OVERVIEW

This toolkit provides necessary context and best practices for crowdfunding on launch.lsu.edu. Mary Julia Klug (mklug@lsufoundation.org) is the main point of contact for all crowdfunding requests.

Project Approval

If an on-campus group with an established LSU Foundation account would like to host a crowdfunding campaign, they may begin the process by submitting this form: Start a Project - Crowdfunding Campaign Submission. Once the form is submitted Mary Julia Klug will follow up with a list of assets needed to build the campaign page upon approval.

If the group does not have an established LSU Foundation account, please reach out to Emily Kline (ekline@lsufoundation.org) to request approval for a creating a new fund.

If you are a student creating a project on behalf of a student organization, you will need to receive approval from the organization's advisor.

If your project is research-related, please send an email directly to Emily Kline (ekline@lsufoundation.org) and Mary Julia Klug (mklug@lsufoundation.org) for approval.

PRE-LAUNCH

Audience Plan

To have a successful campaign, there should be a defined (or target) audience. The host of the crowdfunding campaign, either the unit or the club, oversees all solicitations and outreach regarding the campaign. The size of your audience should be considered when creating a goal, a timeline, messaging, and giving levels.

Goal

Set an achievable and realistic goal. The goal can be changed throughout the campaign to keep momentum going, but having a goal that is unachievable can discourage donors from making a gift. Have a stretch goal – an amount that exceeds your initial target goal – ready when your campaign begins so if donors reach the goal early, the goal can be updated quickly.

Timeline

Most successful campaigns are active for 4-6 weeks. A short timeline leverages urgency and motivates donors. When selecting your campaign dates, consider important holidays or events that may conflict with your project.

Assets

In addition to filling out the Start a Project form, the following assets will need to be provided to complete the crowdfunding campaign page:

- **MEDIA**
    - 500 x 500 px logo
        - This can include your logo, campaign mark, or image.
        - This will be the image on your campaign tile on the Launch LSU homepage and your campaign page (optional).
    - 1920 x 525 px banner
        - This image is more of a backdrop for the top portion of your page. We recommend using an image or graphic without text. We could also use a solid color here (e.g., LSU Purple).
    - 680 x 400 px slider
        - This is a slider where you can include multiple photos/images, and videos. We recommend 4 max. If you'd like to include a video here, please provide a YouTube or Vimeo link, and be sure to set it to unlisted or public.
- **PAGE COPY** – send in a Word document if possible (up to 4 sections per page; headlines can be changed)
    - **Description** - Headline 15-word max; explanation copy 100 word max
    - **Personal Message** - Headline 15-word max; explanation copy 100 word max
    - **Donations are applied to** (We use "What will my gift support?")- Headline 15-word max; explanation copy 100-word max
    - **Why Donate?** (We use "Why are donations necessary?") - Headline 15-word max; explanation copy 100-word max
- **GIVING LEVELS** (Optional)
    - Suggested are $10, $50, or $100, but this varies depending on the audience being solicited.
    - Note: Donors can choose a specific amount to give whether giving levels are used or not.

Promotions

Messaging, to be used within your project page's description and throughout communications, should express your team's passion for and help your audience connect emotionally to your project. Start by defining your project's mission:

- Why are you creating this project?
- Why is it important for someone to donate?
- What will the money support?
- Who will be impacted by this project?
- What real-life stories can you share that illustrate your project's impact?

Remember that you are doing more than just raising money; you are building a community of Tigers who care about your project. One of the best ways to promote your project is to build a base of supporters prior to the launch. Each team member should start by compiling a list of 15-20 people who are likely to donate to your project. Send them an email or direct message with information on the project and how they can support it once it is live. Securing donations early on can help build your project's momentum. Reference the attached sample when drafting your message.

Plan when you will send emails and post on social media. We recommend sending one to two emails throughout the campaign and making one to three social posts per week, depending on the length of your campaign. Here are some key dates to consider while scheduling:

- Launch
- Goal milestones
- Three-day countdown
- Last Day
- End of campaign and thanks to supporters

Email is one of the most effective tools in driving traffic and donations. The more emails your team sends, the more likely you will reach your project's goals.

