

**THE BEGINNER'S
GUIDE TO**

Planning a Run / Walk Event

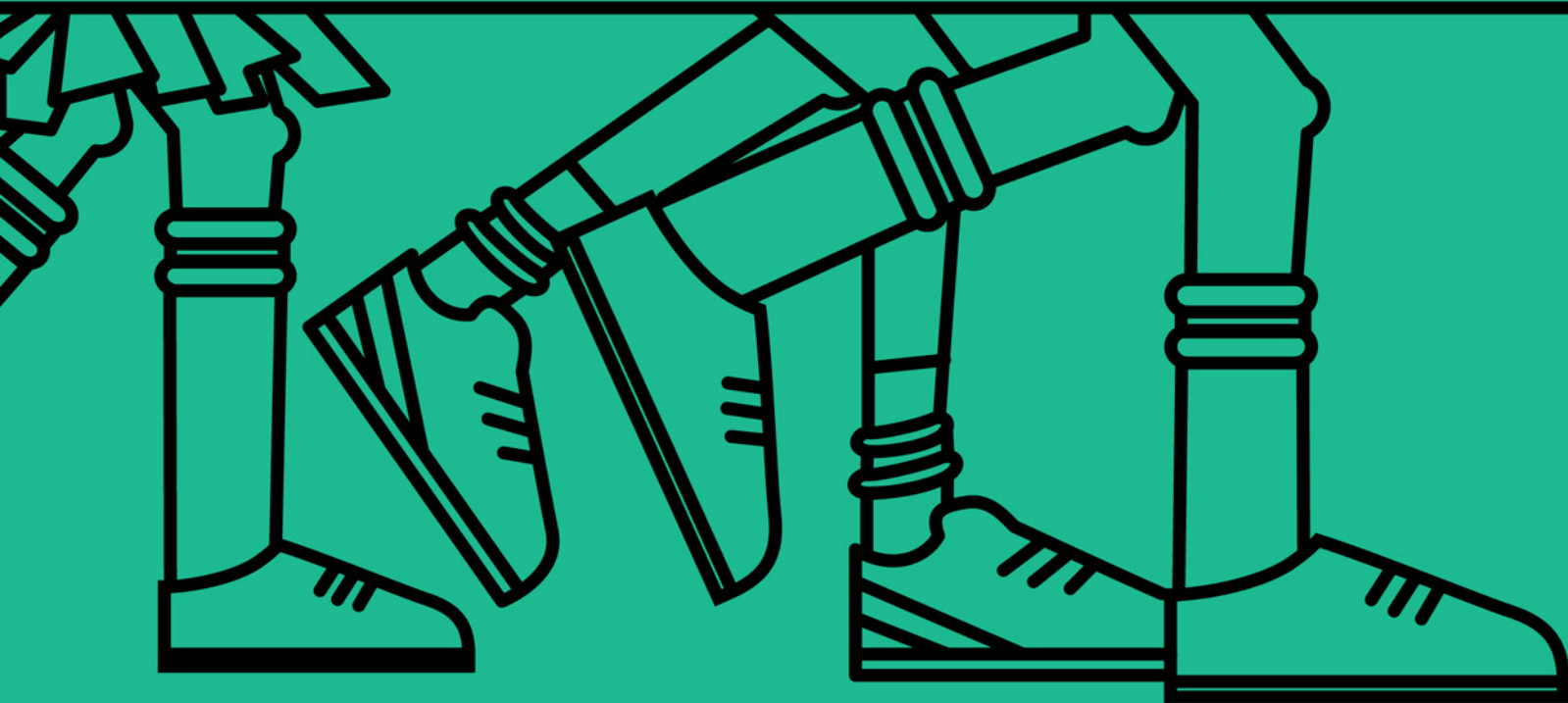


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Introduction

The fact that run/walks are classic fundraising events for nonprofit organizations doesn't make them any easier to plan and execute. Like any event, attendance and fundraising results are very important, but run/walks involve extra challenges and expenses including marketing, registration, and safety.

This guide will walk you through the process of organizing a charity run/walk event for your organization, covering logistics like choosing a date, location, and t-shirts, along with volunteer management, budgeting, and promotion.

If you're ready to start planning your run/walk, let's get started!

Chapter 1

Start with the Big Questions

You need to answer five main questions in order to plan a successful event. Who, what, when, where, and why. They're the same five questions writers use when crafting a story. These questions lay the foundation for the plot and they will also help you structure your fundraising event.

We'll go through these important questions to lay out your event and start planning. If you already have one of these areas defined, you can start with that and move on to other points in whatever order makes sense for you.

WHAT? What kind of run/walk event are you putting on?

You have lots of options, including a short fun run, a trail run or hike, a 10K or half marathon, or the classic 5K distance. Knowing what kind of event you want to put on will help you establish the rest of the details.

Here are a few questions to help you decide what kind of event is right for your organization and community:

- **How active/physically fit is your audience and community?**
- **How many races and other physical challenges take place where you are?**
- **What size event is your organization capable of running? (Look to past events and potential volunteers.)**
- **How much space can you find for this event?**
- **Do you want this to be a competitive race or a fun run?**

It's also good to keep in mind that you can include more than one physical event. For example, if you're hosting a 5K, you can also add a one-mile fun run for kids. Just don't overextend yourself. It's better to do one event really well than commit to too much and execute poorly.

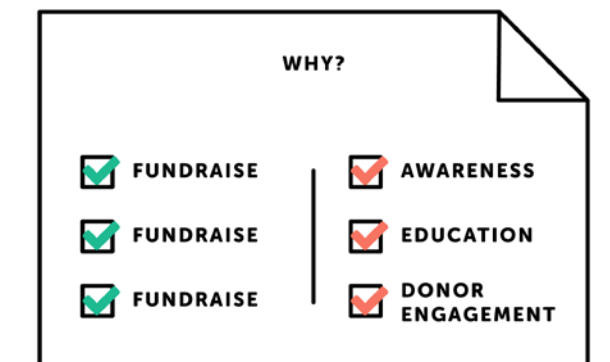
You can also add workshops, entertainment, and other activities to draw bigger crowds and more supporters.

WHY? Why are you putting on this event?

There are actually two sides to the question. The first part is establishing the outcomes you want to achieve with this event. In this guide, we will assume fundraising is a priority for the reader, but *are there other objectives for your event, such as community awareness, donor engagement, and public education?*

Here are the primary goals that drive most nonprofit run/walk events:

- **Fundraising.** Raise money for your organization through registration fees, peer-to-peer fundraising, and sponsorships.
- **Awareness.** Create awareness in the community, not just about your cause but about your organization. Reach a larger audience in future initiatives and fundraising campaigns.
- **Education.** You can make the day about fitness and nutrition, the environment, or any theme that's relevant to your cause. Use the event to empower people to take action.
- **Donor Engagement and Acquisition.** Create a face-to-face experience to bond supporters with the organization. Share results through some kind of display.



Whenever you have to make tough decisions or feel like the event is getting off track, refer to the goals of the run/walk to guide your decisions.

The *other side* of the why question is the *theme or reasoning you show the public*. Are they running for a specific program? Is it an annual event to cover operating costs? Is it to fix a structure or buy a van?

This helps participants connect the event to a positive social outcome.

Donors and fundraisers both like to have concrete goals for their involvement with a nonprofit.

