



# Friends for Life Bike Rally Fundraising Guide

# Welcome

Thank you for becoming a Bike Rally participant!  
Whether this is your first time riding with us or your twenty-first, fundraising is a big part of the experience.

We know that a lot of you would rather skip this part—asking for money can feel uncomfortable for a lot of us. It’s important to remember that you’re not asking your contacts to give money to you, you’re asking them to support the large community that benefits from the life-changing programs and services provided by PWA, Trellis and ACCM.

We’ve put together this guide to help make your fundraising journey more enjoyable and more successful. Once you get immersed in the process, fundraising can be fun—and it’s exciting to watch your total donations grow as you get closer to your ride.

In this guide, we will help you:

- 1. Set up your Participant Centre page .....3
- 2. Set your fundraising goals (then smash them!) .....6
- 3. Fundraise at your workplace .....8
- 4. Fundraise using social media .....9
- 5. Hold fundraising events .....12

## Let's get started!

If you need more fundraising support after reading this guide, please contact us at: [fundraising@bikerally.org](mailto:fundraising@bikerally.org)

We want you to succeed and we're here to help!



# Set up your Participant Centre page

First, let's get your page set up so you can start accepting donations. The Participant Centre is your home page for fundraising. It's the perfect place to set the tone for your campaign.

## Create your profile

As soon as you register for the ride, you'll have access to your [personal fundraising page](#). Upload a profile picture so that your contacts can see they're in the right place. Personalize the page right away to share your story and your goals with potential donors who will be inspired to support your ride. This is the place to tell everyone why the Bike Rally is important to you, and what the funds they donate will do for the PWA, Trellis and ACCM communities.

Sharing a personal story on this page will encourage more and larger donations than using the default message. It's worth taking the time to explain your own connection to the event:

- Is this your first Bike Rally or have you been participating for years?
- Is this the farthest you've ever tried to ride?
- What is your personal connection to the cause? Have the organizations' services made a difference for you or someone you know?
- Why is this cause so important to you?

This is also the time to set your (first) fundraising goal. If you're feeling nervous about raising enough money, you can set it to the minimum amount listed in the section below called "Set your fundraising goals (then smash them!)," but we encourage you to set your sights higher and aim for the stars.

☆+ A great way to get started is to make the first donation yourself. That will get the ball rolling and show your commitment to the event.





## Send fundraising emails

Gather email addresses for everyone in your network who might help you reach your fundraising goals: family, friends, colleagues, teams you're on, clients, etc. Don't be shy about reaching a wide audience. You might be surprised to see who donates!

We provide some email templates that you can use if you're not sure where to begin. They tell your contacts about the amazing programs and services that their donations will provide to members of the HIV/AIDS community. You can find them in the Participant Centre in the drop-down menu.

But it's even better to make your message personal by writing your own email. Tell your contacts why it's important to you to support the Bike Rally. Share a moving or inspiring story if you can (It can be the same one you used on your profile page). Try to keep your email short (no more than 3 or 4 paragraphs) and don't forget to share your fundraising goal.

You can also include information about what the funds raised will pay for (see the email templates or our fundraising graphics at [bikerally.org/fundraising](http://bikerally.org/fundraising)) or provide some statistics about the ongoing challenges for people living with HIV in Canada (you can find them at [www.catie.ca/essentials/statistics/hiv-statistics](http://www.catie.ca/essentials/statistics/hiv-statistics)).

**Get that first email out as early as possible to start your donations coming in.**



## Fundraising Golden Nugget

“Share the journey with your donors, tell your story of why you participate and tell the agency story and the cause it supports. Connection to the cause will lead to a financial outcome.”

Robb Walker  
15-Year  
Participant



### Send follow-ups and thank-yous

Did you know that most people need to see two or three email messages before they give? Perhaps your first email didn't come at a good time, or they intended to donate but didn't get around to it. Send a follow-up email to your list every few weeks to remind them that there's still time to support you. You can provide an update on how you are progressing toward your fundraising goal and any training you're doing. Let your contacts know about fundraising events you're planning. Keep your messages fresh by changing the content each time you email. Bring your contacts along on your journey.

You will get an email alert every time someone donates to you online. Send your donors a personal message right away to thank them for their generosity and encourage them to let others know about your ride.

We provide templates for follow-up and thank you emails in the Participant Centre as well. You can use those if you're not sure what to say.

When you reach your fundraising goal, send out an announcement to your whole email list, and tell them about your new, higher goal (we'll talk about that next).

