Habitat for Humanity® Canada



GLOBAL VILLAGE
fundraising toolkit

Updated 2026

fundraising toolkit

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Getting started

Congratulations on joining a Habitat for Humanity Global Village build! You are now part of a global movement working toward a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. By sharing your time, energy, and resources, you are helping build homes, communities, and hope alongside families around the world.

This handbook is your guide to raising awareness and support for Habitat for Humanity, drawing on successful fundraising and outreach strategies used by Global Village volunteers.

Building awareness, building impact

While fundraising for your build, you will be connecting with people who may not be familiar with Habitat's work. As a Global Village volunteer, you are an ambassador for

Habitat and have a unique opportunity to raise awareness to inspire others to support safe and decent housing for all.

We cannot achieve Habitat's mission through housing projects alone. That's why advocacy is a natural extension and an important complement to our work. By engaging more people, organizations and communities, we can raise awareness and expand our collective impact.

Certainly, the experiences you gain on your Global Village build will give you a unique perspective on Habitat's work and its impact on families and communities. But you don't have to wait until your trip to become an advocate. Even if you are able to cover your program and travel costs yourself, we encourage you to invite your friends, family and community to support your build and learn more about Habitat's work. Whether you raise significant funds or not, our ultimate goal is to inspire as many people as possible to follow your journey and join your commitment to advancing safe housing solutions around the world.

Our ability to truly further Habitat's work depends on volunteers becoming passionate advocates for safe and affordable housing. In many of the communities where Global Village builds serve, the need is especially great. By sharing your experiences, you can help raise awareness of the global housing challenge and inspire others to be part of the solution.

> *"Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.*
>
> *You only need to have a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."*
>
> — The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Setting a fundraising goal

Many people are nervous about the idea of fundraising; some are downright intimidated by the thought of asking others for money. So how do you begin to set a fundraising goal?

Habitat for Humanity Global Village builds offer opportunities for volunteers to try new things, step outside of their comfort zones and transform their own lives working alongside others. Stepping into your fear and discomfort will allow the most learning and growth to happen. Set a fundraising goal that stretches you but doesn't paralyze you. Set a goal that you aren't quite sure how you will achieve, but that doesn't feel so enormous as to be impossible. Give yourself the space to amaze yourself!

The more funds you raise, the more Habitat can do. Remember: The more people you ask, the more people know about our work — even if they say no.

Many Global Village teams set a shared fundraising goal to maximize their impact. You can use the team's goal as a starting point when setting your own target. How much of the team goal would you like to contribute to? Some volunteers set particularly ambitious goals, aiming to match the entire team target themselves and then challenging the rest of the team to match it.

Tonight, one in three people worldwide, or more than 3.4 billion people, will sleep without access to safe or adequate housing. Every dollar raised, no matter the amount, goes directly toward delivering our Global Village program and supporting housing solutions to families and communities around the world.

In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "The reasonable (person) adapts herself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to change the world. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable person." So whatever goal you set, remember, more than 3.4 billion people are counting on us. Be unreasonable.

> *"Often, when I am on a speaking trip, someone will speak to me with a word of advice. It goes something like this: 'Millard, I am a strong supporter of Habitat for Humanity, but you send out too many letters asking for money.' My reply is always the same: 'We've tried asking and not asking. We always get more when we ask!'"*
>
> — "Building Materials for Life, Volume II," by Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity

Assessing your network: Whom to ask

You are much more than a fundraiser

Start by reaching out to the people you know best as your immediate network is often the most eager to help. From there, expand your network to include colleagues, classmates, community groups, local businesses, and other connections. The truth is that many people you ask will want to support you. Often, people will donate simply because you asked!

Professional fundraisers often group potential supporters into different categories to help them identify opportunities and develop a fundraising plan. Here are a few types of donors you may want to consider:

High-level donors

High-level donors are individuals or family foundations who may be able to make a significant gift of $1,000 or more. When possible, approach these donors personally and share why Habitat's work matters to you.

Corporate, community and organizational supporters

Many local businesses are eager to support people who are making a difference. Consider businesses where you have existing relationships or are a loyal customer. Also, ask supporters whether their employer offers a matching gift program, which could double the impact of their donation.