Emphasizing the impact this event will have can help keep participants focused and motivated.

WHO? Who will be supporting and participating?

An event is only as good as the people involved. And it's not just about the participants.

First, you should think about who will be spearheading and leading the initiative. It may be one person at your nonprofit or a whole department. You could partner with another nonprofit or you could partner with a business or social club. *When it comes down to it, who will be responsible for the success of the event?*

You should also consider your pool of volunteers. Run/walk events require a lot of support. If your organization already has a strong volunteer program, that's great, but you can also reach out to schools, churches, and businesses to recruit more volunteers. You can estimate how many volunteers you will need based on the number of participants and the different amenities and activities at your run/walk.

Ultimately, though, it's better to have too many volunteers than too few.

Finally, who is going to be ready to run on the big day? Start by looking at your audience of donors and supporters and how many of them are likely to get involved. You should also look at other local events and reach out to fitness groups. People who have run in other races are great prospects for your event. Get in touch with local high school and college cross-country and track teams, too. Even if they don't all participate, they can help spread the word to the local running community.

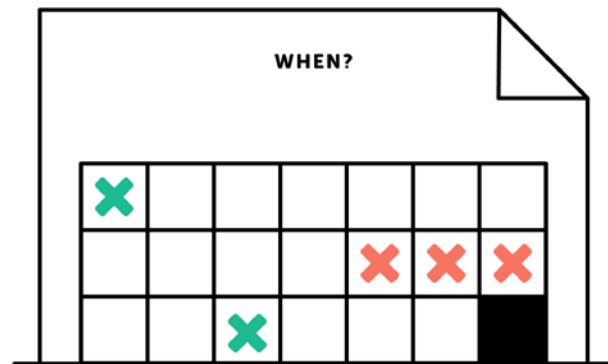
WHEN? When will your run/walk take place?

The sooner you set the date, the better. People can't mark their calendar and reserve the date if your 5K is "sometime in May." Unfortunately, setting a date goes hand in hand with finding a location (which we'll get into next).

To start, look at your organization's main calendar to see which dates are out of the question. Choose some potential days (mostly likely a few Saturdays and/or Sundays) to work with and then move on to your city's event calendar. You don't want to compete with another race or parade that falls around the same time.

Finally, scout potential spaces such as parks, trails, or schools and find out when they are available. Ideally, you'll be able to find a date that works for you, doesn't overlap with another event, and is also available at your location. If the stars don't align the first time around, consider whether or not your organization can move its calendar around,

if your potential audience will be drawn by a competing event, or if you're willing to change locations. Consider how each of your options will support your goals and make a decision from there.

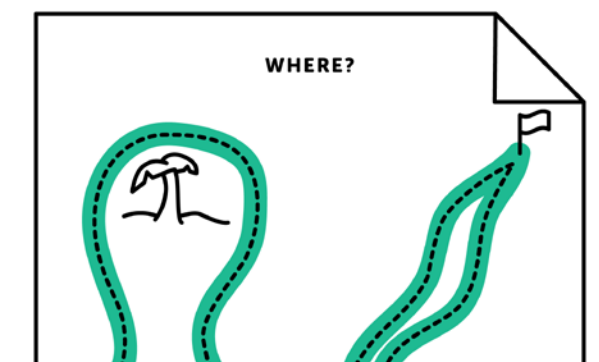


WHERE? Where will your run/walk start and finish?

You have to start somewhere. You have to end somewhere too. When and where are closely intertwined so you should work on both issues at the same time.

Consider these factors:

- **Are there any viable locations near your nonprofit's office?**
- **Where have other community events like this been held?**
- **Which locations are convenient for local residential neighborhoods?**
- **Are these locations close to local businesses and potential sponsors?**
- **Will you have to pay to use this location? How much?**
- **Will potential locations have enough space for a run/walk of this length?**
- **How many people do you expect to attend the event?**
- **Does the location have adequate parking space for your event?**



You will have to juggle several priorities when making this decision. On the one hand you want to keep cost and labor down, so you have to think about travel time, accessibility, and venue costs. But you also want a place that will work for your run/walk course and any educational or entertainment features that you plan to incorporate. Always keep in mind that your run/walk course can be multiple laps of a single path or an out and back with a turnaround point.

Takeaways from Chapter 1

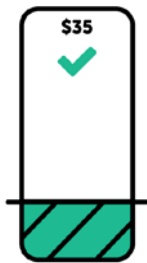
- **Begin planning your run/walk by determining the goals and purpose of the event.** This may include fundraising, awareness, education, and donor engagement.
- Consider your network of supporters, and the local interest in fitness, to help **decide the length and size of your event.** Take note of potential volunteer communities.
- **Set a date and location early** on to help with planning and promotion of your run/walk. Compare the availability of possible locations with your ideal event dates.

Chapter 2

Fundraising, Budgeting, and Registration

One of the primary aims of charity run/walks is to raise money for the cause and the good news is that nonprofits now have a variety of ways to accomplish this. This chapter will introduce some of the most common fundraising models and explain their pros and cons. We'll also cover how to prepare a budget for your event to help you make financial decisions and keep you on track as the big day approaches.

Run/Walk Fundraising Models



TICKETED EVENTS

Anyone who participates in run/walks and races knows that there is typically a registration fee. Often, the fee will be smallest for those who register beforehand and increase the week or day of the event. This is probably the simplest and most straightforward fundraising model for a run/walk event.

If you choose to stick with a simple ticket or registration fee, it can be easier to project your expected revenue because you simply multiply the number of entrants by the fee they paid. The biggest drawback of the ticketed events model, especially for run/walks, is that it limits your fundraising potential. It's kind of like only accepting donations of a certain size. Why ask someone for a \$35 gift if they are willing to give more or fundraise for the cause?

