

A large, faint, light teal graphic of a plant with several vertical stems and leaves is centered in the background of the page.

HOSTING AN EVENT TOOLS & IDEAS

TOOLKIT

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QUICK START GUIDE

You share our passion for rebuilding lives and want to support our cause. Looking for somewhere to start? We've put together this menu of ideas to inspire you. Whether you're one person interested in hosting a small event or a group of volunteers looking to rally your campus or community, these time-tested suggestions are a great way to get going.

HOST A BAKE SALE. Identify a high traffic area in your community – maybe a grocery store, a library, a shopping center, or a park to host your sale. Bake and sell items yourself, or recruit others from your community to get involved. Not a baker? You can buy items in bulk and easily resell! Make sure to have some petty cash on hand to make change.

HOLD A SPECIAL COLLECTION. During your church, mosque, or synagogue's service, hold an appeal and special collection to benefit AMAR's work.

RAISE MONEY AT A LOCAL SPORTING EVENT. Contact your local sports teams and ask about opportunities to fundraise during an upcoming game. You maybe be able to solicit contributions from attendees at the door, host a 50/50 raffle, or even make a "text to give" appeal during half time.

COORDINATE A "DINE & DONATE" EVENT. Many chain and local restaurants choose to give back to the community by supporting Dine & Donate events where a portion of the profits raised by the restaurant on a particular date are donated to a designated organization. Sometimes restaurants will give a flat rate (10% of total proceeds) or they'll donate a fixed amount for every guest that use a coupon or flyer for the designated organization. Start with: Texas Roadhouse, Chipotle, Whole Foods for ideas.

HOST A CAR WASH. This is a great, low-cost event for a small group of 5-10. Locate a high-traffic community space to host your event such as a school or church parking lot. Make sure that you have all the supplies your need – including access to a water source. Make sure to have 1 or 2 high energy volunteers with signs to attract customers. Split remaining volunteers into teams to wash, rinse, and dry.

PARTNER WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES. Reach out to local businesses in your community about on-site collection opportunities. Ask business owners if they'd be willing to have a donation jar at their check-out counter or include an added donation "ask" at check out. Make sure to have a clear timeline in mind and communicate when you expect to collect donations.

HOST A BOARD GAME NIGHT. Identify an event venue – possibly at your home, the library, or a local bar or restaurant. Bring a variety of games to play. Charge an admission fee at the door, and consider offering fun prizes to top winners. Depending on the age of your audience, sell drinks or work with your bar host to get drink specials with a portion of the proceeds donated to the event.

DONATE A SERVICE AND RAISE SUPPORT. Think about creative ways that you could donate your time to raise support in your community. Maybe you live in a wooded neighborhood where everyone needs help raking leaves in the fall. Ask neighbors if they would make a donation to AMAR in return for an hour of raking. Or host a Parents Night Out – and babysit for a contribution to AMAR.

COORDINATE A BOWL-A-THON. Rally teams of 4-6 people to set raise a set fundraising goal (example: \$1,000 per team). In the weeks before the event, they'll ask friends and family members to donate to their efforts to bowl for a cause. They could ask for donations of \$1, \$5, or \$10 per pin. Teams that meet their fundraising goal will compete at the bowling alley for fun prizes and bragging rights!

PEER TO PEER CAMPAIGN

Are you looking for a unique way to connect your network of friends, families, and co-workers to AMAR's mission? Consider hosting your own peer-to-peer fundraising campaign. This is a great way to leverage your connections to help strengthen the AMAR community. You can launch a fundraising campaign alongside one of AMAR's annual campaigns (like our Ramadan Meal Appeal), or create your own campaign for a special event in your life. Here are a few ideas:

BIRTHDAY | GRADUATION | WEDDING | HOUSE-WARMING | ANNIVERSARY PERSONAL GOAL (SUCH AS RUNNING A MARATHON)

CHOOSE A PLATFORM

There are a ton of great online crowd-funding sites that are designed for fundraisers like you. Razoo, Generosity, Donate.ly, and Crowdrise are just a few that we've used before. But you should feel free to research and work with the site that you feel most comfortable with.