Smaller-level donors

Most successful fundraising campaigns are built on a foundation of smaller-level donors who give in increments of $10, $25 or $100. If you ask enough people, you can quickly raise significant amounts of money $10 at a time.

Donor bridges

Sometimes, the best fundraising opportunities come through people you already know. A friend or supporter may be willing to introduce you to someone who shares an interest in your cause. These introductions are often called donor bridges. Be sure to thank and nurture these relationships, as a warm introduction can be just as valuable as a donation.

Assessing your network:

How much should you ask for?

Creating a list of potential donors and estimating how much each person might be able to give is a great place to start.

Setting a fundraising goal can feel overwhelming, but breaking it into smaller, achievable steps makes it much more manageable. Start by considering the size of gift you feel comfortable asking for. For example, which of the following ways to raise $5,000 seems most realistic for you?

Five ways to raise $5,000

1. Five people who give $1,000 each.
2. Ten people who give $500 each.
3. Twenty people who give $250 each.
4. Fifty people who give $100 each.
5. Two hundred people who give $25 each.

Think about the amount you feel most comfortable asking for. Is it $25, $100, $500 or $1,000?

You might be comfortable asking for $25 but realize that you don't know 200 people to approach. In reality, your fundraising will likely include a mix of sizes. While it's important to work within your comfort zone, don't be afraid to stretch yourself and make a few larger asks.

One helpful tool is a network chart to break down your goal into gift ranges that helps you identify potential supporters so that it feels achievable to you. As a general rule, one out of every three to five people you ask will make a donation. Larger amounts often mean you need, to ask fewer people. Mapping out your network can help you to determine the approach that works best for you.

Network chart

GOAL: $	**$1,000 and above (or bridge to these people)** (ask in person)	**$250 – $999 (or bridge to these people)** (try to ask in person)	**$100-$249**	**$25 – $99**	**$25 or less**
Number of gifts in this category needed to reach my goal					
Total amount I hope to raise from this category					
Number of people I need to ask to reach that goal Multiply number of gifts you want by 4. About 20% to 40% of people will say yes when asked in person.					
Whom to ask: Put names of potential donors in the column that matches how much you want to ask them for.	1	1	1	1	1
	2	2	2	2	2
	3	3	3	3	3
	4	4	4	4	4
	5	5	5	5	5
	6	6	6	6	6

Sample network chart

GOAL: $	**$1,000 and above (or bridge to these people)** (ask in person)	**$250 – $999 (or bridge to these people)** (try to ask in person)	**$100-$249**	**$25 – $99**	**$25 or less**
Number of gifts in this category needed to reach my goal	**1**	**4**	**8**	**15**	**35**
Total amount I hope to raise from this category	$1,000	$1,600	$1,200	$600	$600
Number of people I need to ask to reach that goal Multiply number of gifts you want by 4. About 20% to 40% of people will say yes when asked in person.	4	12	20	60	150
Whom to ask: Put names of potential donors in the column that matches how much you want to ask them for.	1 **Aunt Becky**	1 **Local car wash**	1 **Martin – childhood friend**	1 **Ask neighbours door to door**	1 **Ask at church**
	2 **Local Safeway store**	2 **Mom and Dad**	2 **Donna – best friend**	2 **Send SASE letters to 50 friends**	2 **Send to Facebook friends**
	3 **Local supermarket**	3 **Local Starbucks**	3 **Cal – ask him to do a benefit class**	3 **Ask Mom to email her friends**	3 **Have a garage sale**
	4 **Sam – donor bridge (knows the head of foundation)**	4 **Maria – Jennifer's boss**	4	4	4 **Send letters to coworkers**
	5	5 **Local branch of my bank**	5	5	5
	6	6	6	6	6

Fundraising strategies: How to ask

There are many approaches to Global Village fundraising. Here are a few common strategies:

Online giving

Online fundraising is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reach your network. Your personal page on our fundraising platform allows you to set a fundraising goal, track your progress, share your story and accept online donations. Be sure to share your page regularly by email, text, and social media to keep supporters engaged and inspired to give.