- Consider grouping your networks into audiences and identifying messaging approaches that will appeal to each. Each audience may have a different connection to your project or motivation for donating. You may also need to alter the style and tone of your writing to suit each audience. For example, your approach to students may be more casual than to professionals.
- Keep your emails between 150-200 words.
- Make your "ask" clear and personal by using personal pronouns such as us, we, and you.

Sample Email:

Friends,

As many of you know, I have been involved with LSU Service Breaks for the past three years. Service Breaks gives LSU students like me experiences learning and volunteering around the globe. We create dialogues, build relationships, and spark positive change.

On Friday, Aug. 10, we will launch a crowdfunding campaign to support Service Breaks. I know that community service is dear to your heart, so I am inviting you to be one of our first supporters.

This year, Service Breaks will host three domestic service experiences and three international service experiences. We will travel over 20,000 miles and complete more than 2,000 hours of service focusing on issues such as low-income housing, wildlife conservation, and human trafficking. Your gifts will help reduce the travel, housing, and food costs of these trips. Through Service Breaks, I have learned more about who I am and my purpose in life. I hope you will help me continue my journey and offer this invaluable experience to more Tigers. Please spread the word by sharing my Facebook posts, or by creating your own with the campaign link and #LSUServiceBreaks.

Thank you!
Mary Julia

Social media is a crucial tool to reach a broader audience than can be reached via email.
- To maintain efficiency and organization, schedule posts ahead of time through tools such as Hootsuite or Buffer, which has a free version.
- Create a Facebook event for your project's launch day.
- Team members should set the project page's banner image as their cover photos with a direct link to the project page in the caption.
- Each post should be brief and include an image, photo, or video; your project's unique hashtag; and a direct link to the project page.
- Encourage sharing – it's just as important as donating!
- Here is some sample language to use when posting:
  - Post #1: Calling all alumni, loyal friends, and fans. Today, until ____, we are raising money for _____. Gifts of $5, $50, or $500 can help us tremendously. Click the link above/in our bio to give. On behalf of the entire organization/team/chapter, thank you to all who makes this organization so great!
  - Post #2: Don't forget we are still raising money for _____. Giving takes less than 5 minutes. Link in bio!
  - Post #3: Only ____ left! Thank you to all who have donated so far. We are _____ away from our goal. Can we make it happen? Give to the link in our bio!

Gift Policies
All gifts made through Launch LSU must be used for the project's stated purpose. Individuals are prohibited from keeping any portion of the raised funds as profit or compensation. Launch

LSU projects benefit from 91.75 percent of each gift contributed. The remaining 8.25 percent is held when the gift is processed (3.25 percent covers credit card companies' transaction fees, and 5 percent fulfills the development support fee).

Launch LSU project pages display the total amount raised, and donors receive a gift receipt acknowledging the full amount as a charitable contribution. More information is available on Launch LSU's FAQ page.

Branding

Keep a cohesive brand throughout all print and communication materials surrounding your campaign. Color palette, font, tone, purpose, etc. should stay consistent throughout all channels.

Use of the LSU insignia, logo, and other related promotional branding materials requires university approval. Media outreach should also be coordinated through the LSU Foundation team.

POST-PROJECT

Accessing Funds Raised

Any payment requests from student organizations would need to go through the Office of Student Affairs for processing and approval. Please contact Emily Hester at ehester@lsu.edu with questions/pending approval.

Funds can be accessed by processing a check request through the LSU Foundation – linked below. You can either have the vendor submit an invoice and then a check request would need to be prepared and approved and sent into the LSU Foundation.

Individuals can purchase the item up front and submit a check request for reimbursement. All vendors or individuals seeking reimbursement must be enrolled as a vendor in our vendor system.

If you need clarification on anything, please contact Emily Hester at ehester@lsu.edu or Felicia Jennings at fjennings@lsufoundation.org.

LSU Foundation - Vendor Information Submission Form

LSU Foundation – Updated Check Request Form

Accessing Donor Data

Name, email address, and mailing addresses can be shared with faculty & staff, but not with students. If the students plan to do post-campaign stewardship or outreach, their advisor or faculty or staff member must send the communications via email or post. This request can be

made to Mary Julia Klug (mklug@lsufoundation.org) so bio & gift records can begin the process of collecting the requested data.