- >> Be clear about your fundraising goal and what the funds raised will support. If you want to campaign for a specific AMAR program, just contact us at the DC office and let us know how you'd like to restrict your contribution.
- >> Add a picture of yourself – or of AMAR's programs - to make it feel more personal.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

A great fundraiser page is a personal, authentic way to connect your community. The more you share with your friends and family, the more supportive responses you'll receive. The story is the heart of your fundraiser. If it's your story, you might feel vulnerable telling it, but know that by sharing your story you're creating a stronger support system around you.

Providing as much information as possible about your story and your cause also fosters trust and transparency among the visitors and potential contributors to your fundraiser:

- >> Make your story authentic and transparent. Paint a complete picture of the situation and let your fundraiser reflect your personality. Why are you choosing to support AMAR? Which program resonates with you and why is it important to you. The stronger you make your personal connection, the more likely your network is to support your campaign.

SHARE YOUR FUNDRAISER

Email is the best way to share your fundraiser with loved ones. The first paragraph should be personalized for the recipient, while the second paragraph can be a short summary that is sent to your entire community. It should say concisely why you're fundraising and why you need your community's support.

Share your fundraiser on Twitter and/or your Facebook page at least twice a week and always remember to include a direct link to the campaign donate page. Your posts should be engaging, personal and should communicate to your supporters why you need their help. Start conversations by tagging friends and encourage friends and family members to share your posts on their Facebook and Twitter pages as well.

To spread the word, be sure to follow people you know as well as people in your local community. You can also use Twitter Search to find conversations about a cause or topic that might be

relevant to your campaign. See what people are talking about and join or start a conversation.

People love to look at pictures and watch compelling videos, so be sure to include relevant visuals in updates and tweets whenever possible. Twitter and Facebook add every photo you share to a photo gallery. Take advantage of this feature to tell a visual story that is relevant to your fundraiser. You can also invite contributors to post images and videos from your fundraiser and share on social media.

UPDATE YOUR NETWORK

By donating or sharing your fundraiser, friends and family are expressing that they want to come on this journey with you. Many online fundraising sites have an “update feature.” Use the updates

section like a blog to keep loved ones informed by sending out weekly updates about the fundraiser and your progress.

THANK YOUR DONORS

Don't forget to thank friends and family - showing your gratitude is often enough to encourage a second donation to the fundraiser. You can:

- >> Write a personalized email to show your gratitude
- >> Give a shout out on social media
- >> Send a handwritten thank you note

HOST A BENEFIT CONCERT

Below are some step by step guidelines for hosting a successful community entertainment event. These types of events are a great way to engage larger groups of volunteers raise funds for AMAR U.S., and advocate for our work.

STEP 1. BRAINSTORM & RECRUIT

You'll have lots of decisions to make while planning your event. Do you want to host a concert, a comedy show, or another type of performance? If your event includes a musical focus, should there be a live band or a DJ? Acoustic or electric? Start by recruiting a great team of volunteers to help. You'll find every stage of organizing your event is easier with a strong team around you.

Recruit Your Team. Some important volunteer roles include:

- >> Event producer: Makes sure the venue logistics are all taken care of.
- >> Event promoter: Promotes the event through local channels, puts up posters, and sends out press releases.
- >> Lead event organizer: The one who keeps everyone on task and makes sure the plans stay on schedule
- >> Other roles could include venue lead, door staff, and fundraisers during the event.

Pick an event & theme. Local band? Dance performance? Acoustic act? Club night? Open mic? You decide.

Aim to sell out. Better to have a smaller, sold-out event than a big, half-empty venue.

Know your audience. When choosing your event, think about your main audience. What is the scene like in your town or on your campus? What types of events will draw a crowd?

Use word-of-mouth. The more connections you get involved from the very start, the more friends-of-friends are likely to show up at your event.

Put fundraising first. Set a target for funds raised at your event. Plan to raise most through ticket sales. You can sell tickets in advance, at the event itself, or both. Some other ways to fundraise are:

- >> Ask businesses to donate prizes & hold a raffle
- >> Pass around a donation bucket for AMAR
- >> Persuade the venue manager to let you run (and take all proceeds from) the coat check
- >> Ask the venue if they can create a special AMAR cocktail or donate a portion profits

STEP 2. PLAN, PLAN PLAN!

Good planning isn't hard. It just means knowing what needs doing, when it has to be done by, and who is going to do it. Here are some tips to keep in mind when making plans for your event:

Make a schedule. Make sure you allow enough time to plan your event. Ideally, you should start planning at least three months ahead of time. Then, set some key dates and aim to stick to them.