### Keep the momentum going!

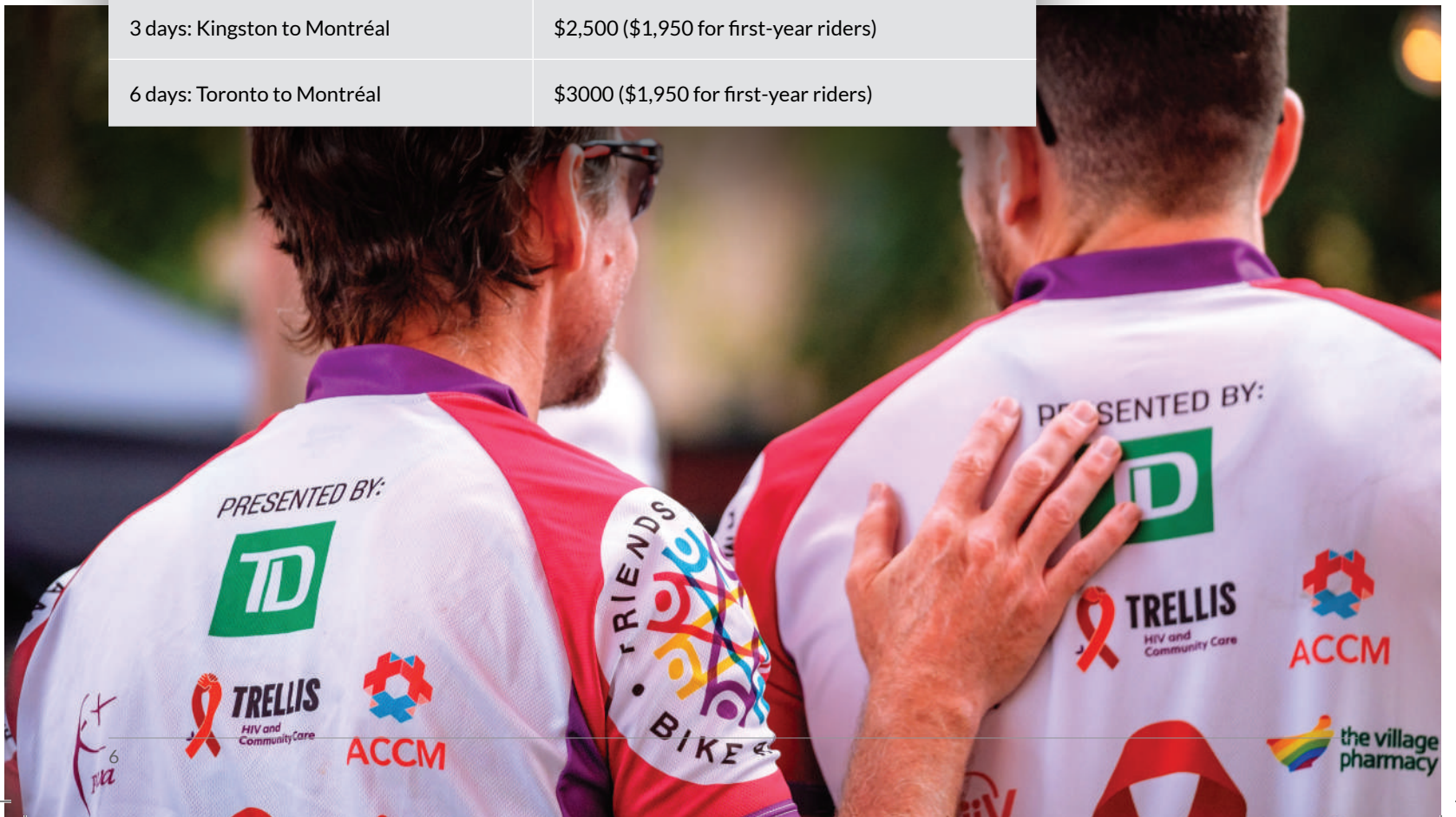
# Set your fundraising goals (then smash them!)

## Minimum fundraising amounts

Participants in the Bike Rally enjoy a lot of support during the ride, and our dedicated volunteers work hard to make the experience fun for everyone. Among other things, we provide all of your food and transport your gear from camp to camp for you. To make sure we have the resources to support all of our riders and raise enough funds for the organizations to run their programs and services, we need you to raise a minimum dollar value in donations. Of course, we hope you'll raise much more than the minimum! This is just a starting point.

Your fundraising minimum depends on how far you'll be riding. Because fundraising can be a challenge for first-time participants, there is a special, lower minimum for first-time riders participating in the longer rides. This table shows the minimum amounts you need to fundraise.

YOUR RIDE	YOUR FUNDRAISING MINIMUM
1 day: Toronto to Port Hope	\$950
3 days Toronto to Kingston	\$2,500 (\$1,950 for first-year riders)
3 days: Kingston to Montréal	\$2,500 (\$1,950 for first-year riders)
6 days: Toronto to Montréal	\$3000 (\$1,950 for first-year riders)



## Set higher goals

The minimum amounts are a great starting point, but a lot of our participants raise much more! Setting an ambitious (but achievable) goal can really motivate you to supercharge your fundraising campaign.