Mail-out appeal letter

Some of our most successful fundraisers do it the old-fashioned way — they write an appeal letter, print and sign it, and mail it to friends and family. Including a self-addressed return envelope makes it easy for recipients to respond and support your fundraising efforts.

Events

Hosting an event is a fun and effective way to raise funds. Consider organizing a dinner, barbecue, game night or gathering where guests make a donation to attend. If you or someone you know has a special skill or hobby, you could also host a class or workshop and invite participants to support your fundraising goal.

In person/phone

When possible, ask for larger gifts in person. Personal conversations are often the most effective way to secure support and build a stronger connection with potential donors.

Athletic event sponsorships

Participating in a race, walk, ride or other athletic event can be a great way to raise funds. Ask friends, family and colleagues to sponsor your efforts and support your Habitat fundraising goal.

Selling stuff for a profit

Cleaning out your attic and garage and having a benefit garage sale, or designing and selling T-shirts or other items, can generate a significant amount toward your fundraising goal.

Crafting your message

There are many ways to tell your fundraising story. The ideas below are designed to help you get started but the most effective message will be the one that feels authentic to you. Share why you're participating in a Global Village build, why Habitat's work matters to you and the impact you hope to make. For sample messaging, see Appendix 1.

Sponsor me

Invite supporters to sponsor a portion of your build experience. For example, if your fundraising goal is $5,000 and your build is seven days long, you could ask someone to sponsor a half or full day of your build (e.g. $500 for a day or morning or afternoon for $250).

Support our team

As part of a Global Village team, you're working toward a shared goal. Consider highlighting your team's collective fundraising target and the impact it will have. Sharing both your personal goal and your team's goal can help supporters feel connected to something larger and understand how their donation contributes to meaningful change.

Alternative gifts

An alternative gift campaign encourages friends and family to make a donation in honour of a special occasion instead of giving a traditional gift. Birthdays, special holidays, anniversaries, graduations, and other celebrations can be meaningful opportunities to support your fundraising goal while making a difference for families in need of safe housing.

Birthday appeal

One Global Village volunteer marked a milestone birthday by joining a Habitat build to Hungary. For her 60th birthday, she asked friends and family to support her Habitat fundraising efforts in lieu of traditional gifts. To tie the campaign to her 60th, she asked for contributions of $6 to $600 or any amount, as long as it included a six. Many donors who might otherwise have contributed $10 donated $16, while others gave $60, $60.60, or $66. By connecting her celebration to a cause she cared about, she engaged nearly 50 donors, turning a special birthday into a meaningful opportunity to make a difference.

Writing your appeal letter

A clear, compelling message is at the heart of a successful fundraising campaign. The most effective appeal letters share a personal story; explain why you are participating in a Habitat Global Village build and highlight the impact supporters can make through their donation.

Consider including the following in your letter:

- Details about your build, including where and when it will take place.
- A personal greeting tailored to the recipient whenever possible (e.g. "Hi Bob, Happy anniversary to you and Marybeth. Hope you are doing great.").
- Why you chose to participate in a Habitat Global Village build.
- A story that illustrates the need for safe and decent housing.
- Brief background information on Habitat for Humanity
- A clear request for donations or financial support and your overall fundraising goal, along with how it will make a difference.

- A deadline date for making a contribution.
- A link to your fundraising webpage.
- Instructions on how to donate via cheque, if applicable.
- For mailed appeals, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Your contact information for any questions.

Additional tips

- **Keep it concise**. A strong fundraising appeal can be shared in a few short paragraphs.
- **Start early.** Send your appeal letter/email at least a few months before your departure date.
- **Follow up.** Many people intend to donate but simply forget. Send a reminder a few weeks after your initial appeal and another closer to your departure date. Share updates on your preparations, fundraising progress and remaining goal. Thank those who have already contributed and invite others who haven't yet had a chance to support your campaign.

