

Crowdfunding at A Glance

What is IU Crowdfunding?

IU Crowdfunding is an IU Foundation platform that connects donors with short-term fundraising campaigns that benefit IU students, faculty, staff, programs, and more. Crowdfunding campaigns can be established at any time of the year.

When should you use a Crowdfunding page vs Fund Page?

Crowdfunding is best utilized when:

- You have a story to tell, and you want to create a sense of urgency for a specific period of time.
- For an upcoming event or an anniversary are great ways to use the special nature of crowdfunding.
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Standard or Enhanced Fund Pages are best utilized when:

- You are simply looking for a static landing page to drive donors.

Want to use a Crowdfunding page?

Submit a crowdfunding request via [this](#) Workfront form. Crowdfunding submissions take approximately **three weeks** to complete. Before you submit your request consider the answers the following questions:

Required during form entry:

- What will the title of the campaign be?
- In 2 - 3 sentences, what are the campaign highlights?
- In a more detailed format, what other information do you want to share with your donors about this campaign, what impact can gifts make?
- What is the monetary goal of the campaign?
- What account number is your Crowdfunding page soliciting for?
- Will you be soliciting for gifts to the crowdfunding page? Is this via email, direct mail, and/or social media? What is the criteria of your solicitation audience?

Helpful to consider:

- What solicitation materials are you planning to send (i.e. letter, email, reply form) and what will the language on the material(s) be? These elements require approval.
- Timing, what is the timeline for donor solicitation?

For additional details see an in-depth guide below.



In-depth Crowdfunding Guide

Introduction to IU Crowdfunding

IU Crowdfunding is a fundraising channel that allows you to think outside the box, have fun, be creative, and provides accessibility for rallying your audience and getting them involved in fundraising for your cause.

When to use Crowdfunding

Your campaign is relatively short—two weeks is better than two months. The shorter time frame builds intensity and urgency.

You have the capacity to manage the campaign - a lot of pre-campaign planning, content preparation, and ongoing management throughout the campaign is required.

Best Practice at a Glance

BEST PRACTICE	MORE INFO
Develop a communications plan.	Thoughtful, consistent communication and marketing activities to your entire base of supporters via multiple channels.
Create a strong campaign page.	Use logos, images, videos, and other cohesive, compelling content to boost your cause.
Use email.	1 in 4 friends-ask-friends emails result in a donation; a great fundraiser sends emails to at least 15 people.
Leverage social media.	Those who use social media raise 40% more than non-users.
Keep people updated.	Use both email and social media to keep internal and external audiences in the loop.
Stand out by making it unique and fun.	Examples: "I'm going to write the name of every donor on my arms and legs, a badge/image supporters can share or a unique hashtag.
Thank everyone.	Use email and social media to thank donors. A mass thank-you should also be sent at the campaign's conclusion.

Best Practices For Communications

A successful campaign requires a strong multi-channel marketing effort, including:

- Make your **case for support**—what is needed and why it is needed in one sentence.
- Include a crystal-clear **call to action** in all materials.



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- Write talking points, emails, social posts, and other **content that your team can use**. Put these materials, along with photos, logos, etc., in a OneDrive folder where ambassadors and fundraisers can easily access them.
- Highlight the **personal and emotional** aspect of your cause.
- Write with a single person in mind; be conversational.
- Use **“you” language** and focus on the audience, not your program or cause.
- Leverage **storytelling and testimonials**. Use specific examples.
- Show as much as you tell, using **videos and photos**.
- Piggyback off **timely happenings** related to your cause, campus, or university—or even national or global events (e.g., anniversary; Homecoming; IU Day; etc.)
- Seize the opportunity to **be creative and have fun!**

Writing For Your Campaign Page

Before you complete your IU Crowdfunding Request form, you’ll need to have written and edited the content for your campaign page. There are optional page elements (like giving levels), but there are four things you **MUST** include:

1. Title of Campaign
2. Summary Message
3. More Info
4. Campaign Goal

Title of Campaign

Make your title memorable and easy to understand. Avoid institutional jargon and uncommon acronyms. Limit it to 100 characters.