We recommend that you keep a close eye on your fundraising total over time, and increase your goal each time you reach it. Increasing your goal gives you a perfect opportunity to reach out again to your contacts who have not donated yet—and even those who have.

Team goals are also a great way to boost your fundraising. Since everyone in the Bike Rally is part of a team, you can help each other by



### Fundraising Golden Nugget

“Remember you’re not alone...join with other teammates [or the fundraising coaches] and ask for their help!”

**David LeBlanc**  
2-Year Participant



cross-promoting your fundraising events and showing up to support your team members. A bit of healthy competition between members of your team can also spur you on to higher donation totals, if you’re the competitive type!

## Get incentives for reaching higher goals

To help keep you motivated, we’ve also set specific stretch goals for participants. If you reach any of these levels, you’ll be rewarded with a variety of gifts and perks that will add more luxury to your ride.

**4K**

### 4K CLUB

Raise \$4,000 or more



### TOP FUNDRAISER

Raise \$6,500 or more (receive an exclusive Top Fundraiser cycling jersey)

**10K**

### 10K CLUB

Raise \$10,000 or more

The gifts and incentives change from year to year, depending on who sponsors them. Some of the past perks have included:

- Cycling gloves
- Cycling sleeves
- Vintage jerseys
- Cycling caps
- Access to a Top Fundraiser lounge
- Preferred parking

# Fundraise at your workplace

## Ask for corporate donations

Asking your employer to support your ride is a great way to get larger donations than individuals can typically afford. You may want to begin by speaking with your direct manager to find out about the company policy on charity events. You can also contact the leader of your company’s environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives. If the Bike Rally is aligned with your company’s social goals, they may be able to offer you a donation or even hold an event to raise funds for you.

## Fundraise from your colleagues and use matching programs

Ask your manager if you can include a link to your fundraising page in your internal email signature. That way, everyone who works with you will know what you’re doing and can donate as soon as they see the link. Otherwise, your colleagues may get distracted by other tasks and forget to visit your fundraising page, even though they were planning to support you. They are at work, after all.

Find out whether your company has a matching program for charitable donations. Many workplaces do —especially larger companies. If they have one, donations from your work colleagues may be matched dollar-for-dollar by the company. This can grow your fundraising total twice as fast, and help you reach your goal. If your company doesn’t have a program but is open to the idea, we can help them set one up. [Contact us](#) to find out how.

## Hold fundraising events at work

Your employer may let you set up a fundraising event (or a bunch of them) at work. Ask the company to donate prizes to create extra incentives. You can also ask some of your colleagues whether they have prizes to donate. Here are some ideas that can bring in more donations:

- Bake sale
- Pizza lunch (or barbeque or chili cook-off)
- Trivia tournament (at lunch or after hours)
- 50/50 draw
- Raffle for prizes (or for a paid day off)
- Silent auction
- Talent show
- Paper airplane competition (in the parking lot or any open area)



## Fundraising Golden Nugget

“Put your social media presence on overdrive: Document everything and be sure to include your donation page link. Message frequency = donations!”

**Seamus Butterly**  
4-Year Participant & Fundraising Coach







# Fundraise using social media

## Ask your networks for donations

Most people have extensive social media networks these days, and reaching out to all those people (yes, even the ones you haven't seen since high school) is a great way to get more donations. Whatever platforms you use, be sure to keep your followers and connections updated about your preparations for the Bike Rally and let them know how your fundraising is going. Catch their eye with photos or videos from your training rides.

You can tag the **Bike Rally (@f4lbr)** in your posts or add our hashtag (**#f4lbr**) to make sure they're seen by anyone looking for Bike Rally updates.

Use your social posts to appeal directly for donations by including a link to your donation page. Make your posts entertaining, funny, inspiring or emotional to move people to donate. We've provided some graphics that you can download from our website's [fundraising page](#) to use on your own social media channels.

If you're holding live fundraising events, you can livestream or live tweet them, and afterward you can share photos and videos. Again, make sure you always include the link to your donation page to make it easy for people to donate.

## Engage with our official channels

The Bike Rally is active on **Facebook** and **Instagram**.

Follow our accounts and share some of our posts with your network to get your followers excited about the event. Whenever you share a post, be sure to include a link to your donation page and ask people to donate whatever they can.

Your followers will also see your comments on our posts, so be sure to engage with us regularly and keep the conversations going. Cheer on the other participants and share your enthusiasm!





## Post more often around special dates

There is always a period from mid-May to mid-June when a sponsor matches all donations to Bike Rally participants. This makes it a great time to post on social media a lot. We supply special graphics on our [fundraising page](#) that you can use to let your supporters know that their donations will make twice the difference during this period.