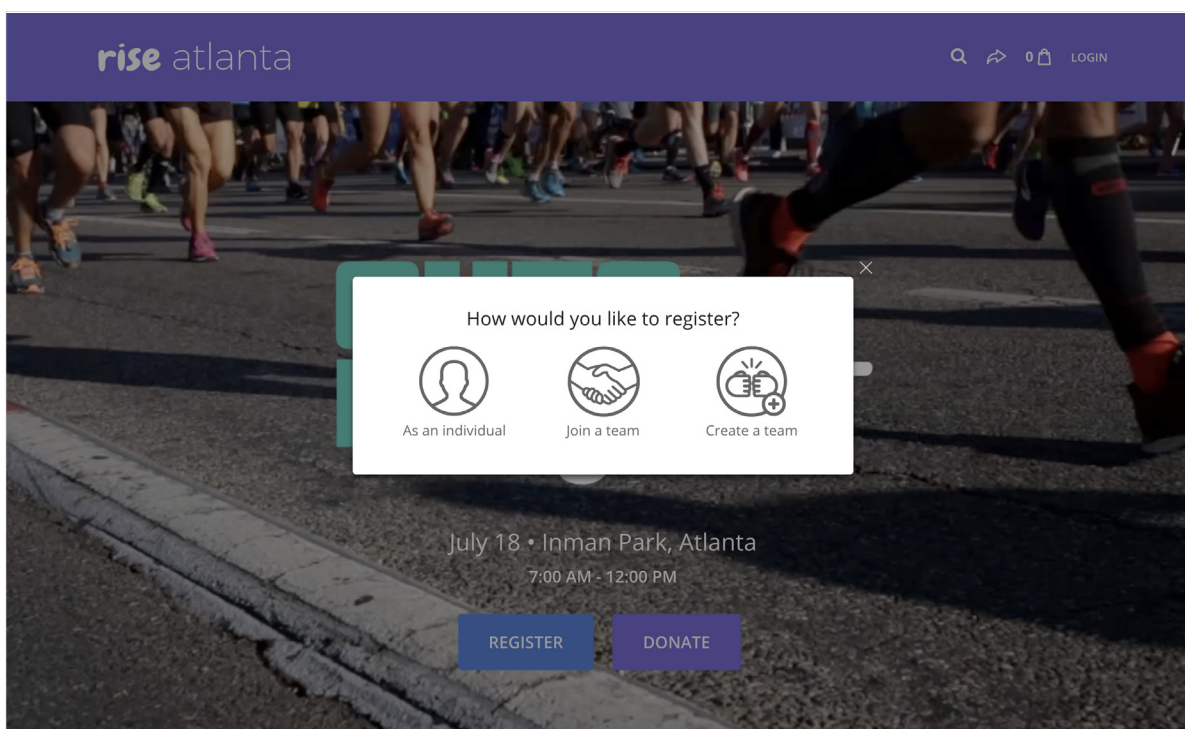
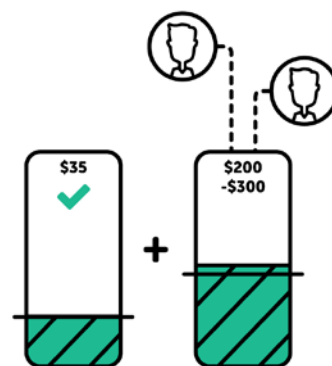
A screenshot of the 'rise atlanta' website's registration interface. The page is divided into two main sections: 'Select registrations' and 'Your Order'.

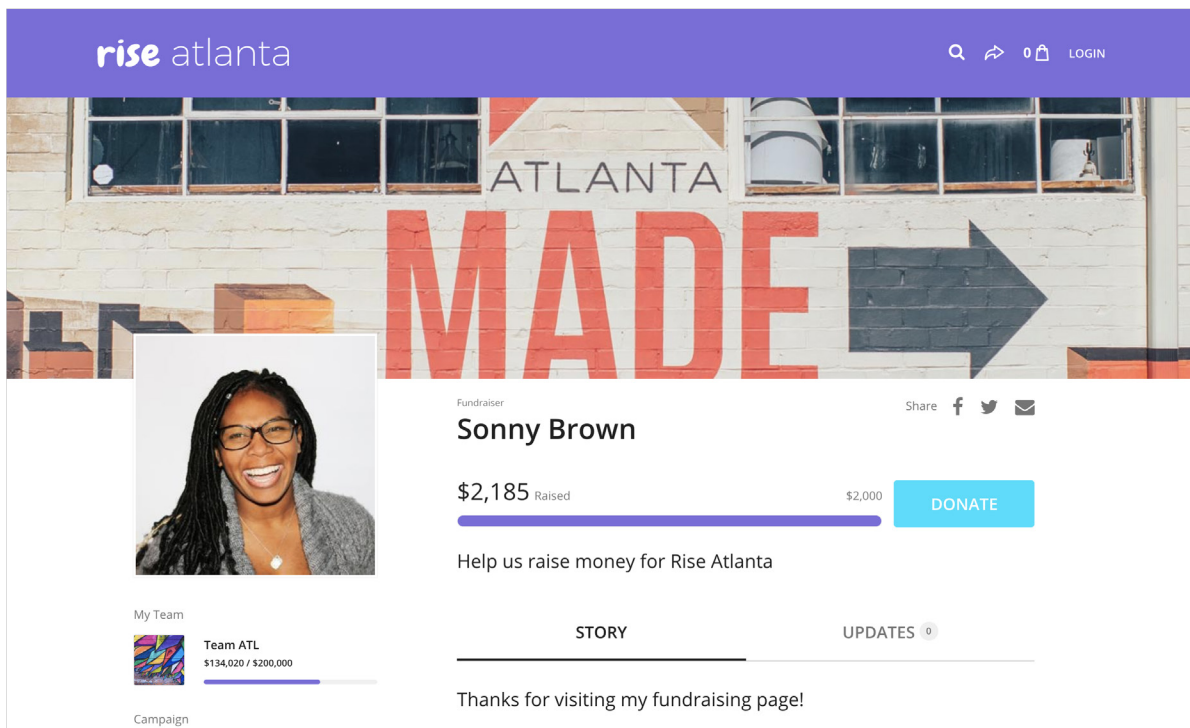
The 'Select registrations' section has two rows:
1. 'Adults': Includes registration for the event, standard race bib, and race shirt. Price: \$175.00. Quantity: 1 (with minus and plus buttons).
2. 'Students': Includes registration for the event, standard race bib, and race shirt. Must have .edu email address. Price: \$120.00. Quantity: 0 (with minus and plus buttons).

The 'Your Order' section on the right shows:
- 'Adults Attendee 1' for \$175.00 with a 'Remove' link.
- A prompt to 'Add a promo code on the next step'.
- A summary table:
 Subtotal: \$175.00
 Service Fee: \$13.19
 Total: \$188.19
- A purple 'RESERVE' button at the bottom.

REGISTRATION WITH FUNDRAISING

Registration with fundraising retains the simplicity of a registration fee but opens the door for additional revenue through peer-to-peer fundraising. Participants register for the event and pay the fee to gain entry, but after that a personal fundraising page is automatically created and participants have the choice to fundraise more for the cause.





Of course, because the fundraising element is optional, you're not guaranteed any extra donations. With a little promotion and guidance, however, you might motivate some of your participants to reach out to their friends and family. Setting a suggested fundraising goal can give fundraisers something to work toward. You can even offer a prize or award to the supporter who raises the most.

SPONSORSHIPS

Registration fees and peer-to-peer fundraising aren't the only possible revenue sources for a charity run/walk. Sponsorships are a big part of these events and may come in the form of cash gifts or in-kind donations. Businesses are usually acknowledged in race materials, on event T-shirts, and publicly thanked at the event, so recruiting sponsors early on will make it easier to finalize the design of banners and T-shirts. If you do get a last-minute sponsorship, make sure the business is aware of what materials are already printed and tell them how you will be thanking them.

Drafting a Budget

Just as it's important to plan for the event's revenue, event organizers must also budget for a run/walk's expenses. Run/walk events typically have higher overhead than a traditional fundraising campaign, due to the costs of equipment, first aid, insurance, T-shirts, and other amenities. Creating a budget beforehand will help you make many smaller decisions and inform your fundraising goals as well.

Begin by making a list of all the projected expenses of the event. Your list may look something like this.