Check the calendar. When setting a date for your event, make sure it doesn't conflict with holidays, campus events, and other big events planned in your city.

Aim to spend as little as possible. Be realistic and don't be afraid to ask for favors. You'll be amazed how much people are willing to do for free (or at a reduced rate) when you tell them your event is for a good cause.

Set a price. Decide in advance what you'll charge for tickets to the show. Think about the venue, the band, the day of the week, and what other venues charge. And always ask your venue for advice to make sure you're not under or over charging.

Pick a venue. Getting the venue right is ultra-important. It needs to fit with the type of music, crowd, and atmosphere you're aiming for.

- >> Find a venue you know you can sell out.
- >> Go small (maximum 200-person capacity), especially if it's your first event.
- >> Look for a popular venue that draws a regular crowd.
- >> Ask your venue to waive their rental fee

STEP 3. PROMOTE IT!

You've planned a great event. You've got the performers lined up. The venue's booked. Now you need to draw a crowd! Thankfully, there's no shortage of great ways to make sure you sell out.

Get started early. Think about starting your promotion six to eight weeks before your event.

Get social. Create a Facebook event page, talk and tweet about your event on your social networks, and ask your friends to help spread the word.

Talk to local media. Maximize promotion of your event by sending a press release to local newspapers as well as websites and blogs focused on local events. If your event is music-related, reach out to nearby music bloggers and radio stations.

STEP 4. HOST IT!

After all the planning, the actual day will fly by! Follow these tips to make sure your event is a big success and a great time.

Arrive early. Get to the venue, along with anyone else who's helping you set up, at least one to two hours before the first act is due to arrive.

Meet the performers. Make sure you meet the performers as they arrive. Check to make sure they've got everything they need and know the order of the lineup.

Make the venue yours. Put up posters and banners to make sure people know it's an AMAR event.

Explain how it helps. Make sure you show how donations collected during your event will help rebuild lives.

STEP 5. GIVE BACK

Congratulations on your successful event, and thank you for being part of our community! Now comes the life-changing part: Donating the funds you raised to help AMAR U.S. rebuild lives.

GALA & AUCTION

Gala events provide philanthropic opportunities to the local community and are a great way to showcase AMAR's work. These types of events require a lot of planning and volunteer hours – so you'll want to get started well in advance. The key is to start small and grow the event year after year. We've put together this 12-month check-list to help you get the most out of your Gala event.

12 MONTHS OUT

- Choose a chair for the event and nominate a steering committee.
- Set the date.
- Decide on a budget
- Decide on a targeted number of guests
- Identify additional fundraising activities for the event (such as a silent auction, raffle, special appeal)
- Choose a theme.
- Choose and reserve a central, convenient, well-known venue.
- Book entertainment.
- Reserve audio-visual equipment.

9 MONTHS OUT

- Recruit subcommittee volunteers.
- Compile a list of potential major sponsors, and begin speaking with them.
- Set table and ticket prices based on your fundraising goal.
- Select a caterer (unless venue has in-house catering).
- Begin sending letters requesting donations for significant auction items.
- Order decorations.

6 MONTHS OUT

- Develop sponsorship packages for smaller donors.
- Choose the food and drink for the event, keeping in mind the gala's theme for menu inspirations.
- Make a floor plan.
- Start the guest list.
- Add the gala to your organization's website and calendar.
- Design, print, and mail "save the date" cards.
- Choose the software or app you will use for event-management tasks.
- Confirm equipment to be provided by the venue and determine if any supplemental rentals are needed.
- Develop a publicity plan.
- Line up a host.
- Prepare auction-item contract forms for vendor and volunteer use.
- Hire a photographer.

3 MONTHS OUT

- Design and print invitations.
- Draft and send out press releases and community notices announcing the gala.
- Make sure all vendors are confirmed, contracts signed, and deposits paid.

3 MONTHS OUT (CONT'D)

- Finalize décor.
- Check in with sponsors.
- Set up the organization's website to accept online payment for tickets and sponsorships.
- Set the lineup for the evening's presentation.
- Design the program book.
- Design and print any banners or other signage desired for the event.

6 TO 8 WEEKS OUT

- Personalize and mail the printed invitations.
- Develop the event-night schedule.
- Gather all sponsor names and logos and insert them into the program book.
- Begin gathering auction items.