It's also a good idea to piggyback on specific days that are connected to your fundraising. For example, post reminders leading up to and on #GivingTuesday (the first Tuesday after US Thanksgiving) or World AIDS Day (December 1) asking people to support your ride and linking to your donation page.

## Set up challenges

Make your fundraising more interactive by setting up challenges. You can challenge your followers to do something, or offer to do something if they donate, or both. Here are some examples:

- **Polar plunge:** Offer to jump into Lake Ontario (or another lake) in exchange for donations.
- **Exercise challenge:** For every \$100 donated, you'll livestream yourself doing 100 push-ups or squats (or whatever you can do).
- **Dedications:** Your supporters may want to share a story or the name of someone they're honouring by making a donation.

Let your imagination run wild. Any new idea will attract attention, and hopefully attract more donations too.

## MATCHING GIFT CONTEST



**6-Day Rider**  
Recipient of  
\$250 Donation



**Crew Member**  
Recipient of  
\$250 Donation

For every \$200 raised during the Matching Gift Campaign (May 15 - June 15) you'll receive one entry into a draw to win 1 of 10 \$250 donations (2 winners per week), to be added to your personal fundraising page.

## Set up a fundraiser on Facebook

To keep things simple, we encourage all Riders and Crew to use your Bike Rally participant page for the bulk of your fundraising. However, raising money on Facebook (especially the birthday fundraising feature) can be a great way to easily receive gifts from your online network.

**If you choose to set up a fundraiser on Facebook, please keep the following in mind:**

1. Select Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA) as the beneficiary charity. The Friends For Life Bike Rally is not listed. If you are raising funds for ACCM or Trellis, please still select PWA so that the funds can be credited to your Bike Rally page. The money will be dispersed to your chosen organization.
2. Facebook does not give PWA any of your donor's information, just the funds. We will not be able to give you the donor's contact information in the future if you want to reach out to them again.
3. Your donors will receive a tax receipt from the Facebook PayPal Foundation, not from the Bike Rally. In the future we will not be able to re-issue any tax receipts to them.
4. When your fundraiser is complete, you'll receive an email from Facebook summarizing what you've raised. Please forward this email to [mmarchand@pwatoronto.org](mailto:mmarchand@pwatoronto.org). We do not receive any information about who is running the fundraiser (ie. you!), so we'll need this email to credit your Bike Rally fundraising page.
5. PWA doesn't receive the actual funds from the Facebook Foundation until 3-4 months later, however if you send us the summary email mentioned above, we can immediately credit your page.



**It's not even about who you know, but more about how many people you know.**  
**On average, it will take 18 donations to reach \$1,000.**



## Hold fundraising events

### Host live events

Live events can be a great way to get a lot of donations in one day, but they also take a lot of effort and planning. If you're the sort of person who loves to throw a party, this could be a perfect fundraising method for you.

One way to fundraise from live events is to sell tickets to something, like a concert, casino night, comedy show, play or sporting event. Try to get all the people involved to donate their time (and the venue to donate the space) so that all of the money you receive goes directly to your Bike Rally fundraising total.

Here are some other live event fundraising ideas:

- Auction or silent auction
- Bake sale or ice cream social
- Dinner party or potluck
- Endurance event (e.g. spinathon, danceathon)
- Trivia night
- Karaoke night
- Yard sale (ask friends and family to donate items)
- Car wash
- Holiday gift wrapping booth (ask to hold it at your local mall, community centre, school or place of worship)

### Maximize donations at your events

Once you have people gathered for your events, take advantage of your captive audience to raise even more donations. Here are some ideas:

- Place a friend at a table just inside the entrance to collect additional donations
- Have a laptop or tablet on hand so people can easily donate directly on your donation page
- Sell raffle tickets for donated prizes and draw winners at the event
- Hold a 50/50 draw

### Host online events

If your supporters are spread out over multiple cities (or countries)—or planning a live event sounds like an overwhelming task—you can hold an online event instead. Most people are now used to gathering on video platforms like Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams, and you can use these or other platforms to bring people together.

Ask people who attend to donate whatever they can, but it's a good idea to provide a suggested amount or a minimum donation. You can even sell "tickets" ahead of time and only send the event link to people who make a donation. Use your social media networks to let everyone know about your event and provide a link or email address they can use to sign up.

During the event, use the platform's "chat" feature to post the link to your donation page to encourage even more donations. Here are some ideas for online events:

- Talent show
- Trivia tournament
- Classes/tutorials (e.g. cooking, dancing)
- Auction
- Storytelling
- Concert



**YOU'RE READY—  
GO GET THOSE DONATIONS!**

We wish you great success on your fundraising journey—and we look forward riding with you in August as your hard work raising money and training culminates in a fun, challenging and community-spirited event!

Need more fundraising support? Contact us at [fundraising@bikerally.org](mailto:fundraising@bikerally.org)



[bikerally.org](http://bikerally.org)