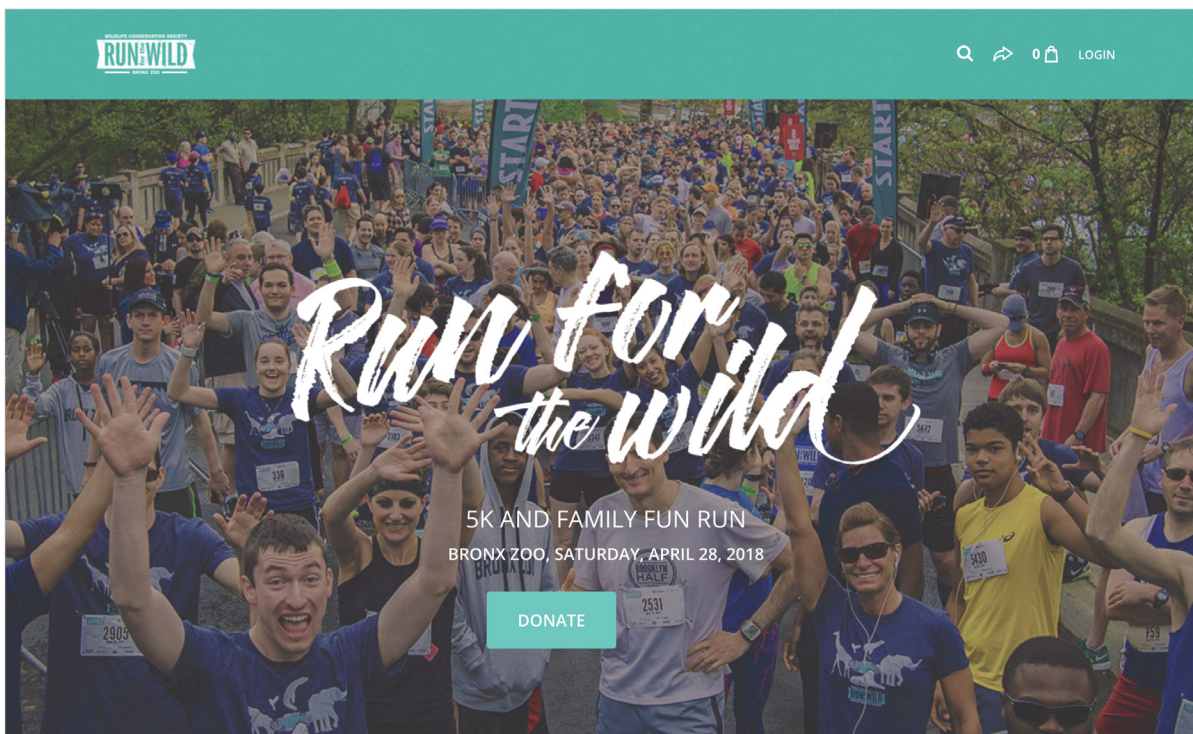
RUN/WALK EXPENSES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Insurance | ☐ T-shirts |
| ☐ Permits | ☐ Race Numbers |
| ☐ Marketing/Promotion | ☐ First Aid |
| ☐ Portable Toilets | ☐ Post-Race Food |
| ☐ Timing Equipment Rental | ☐ Water coolers and cups |
| ☐ Sound System Rental | ☐ Miscellaneous Supplies |
| ☐ Table and Chairs | |

You can then look into pricing specific to your location and number of participants. You may be starting out with a specific amount allocated for the event. In that case, it may be necessary to use your budget to determine how large your event will be.

Event and Registration Pages

Once you've decided on the main elements of your event, you can create your event page and registration page. This is a page people will look to for information on the time, location, and details of the event, and where they will register and begin the fundraising process.



The purpose of your event page is to get interested people to register and donate to your cause. Begin by branding the page to your organization. This can be as simple as adding your colors and logo to the page. From there you can add event details, images, and videos for the audience to engage with and learn from. It's also a good idea to include a fundraising goal for the event.

From your event page, a viewer should be able to ...

- **Register**
- **Donate**
- **Learn more about your organization**






[LOGIN](#)

Select registrations

Adults Includes registration for the event, standard race bib, and race shirt.	225.00 - 1 +
Students Includes registration for the event, standard race bib, and race shirt. Must have .edu email address	\$120.00 - 0 +
Virtual Racer Can't make it to the race? Run or cheer from the sidelines of your hometown! Includes race shirt.	\$95.00 - 0 +

Your Order

Adults	\$225.00
Attendee 1	Remove
Add a promo code on the next step	
Subtotal	\$225.00
Service Fee	\$13.19
Total	\$238.19
RESERVE	

Once someone clicks on the button to register or buy a ticket, they should be taken immediately to the checkout page. Here you will collect names, contact information, and registration fee payment. You can also add custom questions, such as asking what size T-shirt the person wants.

If you're using registration with fundraising, the participant will then be prompted to personalize their fundraising page.

Takeaways from Chapter 2

- Nonprofits can use a variety of fundraising models in their run/walk event including:
 - **Ticketed Events** in which the participant pays a flat fee.
 - **Registration with Fundraising** in which participants pay a flat fee and then have the option to use peer-to-peer to fundraise for the organization.
- To help make financial decisions and stay on track, **list out all the event's expenses and budget accordingly.**
- **Create your event and registration pages.** Include the information your audience needs, but keep the registration process simple and streamlined.

Chapter 3

Logistics and Details

There are lots of things to consider when planning your run/walk and once you have answered some of the big questions from chapter one, you can dive into more details. It's important to know who else will be involved with this event and get in contact with them early. Establishing sponsors and partners from the beginning will make the planning process simpler. You will also have to settle on what amenities you will provide at your run/walk. And of course, with any event there are safety and security concerns to consider and plan for.

Who Are You Working With?

PARTNERS

It's not unusual for organizations to collaborate on run/walks and other events. It allows them to share the responsibility and expense, but also the profit. Decide early on if this will be a joint venture or if your nonprofit will be the sole beneficiary.



As with any organizational partnership, make sure both sides have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Clearly state each organization's role and any share of the revenue and get the agreement in writing.

If you choose to go it alone, that doesn't mean you can't still reach out to your local nonprofit community. Share news of your event and encourage them to participate. You can even offer space for related organizations to set up tables and share their message.

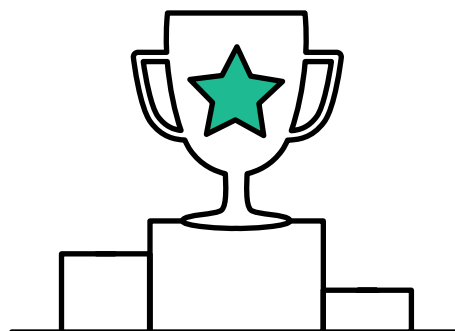
SPONSORS

With sound and timing equipment, amenities, and administration costs, a run/walk can quickly build up a lot of expenses. One way to offset these costs is to recruit sponsors from your local community.

Sponsors can contribute cash or in-kind contributions. For example, you could ask a local café to donate breakfast food for participants to enjoy when they finish. Grocery stores may be willing to provide bottled water or other foodstuffs.