Creative appeal

> *Some people like to write funny or unusual letters to catch the attention of donors. For example, we've seen people turn their appeal letter into a quiz or a creative list of "Top 10 reasons I am building a house halfway around the world."*
>
> *Be creative, and if it suits you, be funny!*

Sample email letter (more samples included in Appendix 1)

Dear Sam,

I hope you are doing well after the big move. I look forward to hearing how life in Halifax is treating you!

In just a few months, I will be travelling to Guatemala as part of a Habitat for Humanity Global Village build. Alongside a team of volunteers, I will work with a local family to help build a safe, decent home in Sololá, a predominantly Indigenous community where many families live in overcrowded and inadequate housing. Learning more about the housing challenges in the region has made me even more passionate about this opportunity and the difference safe housing can make in people's lives.

As you may know, Habitat for Humanity is a trusted global leader in addressing housing challenges and building stronger, healthier and more resilient communities worldwide. My personal goal is to raise $5,000, while our team hopes to raise $25,000. Every dollar raised will help more families access safe and decent housing and create brighter futures.

Today, I'm asking for your support. Any contribution will make a meaningful difference, but if everyone who receives this letter gives $100, we'll be well on our way to reaching our goal. The easiest way to donate is through my online fundraising page: [link to fundraising page here]. If you would prefer to donate by cheque, please make it payable to Habitat for Humanity Canada and mail it to:

[insert your mailing address]

Please include my name in the memo line so the donation can be credited to my fundraising goal.

Thank you for considering this request and for supporting this important work. I'll be sure to share updates on my fundraising progress and the build as the trip approaches. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (905) 555-1313 or david@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

David

Online giving

Online fundraising is one of the most effective ways to reach supporters and maximize donations. It makes giving quick and convenient, helping fundraisers engage a wider network and achieve their goals more efficiently.

Consider the networks you already have access to, including your social media channels, email contacts and community groups. Who among them would be interested in supporting your Habitat journey? Whenever possible, personalize your outreach by including a brief note at the beginning of your email before sharing your fundraising appeal. A personal connection can go a long way in encouraging support.

Habitat for Humanity also offers an online fundraising platform. Donors who give through your personal fundraising webpage will receive an automatic thank-you message, and the donation will be counted toward your fundraising goal. This automated process makes giving easy for supporters and reduces administrative processing.

Details on setting up your fundraising page will be provided as part of your build registration.

Mail

Not everyone is a fan of email, and some of our volunteers have had great success with a more traditional approach: printing their appeal letter, signing it and including a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the donor to return their donation by cheque.

Research shows that including a stamped return envelope can increase response rates, as it makes it easier for donors to give.

Be sure to include your name and your build event code in your appeal letter.

Please note that donations made by cheque may take up to five business days to be processed and reflected in your fundraising total after they are received. To ensure timely processing, bundle your cheques and mail them to:

Habitat for Humanity Canada
100 Yonge Street, Suite 1002
Toronto ON, M5C 2W1

Video appeal

Some of our more ambitious Habitat volunteers create fundraising videos featuring photos of the host program, projects built by Habitat teams, and a personal message about why viewers should support their fundraising goal and Habitat's mission. These videos are a great to share your story and can be posted on your fundraising webpage and shared through email and social media.

Email with restraint

In an age of do-not-call lists and email spam, it is important to fundraise thoughtfully and respectfully. In keeping with Habitat for Humanity Canada's fundraising policies, avoid cold-calling or sending mass solicitations to strangers or distribution lists made up of people you do not know.

Focus your fundraising efforts on your existing network, including friends, family, colleagues and community connections who are familiar with you and your commitment to Habitat's work.

Asking in person

An in-person fundraising ask is often the most effective way to raise funds. It can be significantly more effective than mail and or phone-based appeals. Consider asking in person when approaching a group (such as your church or a local civic club), seeking sponsorship from a company or business, or requesting what you would consider a larger gift (for some people that may be $500; for others, $5,000).

Most people are initially uncomfortable asking for money face to face. The best way to overcome that fear and build confidence is through preparation and practice.

Preparation

Learn everything you can about Habitat for Humanity and the region you will visit.