1 MONTH BEFORE THE EVENT

- Finalize the event-night schedule, minute-by-minute.
- Complete and edit the program and auction books.
- Generate bid sheets for the auction items.
- Follow up on any promised table sponsors who have not yet paid for their full or half tables.
- Arrange transportation.
- Check in with vendors one last time.

2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

- Print the menu, program, and auction books.
- Develop seating charts.
- Get the final headcount of guests to the caterer and venue.
- Finalize videos and other presentation elements.
- Review remarks with the event's host or master of ceremonies.

- Inspect auction items.
- Request the names of all guests seated at sponsored tables, rather than "John Smith and nine guests."

1 WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT

- Finalize seating charts and print table cards.
- Confirm volunteer arrival times and assigned duties.
- Rehearse any presentations.
- Prepare electronic devices and software that will be used during the event.
- Prepare payments for vendors.

DAY BEFORE THE EVENT

- Move decorations and auction items to the venue, if possible.
- Begin to decorate, if possible.
- Pack supplies. Fill a box with scissors, clear tape, duct tape, cord, push pins, permanent markers, and plenty of pens for the check-in and auction tables.

SAMPLE DAY OF EVENT AGENDA

- Check-in starts at 6 p.m. Give guests their auction number, drink tickets, etc.
- Start the happy hour and silent auction. 60 to 90 minutes.
- Open the doors to the dining room at 7:30pm. Silent auction ends.
- Begin dinner at 8 p.m.
- Time the program to begin when dinner has been cleared but before dessert is served.
- Start the live auction, if you are having one.
- Dance floor opens at 9:30 or 10 p.m. Be sure auction checkout is open and ready for business. Event concludes by midnight.

5K OR RACE EVENT

Running events – such as 5Ks, team relays, and other themed races – are becoming more and more popular. Whether you're an athlete with a strong running community or a novice runner looking to host a non-competitive race, you can have a lot of success with a racing event. Below are some best practices to help you host a fun and successful event.

DETAILS, BUDGET AND GOALS

Pick a date. Start planning at least 6 months in advance. Do some research to see what other racing events are happening in your area. Websites like active.com are a good resource.

Choose a course. Decide whether you want to host your race on a private course (like a trail or track) or if you want the race to take place on a route through your community.

Recruit Volunteers. It takes a lot of work to host a successful race event. Some volunteer positions you'll need to fill include: Operations Lead (for permit requests & other info collection), Registration Volunteers, Goody-bag Stuffers, Race Day Packet Pick-Up Workers, Set-up/Clean-up Team, Course Marshalls, First Aid, Water Stations, Finish Line Greeting, Award Presenters

Create a budget. Outline the costs for first aid supplies, port-o-potty rentals, race packs, t-shirts, police & permits, printed materials, water stations, etc. Use these expenses to help determine how much you'll need to charge for an entrance fee and how many participants you need to meet your fundraising goal.

CHOOSE A THEME

Be creative. A creative theme will help your race get more traction. Don't be afraid to think up quirky, silly, and unique themes that will be popular in your community or attractive to a particular target audience.

GET YOUR PERMITS

This can be time consuming. Once you have the details sorted out, contact your city officials to ask about what approvals you need. Most likely, you'll need approval from the city for everything from road closures to noise permits. You'll need support and approvals from law enforcement as well.

It's crucial to start applying for permits as early in the process as possible, because a delay in approval could affect the intended date of your race. If you choose to host your event at a park or on a private-track, you might be able to minimize red tape and keep the costs lower.

SPREAD THE WORD

Create an online registration page. Use an online platform like Event Brite to set up a landing page for your race and allow runners to pay and register online.

Use social media. Creating a Facebook page as well as tweeting about your event can exponentially increase reach, exposure, and enthusiasm.

Post your event online. Submit event details to online community calendars and post on race websites like ACTIVE.com.

Go grassroots. Telling people about your race or simply distributing flyers at local gyms and community centers are off-line marketing tactics that always give registration numbers a little boost.

FIND SPONSORING PARTNERS

There are two ways to approach potential sponsors. You can ask for money or for giveaways. If you're learning how to organize your first 5K, it might be unrealistic to go after huge sponsors and ask for large amounts of cash. Start by asking sponsors to chip in for race supplies. For example, a local business could fund the race t-shirts and get logo placement on the shirts. Or a grocery store could donate finish line refreshments like sports drinks and power bars and get their banners hung along the fencing. If you do ask for cash, make sure it's small to begin with unless you are confident you have a generous benefactor.