Of course, sponsors will want some kind of acknowledgment in return, whether it's their logo on the event T-shirt or a banner at the starting line. Many organizations create a tier system for sponsorship, in which different donation amounts offer different levels of recognition. For example, top

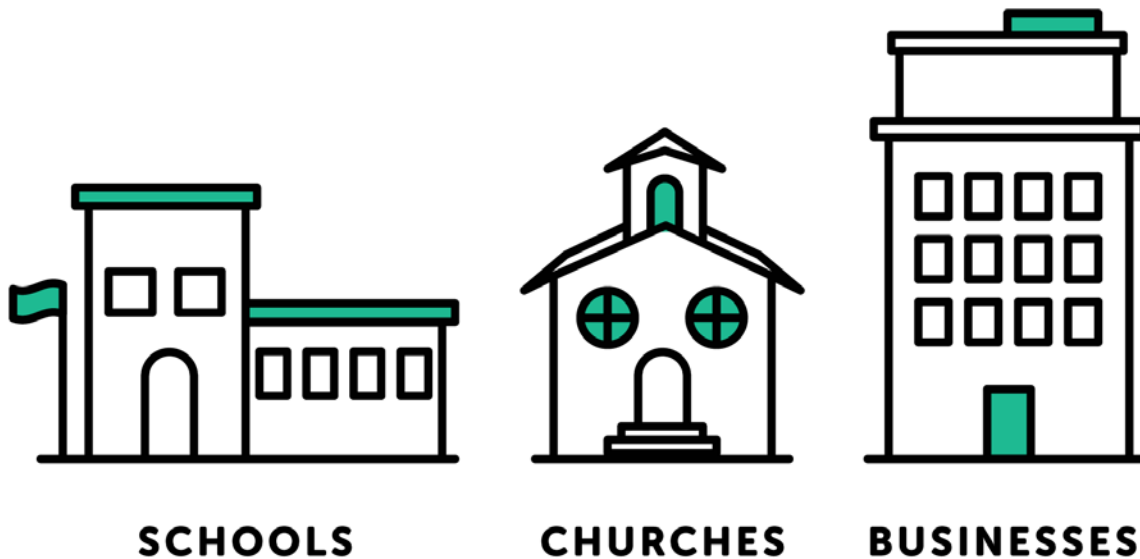
sponsors might have their logo prominently displayed on the event T-shirt. This is one reason why you should start looking for sponsors as soon as possible. You can't promise to put their logo on T-shirts that are already silkscreened.



VOLUNTEERS

The average nonprofit won't have enough staff to run this event all by itself. Even the Boston Marathon has volunteers. Your first stop when recruiting will be your existing pool of volunteers. Contact people who have donated time to your cause in the past and reach out personally if you can. If you're counting on a long-time volunteer to run the PA system, take the time to call and tell them how important they are.

Schools and churches are great outlets for recruiting volunteers. Many students are required by their school to volunteer for a certain number of hours each year and community service is an important value to many faiths. Just be sure to have a member of staff or experienced volunteer leading those who are new to your organization.



Many companies and offices also volunteer at community events, so contact local employers to see if they want to get involved. A sponsor might also have employees who would like to help.

Supplies and Amenities

As run/walks have grown in scale and popularity, so too have the amenities that are offered. Keeping in mind the goal of raising funds, nonprofits must decide what they will offer participants at the event.

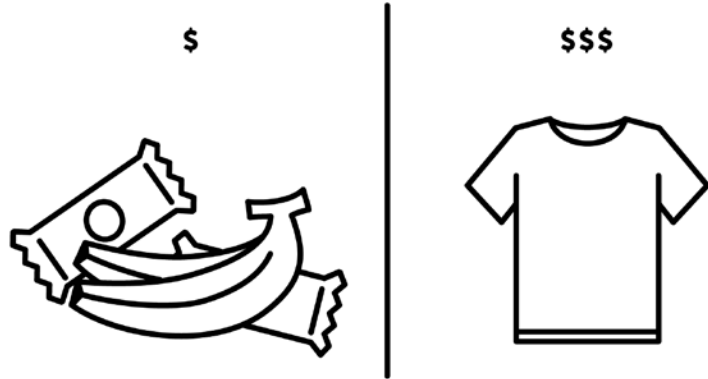
The most important amenity (which is expected at any run/walk) is water stations. To keep participants hydrated, you should have a water station every mile of your course and at the finish line. Sports drinks are also common at run/walk events, and you can save money by asking a supplier to attend. Many companies are willing to donate their product and send promotional staff to a run/walk.

Whether or not you should provide food to participants is a more complex question. Most races offer some kind of recovery food at the end of the race, such as bananas or protein bars. Ideally, this is

another area where you can recruit donations and sponsors. If you don't find businesses or companies willing to cover food, it's best to keep your offerings simple and low-cost. Some good options that can be purchased in bulk are:

- **Bananas, apples, other fruit**
- **Protein bars, cereal bars**
- **Bagels**

Other than food and water, T-shirts are the most common run/walk amenity. This wearable souvenir serves two purposes:



1. To promote your organization and event
2. To recognize partners and sponsors

The usual design is to put the organization or event logo on the front and the sponsorship logos on the back. Be cognizant of your deadline for the T-shirt design when soliciting donations and sponsorships.

With modern fundraising and registration software, you can easily get a count of how many T-shirts you will need in each size. There will probably be day-of registrants, volunteers, or surprises, so err on the side of having some extra T-shirts. When it comes to unknown attendees, bigger sizes are better. A too-big shirt won't fit well, but a too-small shirt won't fit at all.

Safety and Administration

PERMITS

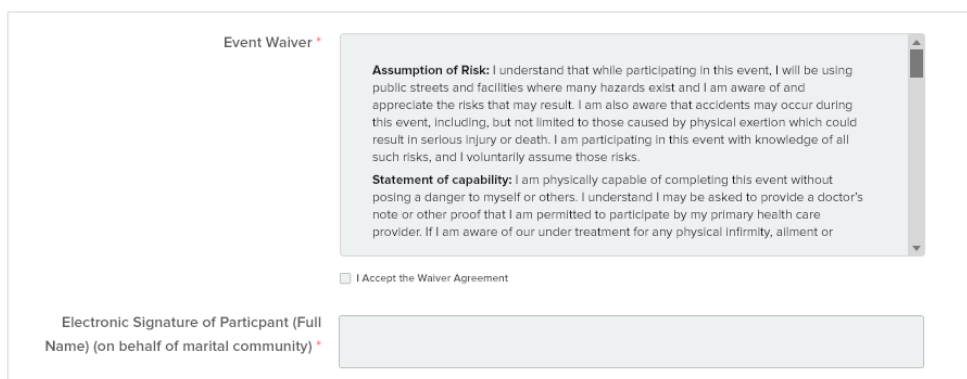
There are important legal and safety concerns that are inherent to any run/walk event. Your first administrative concern is getting permission to hold your event. If you're using any public streets or places you will need approval from your city and police department. Contact your city government to find your local application process.

COURSE EQUIPMENT

You will most likely need some equipment to mark and separate your course from traffic or other dangers. You will also need portable toilets (approximately one for every 50 attendees). You can rent this equipment from local vendors or speak to your police department about barriers.

WAIVERS

Every participant needs to sign a liability waiver before the event takes place. If you're using Classy, you can create a custom question with the waiver language.

A screenshot of a digital waiver form titled "Event Waiver *". The form contains two paragraphs of text: "Assumption of Risk: I understand that while participating in this event, I will be using public streets and facilities where many hazards exist and I am aware of and appreciate the risks that may result. I am also aware that accidents may occur during this event, including, but not limited to those caused by physical exertion which could result in serious injury or death. I am participating in this event with knowledge of all such risks, and I voluntarily assume those risks." and "Statement of capability: I am physically capable of completing this event without posing a danger to myself or others. I understand I may be asked to provide a doctor's note or other proof that I am permitted to participate by my primary health care provider. If I am aware of our under treatment for any physical infirmity, ailment or". Below the text is a checkbox labeled "I Accept the Waiver Agreement". At the bottom, there is a label "Electronic Signature of Participant (Full Name) (on behalf of marital community) *" and a large, empty rectangular box for the signature.