Be able to speak about your personal connection to or passion for Habitat's vision: a world where everyone has a decent place to live. If you are giving a presentation, include photos of the region and, where possible, examples of other Habitat Global Village build projects.

Be clear about what you are asking for. Your request should be specific and actionable, with a clear yes or no response. This could include a specific donation amount, sponsorship of a fundraising event, or an opportunity to present about Habitat at a company or community organization.

Gather background on the potential donor. Who are they, and what level of support might be appropriate to request? What causes do they already support? What are their interests and

passions? Do they have connections, expertise, resources, or other assets that could help advance your fundraising efforts?

Practice your pitch. You can role-play it with a friend or family member. Be prepared for some unexpected donations from those you practice with. If you are inspired, they will be, too.

Once you have prepared, you should understand the mechanics of how an in-person fundraising meeting works.

> *"I am only one person, and I cannot do everything.*
>
> *But just because I cannot do everything does not mean that I will refuse to do that which I can."*
>
> — Helen Keller

Before the meeting

Before you schedule the meeting, inform the donor that you will be asking for support. Potential donors do not like to be surprised by a fundraising request they were not expecting. On the phone, it can be as simple as, "Hi, Bill. I think you might be interested in supporting the Habitat for Humanity project I'm participating in, and I'd love to meet with you and tell you more about it."

The meeting

- **Introduction.** Thank the donor for taking the time to meet with you.
- **Small talk.** Be friendly, but also respectful of the donor's time.
- **Explain why you are coming to them.** If the donor has a connection to Habitat, mention that connection and acknowledge their commitment. If there is no direct connection, consider what might interest them. It could be an interest in safe and affordable housing, creating stronger communities, the region you are visiting, or supporting your leadership development and personal passions. Think about what will resonate most with them.
- **Build your case.** Share the need for Habitat's work in the region you will visit, along with stories of Habitat's impact and why that work inspires you. Explain how you are contributing to Habitat's vision and why it matters to you?
- **Explain how they can support you** and how their contribution will make a difference.
- **Ask for a specific donation amount or range**, or other specific support if you are not asking for a financial contribution.
- **Be quiet.** Give the donor time to absorb the information and respond.

- **Thank the donor for their time**, regardless of whether they say yes or no.
- **If they say yes,** try to collect a cheque before you leave. If that's not possible, provide instructions on how to donate online. If the donor needs time to consider your request, agree on a clear timeline for follow-up.
- **Follow up** with any additional information or materials you promised.
- **After the meeting,** reflect on what worked well and what could be improved.
- **Within 48 hours,** send a personal thank-you note thanking the donor for their time and consideration, or for their gift if they chose to contribute.

Fundraising cards

Print small flyers or cards with your fundraising webpage URL and a brief description of your fundraising goal. Distribute them at work, school, community events, or holiday dinner.

Other tips for asking in person

- Be attentive, thoughtful, responsive and respectful of the donor's needs. Avoid interrupting disagreeing with or arguing with the donor, even if they express objections.
- Be prepared for questions and concerns. Think about the issues the donor might raise, and how you would respond.
- When making an ask, be specific. Saying, "I hope you will consider supporting Habitat" is less effective than asking, "Would you be willing to contribute $500?"
- If the donor is not receptive to your request, gently explore why. Is it a matter of timing? Is the project not aligned with their interests? Is the amount requested too high? Bring a card with instructions on how to donate online or by cheque. If appropriate, try to collect a cheque during the meeting.

Telephone

Telephone asks have many of the same elements as in-person meetings and require similar preparation. They are typically shorter and more direct. While telephone asks are generally less effective than in-person requests, they can be a very valuable way to reach people you already know.

Establish why you are calling. What is their connection to you, Habitat's work, or the country you will be visiting? Why might they be interested in supporting your efforts?

- Build your case. Explain why you joined a Habitat build and what excites or inspires you most about the experience. What is the housing solution needed in the country you will visit? How will their donation support families in accessing safe and decent housing solutions?

- Make a specific ask, then give the donor time to respond.
- If the person is interested in contributing, ask how they would prefer to donate and provide instructions on how to do so.
- Thank them for their time and consideration.
- If they make a gift, be sure to follow up with a personal thank-you note.

