

WOMEN BUILD 2026: FUNDRAISING TIPS AND TRICKS

Fundraising is a journey, and it looks different for everyone! Whether you're a seasoned fundraiser or just getting started, here are some steps to help you make the experience easy, breezy, and fun.

Step 1: Donate to your own page

We haven't done the exact calculation, but we're about 3,000% sure that if a potential donor sees that you donated to your own page, they'll be more inclined to donate to you as well. Show them Women Build is a cause you really believe in!

Step 2: Set your personal fundraising goal

Each Women Builder is required to raise a minimum of \$500, but to get to our shared \$750,000 goal, we need Women Builders like you to go above and beyond by setting a stretch goal. What's the right number to aim for? Well, that's up to you – but if every Women Builder raises an average of \$1,000, the opportunities to provide more women-led households becomes even more attainable.

Step 2: Break it down

Once you set your personal goal, break it down into manageable bits that make sense for you and your network. If your goal is \$1,000, consider making 15 targeted asks for \$100 to get you there. Make a handful more asks than you think you need, because not everyone will be able to say yes, and that's okay!

Step 3: Develop your outreach list

Think about the network of supporters you have in your life – it's probably bigger than you think! Make an outline of your social circles. Ask yourself who:

...is on my holiday card list?

... do I work or volunteer with?

...did I support with a donation to their charity or fundraiser?

...do I write checks to?

... do my family members work with?

...was in my fraternity/sorority?

...is/was on my latest wedding or birthday party invitation list?

...have I done business with?

...did I play sports with in high school?

...owes me a favor?

...attends my place of worship or health club?

...would like to do business with me?

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Step 4: Craft your message

Women Build and its mission are important for SO many reasons but think about why it is important to *you*! The more authentic you are in your communications, the more passion you will deliver and the more success you will see. Find YOUR why and share it with others...

- Is it the emotional connection of knowing you're helping women achieve the life-changing benefits of homeownership?
- Do you love being a part of a community of women coming together to help fellow women?
- Is it the statistics on why it is so much harder for women to become homeowners that fuel you?
- Are you building to help close the racial inequities in housing and neighborhood conditions in Chicago?

Step 5: Make your ask

Our daily interactions have changed quite a bit these past few years, but don't let that change your approach when making your ask! Video calls have become more popular than ever, so if your supporters are up for them, reach out through video calls. If you know others prefer phone calls or texts, reach out that way. Whatever you choose, remember it's helping you get that much closer to your fundraising goal!

Step 6: Create an accountability calendar

When you hold yourself accountable, you're more likely to follow through with your tasks and goals. Block off time on your calendar for Women Build fundraising each week or add it to your weekly planner. Checking off tasks and goals as "done" each week will feel quite lovely!

Step 7: Get started!

The sooner you start, the sooner you'll reach your fundraising goal! Starting is always the hardest part, but once you do, it becomes smooth sailing. Remember to encourage your donors to see if their company offers **matching gifts** – an easy way to double your impact! Matching gifts typically take 6-8 weeks to be processed, so the sooner you start, the better!

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Remember, there's no ONE right way to fundraise. Here are some additional pointers to keep in mind as you go.

- **All the money is out there, we just need ask for it** – The number one reason people give is because they are asked. It can be intimidating to ask people for money but remember that folks want to be a part of something meaningful too. The worst they can say is "no."
- **Utilize social media** – You'll be surprised who from your friends list will show up and donate (you might receive donations from people you haven't talked to in years, and this will be a great opportunity to re-connect!).
 - a. Checking out our Women Build **social media kit** with pre-made content for you to use.
- **Talk about Women Build** – Let it be known far and wide that you're fundraising for Women Build.
 - a. Add the link of your fundraising page to your email signature.
 - b. When someone asks, "How are you?" use it as an opportunity to talk about Women Build.
 - c. Make an "Ask me about Women Build" button to wear proudly or a sign to hang on your desk in the office.
- **Share the content around** – If someone has a good post or email, share it with the team! Why reinvent the wheel when your teammates have crafted effective messages already?
- **Think about a special skill you have** – Are you a baker? Are you a painter? Are you an interior design consultant? Whatever it may be, consider using your skills to sell your stuff and donate the profits to your Women Build page.
- **Match your donations** – Get your workplace involved and ask your donors to do the same with theirs. Do not overlook **corporate matching gift programs**, including your own employer.
- **Write a handwritten note** – Most mail people receive nowadays tends to be ads or bills. When someone receives a handwritten note from someone they know and care about, it really stands out.
- **Thank every single person who donates to your page** – Whether it is through social media, a text, or a phone call – make sure your donors feel appreciated! (They will also receive a thank you directly from Habitat Chicago).