EXAMPLE: Support IU’s Women in Technology Center

Why it works:

- Cause is clear.
- Leverage’s IU name recognition.
- Includes a call to action.

Summary Message

The summary message is your elevator pitch: an at-a-glance chance to sell your cause before someone clicks away. You have 500 characters.

EXAMPLE: *Be a part of history! Indiana University South Bend softball needs your support in their inaugural season. With your tax-deductible gift, you can make an impact and help shape student-athletes for years to come.*

WHY IT WORKS:

- Entices via exclusivity (*Be a part of history!*)
- Emphasizes why now.
- Establishes need.

More Information



The more info section lets you build on your summary to sell your cause. Tell a story, explain challenges, or share the campaign vision. Whatever you decide, be succinct and break content into scannable text blocks.

EXAMPLE: ***We believe all students deserve the same opportunities to be successful. We know what it's like to take an exam without eating breakfast first or to need a snack while working late on class projects. We want to make sure that every student on campus has access to the meals and snacks they need to fuel their academic dreams.***

Writing for Email

Throughout your campaign, use email to say different things to different audiences.

- Use simple words and keep it short—less than 50 characters.
- Don't trick people—promise only what you can deliver in the body of the email.
- Avoid words that cut open rates (donate, give, fundraise, help, support, etc.).
- Personalize (by name, locale, details) when possible/appropriate.

Body Copy

- Make your case for support quickly and clearly.
- Be sure that the action you want a reader to take is obvious.
- Break your content up into short lines of text that are easy to scan.
- Strive for a conversational, informal tone.
- Link to your campaign page
- Make it clear who the email is from (with the header, footer, or sign-off).
- Add a P.S. to give contact info, reinforce urgency, invite people to share, etc.

Best Practices for Social Media

There is no wrong way to promote your campaign on social media—the more often and more creatively you're getting your message out there, the better. Consult the "Crowdfunding Social Media Schedules" in the Crowdfunding Toolbox for more detailed guides.

Timeline

Determine the optimal timeframe to inform, prepare, activate, and thank your audience. Be sure to consider the following:

- **Don't wait until your campaign launches to talk about it.**
- Consider collecting emails or other forms of "sign-ups" for a **built-in audience that is aware and ready** to participate.
- Plan how you'll **keep people interested** during your campaign. You can only say "it's live!" once—what else is important about it?
- After your campaign concludes, **don't forget to thank** everyone who donated!



Audience

Identifying your audience can be harder than it sounds. Think about where to find people who will care about your cause, and who can help you find them:

- Think of ways to **mobilize passionate fans and coworkers** to spread the word.
- Create **shareable photos, graphics, videos**
- **Reach out to partners within the university**—and beyond—many of which have audiences who will find your message relevant.

OBJECTIVE

Donations shouldn't be the only thing you ask of your audience or talk to them about. Consider employing a variety of calls to action to help your campaign:

- Social **engagement is just as important as clicks**; ask questions, have friends tag others, or encourage fans to share your posts if they believe in your message.
- **Use a variety of media**: Videos encourage views, photos can allow people to tag each other, and graphics can be shared.
- When asking people to donate—or even just interact—**consider offers that can incite action**, like a match period, giveaway, or contest.

Anatomy of a Social Post

An effective social media post will consist of 5 primary elements.

1. POST COPY

Timely, attention-grabbing, and relevant information about why your campaign is important and needs attention NOW. Leverage a news item or holiday that makes today the perfect day to join the cause. Tell the story behind your cause: Who are you helping? Why? What is the hopeful outcome?

2. MEDIA

A promo video, campaign image, infographic, or something in-between.

3. CALL TO ACTION

A clear, concise instruction for what to do next. Example: *Donate and help students today!*

4. LINK

A URL directly to your campaign page or, if pre-launch, an info page or sign-up form.

5. ADDITIONAL INFO

If your campaign is part of a large movement, like *#IUcrowdfunding*, or a specific event, like *#IUday*, use a hashtag to quickly inform your audience that you're part of something larger, and to help define your cause and your moment

For questions email [IUF Annual Giving](#) or contact your Annual Giving Account Manager.