MAP OUT YOUR PRE, DURING, AND POST EVENT CHECKLIST

Think about race day in three simple sections:

Pre-Race: This is the part where you welcome everyone, get the late-comers registered, sort out any issues with bibs or timing chips, set up signage, and ensure the course is safely coned off (or closed).

Main Event: For the race itself, make sure that water stations are ready, volunteers are in the right place, and your course is plotted and marked well. Preparation is key.

Post Event: Make the finish line a party. You should have music and refreshments for your participants, volunteers, and fans. People want to celebrate their accomplishment – if you entertain them, they will be more likely to return next year! Also, make sure you staff enough volunteers to help you break down and clean up. Or consider bringing in a fresh team to show up at the finish line. They'll be more motivated than your first volunteer crew!

EVENT CHECKLIST

The key to hosting a successful event is organization. So we've put together this simple checklist to help you and your fellow volunteers organize the details of upcoming events and activities. In the How to Fundraise for AMAR U.S. toolkit, we've put together some specific ideas for fundraising events, but if you're planning an event from scratch, this list is a good resource to help you get started. For the best results, we recommend that you use the checklist in the order that it's presented.

1. Identify your target audience and their interests. Who do you want to attend your event vs. who will attend your event? Knowing your target audience will help you to tailor the event to their interests and increase attendance.
2. Determine your purpose and goals. Is this a fundraising or awareness raising event? Or both? Clarify what you want to achieve so that time and financial resources are best utilized.
3. Choose the type of event. Steps 1 and 2 will help you narrow in on the type of event that you want. You can look through our catalogue of event ideas or create your own. Feel free to contact us if you want help deciding which type of event to plan.
4. Set a date. Consider the following factors when setting a date:
 - >> Conflicting events in your audience's schedule
 - >> Available venues that meet your event's needs
 - >> Give your ASC plenty of time to plan
5. Determine your budget. Consider what you'll have to purchase vs. what local vendors or organizations might donate. Calculate a break-even point and set a ticket price/fundraising goal.
6. Compile a list of what you will need for the event. Some items include food, rentals (i.e. linens, chairs, AV equipment), promotional materials (example: invitations and flyers), volunteers, giveaways, raffle or auction items, special guests, and other entertainment.
7. Book a venue. Work with your venue well in advance of the event to ensure availability.
8. Get commitments from volunteers. You've already determined your volunteer needs, now delegate event responsibilities to willing volunteers. Set clear deadlines and keep the lines of communication open so questions can be answered and tasks can be completed on time.
9. Be creative! Your prospective audience won't be excited about your event unless you are, so make it interesting and fun! Unique themes and hands-on activities will attract more guests and media interest.
10. Promote your event. Now that you've determined your what, when, where, why and who, it's time to spread the word! Make your marketing as exciting as the event itself. Use social media, press releases, flyers, posters, email announcements, postcards, etc.
11. Prepare for challenges. Things happen. Make sure that you think through scenarios such as bad weather, supplies running low, poor attendance. Take time to come up with some back-up plans.
12. Do a practice run. Think about the event from the attendee's perspective. Is the timeline appropriate? Is the venue easily accessible? What could be done to make things run smoother?
13. Enjoy your event! You've worked hard to get to this point, so take a moment to relax and enjoy yourself.
14. Debrief & Evaluate after the event. What worked and what didn't? Talk to attendees, volunteers, and special guests for feedback. Take notes so suggestions can be applied to future activities.
15. Show your appreciation. Send thank you notes to volunteers and donors when appropriate.

POST-EVENT REPORT

We want to hear from you after each event you host! Please complete this form and the e-newsletter sign-up sheet on page 13 and send them back to us so we can track your success and continue to grow our network. You can return forms via mail to the AMAR U.S. office at 1616 H Street NW, Suite 105, Washington, DC 20006 or email results to washingtondc@amarfoundation.org.

ASC CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS

ASC CITY OR CAMPUS

PHONE #

EMAIL

NAME OF EVENT

EVENT DATE

AMOUNT RAISED \$ _____ **TOTAL # IN ATTENDANCE** _____

COMMENTS: _____

Want to send photos or additional information? Email us pictures, blog posts, and other updates, and we'll be sure to feature the work of you and your fellow volunteers on our website and social networks!