That way, the liability waiver is ready from the very beginning. Always have spare copies of the waiver at the event. When people register or check-in, if they did not complete the online waiver agreement, make sure that they sign a paper copy. Just in case, make sure every waiver is collected and saved by the registration volunteers.

INSURANCE

Wait, didn't they sign waivers?

Yes, but you still run the risk of lawsuits and legal action. There are many insurance companies that offer one-time event policies for run/walks. Consult your own legal or insurance expert to determine what type of policy is necessary in your case.

FIRST AID

Any athletic event has the potential for injury and you must be prepared to respond to both minor issues and emergencies. The finish line is a good place to put your primary first aid station. Not only will most participants end up there anyway, it will also be next to your finish line banner or clock, which is easy to find.

Your first aid station should be stocked with bandages, ice, and antiseptic. If possible, you should recruit medical professionals to staff the station. Look into your state's malpractice laws to ensure you're in compliance.

Sadly, you must be prepared for a true emergency as well. You should hire an ambulance to stand by. If someone has a heart attack or major injury, the few minutes it takes to call 911 can be decisive. If your event is large, you may need more than one ambulance on hand. It will probably add expense to your budget, but it will always be worth it.

Takeaways from Chapter 3

- Choose your partners and sponsors carefully and **get all agreements in writing**.
- **Recruit volunteers from local schools, religious organizations, and companies.**
- **Decide what amenities your run/walk event will include.** T-shirts and a post-race breakfast are the most common.
- **Apply for any permits or use of public spaces through your city government.** Also borrow or rent any necessary road barricades.
- **Require a liability agreement before participants can register online** and prepare waivers for day-of registration.
- **Look into first aid services and liability or event insurance.**

Chapter 4

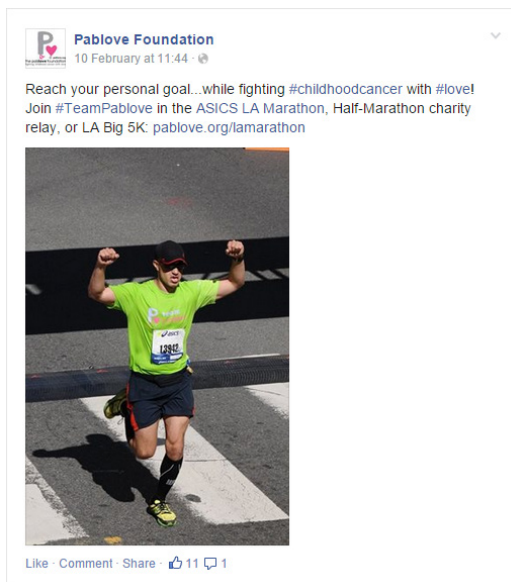
Promotion and Fundraising

Once you know what your run/walk event is going to look like, you need to spread the word. The first part of marketing and promoting your event is to get the word out to your audience of supporters. From there you can appeal to your entire local community. Leading up to the event, you should also promote the fundraising aspect of your run/walk, both in terms of general donations and peer-to-peer fundraisers.

Reaching Your Audience

The most obvious candidates for participants and fundraisers at your event are people who already know and love your organization. Plan a multi-pronged approach to encourage supporters to register, create fundraising pages, and donate.

You can begin with an email addressed specifically to existing supporters to announce the event. Again, the more notice you can give, the better. If you want to get the ball rolling on registrations, you can even offer a discount code to people who have donated in the past.



Another important part of promoting your run/walk to your audience is to make it visible on social media. This can start with simply announcing the date or details of the event, revealing the event logo, and sharing the amenities or activities you will have that day.

Once you have some supporters registered for the event, ask if you can feature them in a Facebook or Twitter post. It doesn't have to be fancy, but

introducing someone who has already committed to participate provides a little social proof and encourages others to join in.



As race day approaches, you should update your social media profiles and pictures to advertise the event. Anyone who visits your pages should be able to tell you have a run/walk event coming up.

Your website should also get a makeover as the event approaches. You don't have to

do a complete redesign, but you should feature an event image and cover it in your "news" section and blog to affirm that this is a major endeavor for the organization.

If you have a pool of registrants early on who have supported your nonprofit in the past, you can also ask a volunteer or devoted supporter to lead some training runs or walks.

Promoting to the Public

Your website and social media will be a resource for people new to your organization, but to reach out to more potential participants and fundraisers, you must go beyond your usual communication outlets.



Local publications and media are a great place to start. You can start by creating a press release to offer the most important details (date, location, cause) and distributing it to all local media, but you will probably fare better if you reach out to specific outlets.



The screenshot shows the San Diego Magazine website. At the top, there's a header with the magazine's logo, a "Subscribe Now" button, and a "Current Issue Digital Edition" link. Below the header is a navigation bar with categories like "BEST OF SD", "RESTAURANTS", "THINGS TO DO", "FEATURES", "GETAWAYS", "PEOPLE", "FITNESS & HEALTH", and "PHOTOS + VIDEO". The main content area features an event listing for "PCI's Walk for Water" scheduled for March 2, 2014, from 10:00 AM to 01:00 AM. The description mentions that PCI is hosting the 5th annual Walk for Water event to acknowledge UN-sanctioned World Water Day. To the right of the event listing is a sidebar with links for "Calendar Home", "Submit an event", and "Get this Event". Below the sidebar is a promotional banner for the "BEST COAST BEER FEST" featuring Will Ferrell's Beer Festival of Choice on March 7, 2015, at Embarcadero Park South.

Get in touch with these platforms to reach local runners and your community at large:

- Local newspapers and weekly papers
- Church newsletters
- Running/athletic magazines and websites
- Schools and athletic leagues

If you can recruit cross-country and track teams from local high schools and colleges, it will help you reach a bigger pool of potential participants. If there are a few teams participating, up the bar and have them face off in a fundraising competition.

And don't forget to contact adult running groups as well. Many cities have groups that meet and train regularly.

Keep an eye on run/walk events preceding your own, as well. Someone participating in an event in March may be looking for their next 5K in April or May. Why not yours?

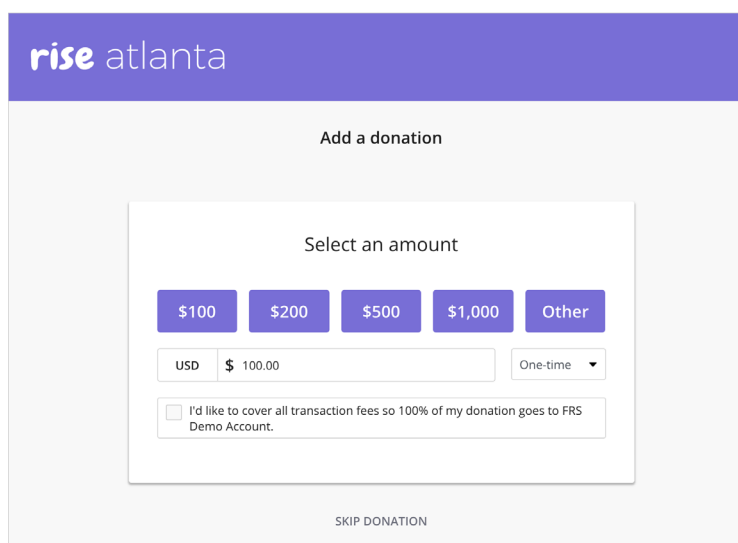
Promoting Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

While your run/walk definitely needs people to show up for the race, don't let the fundraising aspect of the event fall through the cracks. Even if you decide to run a standard registration fee event, you should still make the option to donate readily available.

