the registration form as soon as possible and may request a pause in event planning until any questions are resolved.

WILL DSACO SHARE/PROMOTE MY EVENT?

Please tag us on social media and we will make every effort to share that post on our social media for approved events.

ARE DONATIONS TAX DEDUCTIBLE/WILL I RECEIVE A RECEIPT?

DSACO is a 501c3, so yes, donations are tax deductible. This is one reason why registering your event with DSACO will help us ensure that each donor receives proper tax acknowledgement.

ARE MY EXPENSES TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

No, unfortunately. By agreeing to "host" an event, you take on the responsibility of covering associated costs.

DOES MY FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER COUNT?

Facebook fundraisers are not encouraged.



DOS & DON'TS

DOS

- » Plan ahead: Set a goal, date, and budget before launching.
- » Complete the registration form and be in touch with the DSACO team about your plans.
- » Communicate clearly: Share your event details, how funds will be used, and the impact on DSACO families.
- » Promote widely: Use social media, email, and community boards.
- » Track donations: Keep accurate records and submit funds promptly.
- » Engage your network: Encourage friends, family, and local businesses to get involved.

DON'TS

- » Assume approval: Always register your event with DSACO first.
- » Use the DSACO logo incorrectly: Only approved materials may include our branding.
- » Ignore safety/legal requirements: Permits, insurance, and venue rules are your responsibility.
- » Retain funds for personal use: All net proceeds should benefit DSACO.
- » Misrepresent DSACO or the purpose of the fundraiser: Transparency builds trust with donors and your community.



Thank you for helping DSACO make a difference for people with Down syndrome and their families!

Questions? Please contact Lisa Dodge at ldodge@elevatedd.org.