If you do incorporate a peer-to-peer fundraising element into your event, the way you recruit and support fundraisers can make a big impact on your bottom line.

Once supporters personalize their page, send them a fundraising tips sheet to help them get started. Here you can

share some helpful fundraising advice on how to use email and social media to reach out to friends and family.



FREE DOWNLOAD

Get this tips sheet to distribute to fundraisers

[Download Now >](#)

If your run/walk uses the registration with fundraising option (mandatory registration fee and fundraising page) you should still offer a suggested fundraising goal. Having a concrete destination helps your fundraisers stay on track.

Many people participate in run/walks competitively, but it doesn't have to be all about who crosses the finish line first. Peer-to-peer fundraising can be driven by healthy competition. You can offer a prize for the top fundraiser or build a fundraising leaderboard on your website by tapping into Classy's API. With some special attention, you can make the fundraising aspect of your event as exciting as the actual race.

Takeaways from Chapter 4

- **Promote your event to your existing supporters and donors** through email, direct mail, and social media.
- **Reach out to local media sources to publicize your run/walk to the greater community.** Local news, publications, and radio stations are usually receptive.
- **Tap into local running teams and fitness communities.**
- **If you're using peer-to-peer fundraising, promote this element alongside the event.** Send fundraisers a helpful tips sheet, and acknowledge and thank them.

Chapter 5

Managing the Big Day

It is reassuring to get on top of planning and promoting your run/walk event, but there will always be plenty to do the week and day of your event. You can start the week well-prepared by planning how you will use your staff and volunteers to accomplish tasks that can't be done ahead of time.

A good first step is to create a checklist of all the areas that will need to be set up and all the stations you will need people to be working at during the event.

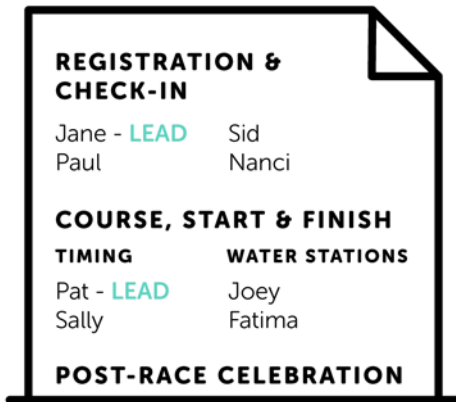
How to Manage Staff and Volunteers

Managing the people working at your event can be daunting, especially if many of them are new to your nonprofit. It helps to think of how any large operation functions.

A car company, for example, will have employees working on design, safety, manufacturing, fuel efficiency, and sales, but what makes it work is specialization and leadership. There is a department specifically working on the design of the car and those employees focus on this task and look to their department head for guidance. They don't need to be trained in sales techniques. That's not to say the various departments don't talk to each other, but specialization allows individuals to focus on one task without juggling everything else.

Consider looking at your run/walk event as an organization with different departments. Some of the areas you will need people to help with are ...

- **Registration and check-in**
- **Water stations and food**
- **First aid**
- **Marking the course**
- **Parking**
- **Entertainment and other activities**



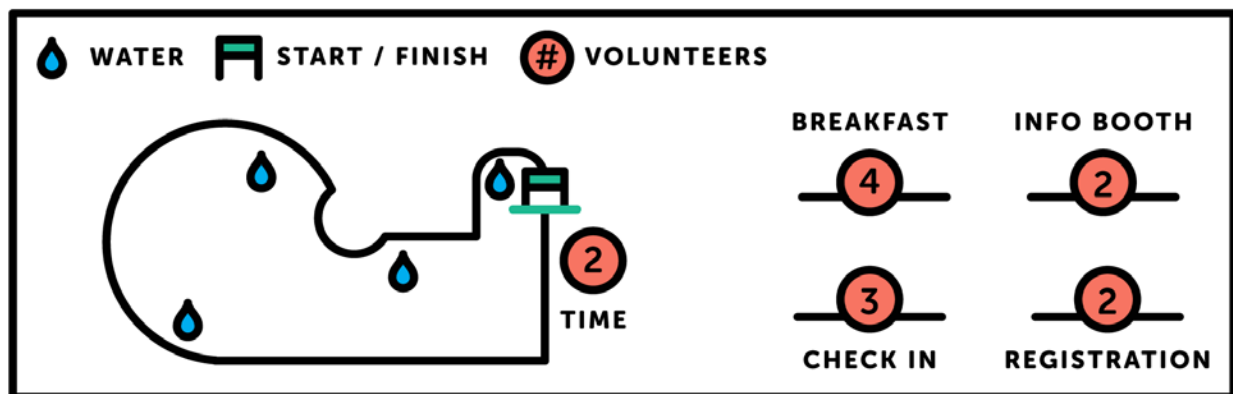
By splitting your staff and volunteers into these different departments, you are making sure everyone knows what they are responsible for and where they should be. Every group, however, should have a leader, someone you have worked with and who you can trust to make decisions. Ideally, this will be a member of staff, but committed volunteers and supporters are also good choices.

When you schedule and check in your volunteers, tell them who their team leader is so they can ask for direction if they need it. The team leader can then explain to their volunteers what each individual will be doing that day.

Every volunteer should know who their supervisor is and supervisors can stay in touch with cell phones or walkie-talkies. It's always smart to save and print a contact list ahead of time.

Signs, Directions, and Parking

One group of volunteers should post signs and direct participants to the appropriate parking area. You should know the exact location and parking situation ahead of time, so that you can include the information on your website and fundraising pages. Even then, walk yourself through the experience of someone trying to find your event.



You can create a map like this one to plan where each station will be and how many people will be staffing them.

If there is restricted parking near your run/walk, make that clear to attendees and volunteers.

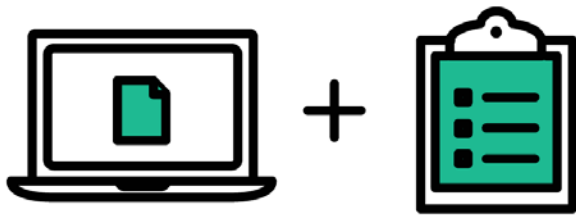
Registration, first aid, and information booths should all be clearly marked as well.

Registration and Check-In

With modern event and fundraising software, it's easier than ever to register participants ahead of time.

With a run/walk, however, even those who sign up ahead of time will need to check in to receive their race number (bib) and timing chip (if you're using them). This is why your check-in table should be set up and staffed two hours before the starting gun.

When pre-registered participants arrive, they will give their name to the volunteers at the check-in table, who will confirm that they have registered and paid. The volunteer or staff member then issues and records which number and timing chip the participant receives. If possible, you can use laptops or



tablets to check in runners through a shared document. This ensures that everyone has access to the most up-to-date registration information. But you should absolutely have printed copies of the check-in list in case you run into any technical issues.

You will probably have some people who show up planning to register that day. Depending on the size of your event, you may want to designate a second table where those people can sign up. This process will take a little longer because you will have to get name and contact information, collect payment, and have the participant sign a waiver. One way run/walk events encourage people to register ahead of time is by increasing the registration fee on the day of the event. This is a standard practice, but be sure to note the day-of fee on the event page.

If participants are receiving a T-shirt or any other gift, it is best to include that in the registration process, or simply put this station nearby.

Takeaways from Chapter 5

- **Split your event responsibilities into different categories and assign a team leader to each area.**

Then assign a team of volunteers for each type of work.

- To help with set-up and clean-up, **create an event map** and mark each area clearly with a banner or sign.
- **Have separate tables to check in participants who registered online and people who are registering the day of the event.** Even if you're using tablets or laptops, have a printed registration list and forms on hand, just in case.

Chapter 6

Crossing the Finish Line and Following Up

When the last participant has crossed the finish line and the crowd has gone home, you can finally breathe a sigh of relief. Pat yourself on the back for getting this far, but like any other campaign, your run/walk event isn't truly over until you reengage with supporters and learn from your results.

First things first, you will need to do some cleaning up. Be sure that your volunteer schedule includes people to help pack up and collect trash. Any rented equipment (portable toilets, sound systems, road barriers) should be returned promptly to avoid extra fees.

Following Up

Once the clean-up is over, your next priority is thanking and engaging with participants. Prepare follow up emails and surveys for donors, fundraisers, and other participants. Any new contacts from the event are potential future contributors, so don't leave them hanging.

In your follow-up message, include

- **A sincere thank-you**
- **Some results or highlights from the event**
- **A link to compelling content, such as an impact story or video**

Your staff and volunteers deserve a big “thank you” as well. If numbers allow, a handwritten card to volunteers can add the personal touch that keeps someone involved for years to come.

Like anyone else who gives to your nonprofit, sponsors and partners should also be thanked for their help. It's important to maintain strong ties to local organizations and businesses, and a little recognition now could pay off the next time you hold an event. Again, personal messages make the best thank-yous.

Running the Numbers

Now it's time to see the results of all your hard work and share them with your organization. The most obvious number that everyone will be curious about is how much you raised for the organization, but because of the costs involved with any run/walk event we need to look at that information in relation to other data.

Let's begin by calculating the total revenue of the event. This is the amount of money collected through registration fees, peer-to-peer fundraising, and additional donations. We'll use an example of a fictional small race to see how it's done.

REGISTRATION FEE INCOME

116 # of runners and walkers	×	\$35 pre- registration fee	= \$4060	
36 # of runners and walkers	×	\$45 day of registration fee	= \$1620	\$4060 + \$1620

FUNDRAISING REVENUE

sum of all donations to individual peer to peer pages	= \$2100	+ \$2100
donations through event page	= \$160	+ \$160
cash donations from sponsors	= \$4500	+ \$4500

TOTAL REVENUE = \$12,440

Now we have the gross revenue from the event. For a small nonprofit, \$12,440 is a sizable result. But before we start celebrating, we need to calculate our expenses. If you've been budgeting from the beginning and keeping track of spending, this should be easy to calculate.

Here's a simplified example of an event's expenses* and whether they were covered by any in-kind donations.

SUPPLIES & SERVICES	COST	DONATED?	NET EXPENSE
T-Shirts (200)	\$1200.00	-	\$1200.00
Bottled Water	-	✓ In-Kind by Dasani	-
Fruit	-	✓ In-Kind by Vons	-
Other Breakfast Foods	\$350.00	-	\$350.00
Portable Toilets (4)	\$500.00	-	\$500.00
Course Signs & Start/Finish Banner	\$200.00	-	\$200.00
First Aid Kit & Supplies	\$50.00	-	\$50.00
Ambulance Standing by	-	✓ Stand by free	-
Liability Insurance	\$350.00	-	\$350.00
Awards (Race winners & top fundraiser)	\$75.00	-	\$75.00
Time Clock (Manual - no timing chips)	-	✓ Borrowed from Mason High School	-
Race Numbers (200)	\$75.00	-	\$75.00
Misc Supplies (Water cups, safety pins, etc.)	\$250.00	-	\$250.00
Marketing and Promotion	\$400.00	-	\$400.00
PA System Rental	\$200.00	-	\$200.00

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$3,650

*Expenses estimated based on available pricing information for 200 people.

NET PROFIT

While this is a fictional event, it illustrates how to account for event expenses. When we bring it all together it looks like this:

TOTAL REVENUE	\$12,440	=	NET FUNDRAISING PROFIT \$8,790
– (TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,650)		

This means the run/walk event had an overhead cost of about **30 percent**, which is good for this type of fundraising initiative.

REGISTRATION FEE EVALUATION

It's also important to evaluate the return from your registration fee. We can do that by finding out the cost per participant. Comparing this event's cost per participant to the registration fee will show whether the fee is appropriate for the run/walk. Needless to say, you should be collecting more funds than you spend.

\$3650 total expenses	=	\$24.01 cost per participant	=	\$9.99 RAISED PER PRE-REGISTERED PARTICIPANT		
152 total # of runners and walkers						
\$35 pre-registration fee	–	\$24.01 cost per participant			=	\$19.99 RAISED PER DAY-OF REGISTERED PARTICIPANT
\$45 day of registration fee	–	\$24.01 cost per participant				

Update on the Event's Impact

While your thank-you message should go out a day or two after the event, you should also reengage with participants, volunteers, and sponsors after you've had time to calculate your revenue and what kind of impact it will have. Surveys have shown that the communications most donors want from a nonprofit are impact stories, so show them a specific program or person who will benefit from your run/walk event.

Debriefing Your Team

It's important to have these numbers on hand for evaluating your run/walk event, but you should also ask for the input of participants and your staff and volunteers. Meet with your volunteer team leaders and ask how they thought the day went.

Start the conversation with questions like these:

- **Do you feel you had enough volunteers and that they were competent?**
- **What went smoothly or pleasantly surprised you?**
- **What were your biggest challenges?**
- **Were there any issues you felt unprepared for?**
- **What changes should we make next year?**

It's smart to get multiple perspectives after the event. Everything may have looked fine to you, but one station may have been in trouble. Soliciting this feedback will not only help you plan for your next event, but also strengthen your bonds with staff and volunteer. They will be more likely to help in the future if they feel appreciated and heard now.

After reviewing the financial results and the viewpoints of staff and volunteers, create a list of action items to make your next run/walk even better.

Takeaways from Chapter 6

- **Follow up with all participants and fundraisers** with a thank-you message within 2 to 3 days after the event. Don't forget to thank and acknowledge your staff and volunteers.
- When your revenue numbers are in, add up the total proceeds of your event. Compare this to the total cost of the run/walk (which may be different from your initial budget). From here you can **determine how much was raised for your programs and compare the cost per participant to the registration fee.**
- **When you have established the fundraising results, share them with your community and emphasize the impact the event will have on your cause.**
- **Meet with your staff and volunteer team leaders to get feedback and suggestions on how to improve the event.**

Conclusion

Organizing a charity run/walk can be an intimidating project, especially if you haven't done it before. We hope this guide has helped you develop a plan for your next event and given you some tips to raise more money and get a bigger turnout.

If you want to learn more about fundraising and events, check out our [blog](#).

Thanks for reading!



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