Event-based fundraising

Asking for support through email, mail, phone calls, and in-person conversations are effective ways to reach family and friends. However, fundraising events allow you to go beyond your immediate network and introduce your build and Habitat for Humanity to a broader and more diverse audience. They can also be a lot of fun!

General tips for events

- Events can be as simple or elaborate as you want them to be. The first few times you host a fundraising event, err on the side of simplicity. People will be happy to support you and don't need a complicated plan or extensive details to get involved.
- Set a fundraising goal. How much do you want to raise at the event? Make sure people know what the goal is.
- Have a sign-in sheet and collect as much contact information as possible. Use this information to follow up and thank people for attending and for their support. You might also use it to share updates from the field and continue fundraising after your build if appropriate.
- If appropriate, offer a short presentation about the project. Show a Habitat video, create a slideshow, and speak from the heart about why you have chosen to invest your own time and money in this effort.
- Ask for support. You might make a formal pitch or invite people to support your build through a silent auction or other activities.
- Plan the logistics of collecting donations. Be prepared to accept contributions you are requesting. Have envelopes available for donations by cheque and enough pens for everyone. Consider having one or two volunteers on hand to collect donations at the door or during the event.
- Always have information about your fundraising webpage available on a card or handout with clear instructions on how to donate online or by cheque.
- Be creative with your theme. If possible, tie it to your project by featuring g food, decorations or entertainment inspired by the region you will visit.

Some successful event ideas

Dinners

Host a dinner party at your home and ask guests for a minimum donation to attend. Consider giving a short presentation between courses. You could serve food from the region you will visit and ask local businesses that carry that cuisine to donate items such as desserts or beverages.

Get a restaurant to sponsor or partially sponsor the event and collect a donation at the door for a buffet or fixed-menu meal. Some volunteers like to host these events at restaurants that feature cuisine from the country they will visit.

Drinks

A popular and effective way to raise funds is to gather people at a restaurant or café and collect a donation at the door. Ask whether the venue would be willing to provide complementary drink tickets or discount beverages. Some volunteers also incorporate silent auctions to raise additional funds.

Concerts

If you know musicians or other performers, or are a performer yourself, consider organizing a benefit concert or partnering with an existing music or performance event.

Ask whether a band would be willing to collect donations at the door or pass a collection hat during the event. They may also be willing to give you an opportunity to speak between sets about your build and fundraising goals.

Parties

Host a party at your home or at a venue that you can use at little or no cost. Collect a donation at the door. If you are feeling ambitious, consider incorporating a silent or live auction into the evening.

Benefit classes

Ask a local restaurant to sponsor a cooking class and collect a donation from participants.

You could also partner with a yoga instructor, dance teacher, fitness coach, or other community leader to host a special benefit class. Some volunteers have successfully brought together multiple instructors to create a unique fundraising event.

A-thons

Athletic events are a great way to combine fundraising with your personal interests. Whether you're a runner, cyclist, swimmer, hiker or another type of athlete, you can seek sponsorship for an upcoming challenge.

Ask friends; family members, and people from your workplace, community group or faith community to support your efforts based on a specific achievement, such as completing a marathon, cycling a certain distance or climbing a mountain.

Tip-a-thons

Restaurant and hospitality workers have organized tip-a-thons to collect donations to support their Habitat builds. A restaurant and its staff might be willing to donate all or a portion of one evening's tips to your fundraising efforts.

Placing a donation jar with a compelling photo and information about your build near the cash register or bar can also encourage support. Be sure to have cards available with information on how people can donate online.

Work-a-thons

Design your own work-a-thon! Work-a-thons provide helpful services to people who may not have the time or ability to complete certain tasks themselves.

Consider offering services such as raking leaves, washing cars, babysitting, pet care, running errands, tailoring clothes, doing laundry, cleaning, trimming hedges, or shoveling snow. Ask friends to help with the work and invite recipients to make a donation in return. Others may choose to sponsor your efforts by task completed or by the day.

Bowl-a-thons

Bowl-a-thons are a popular and enjoyable way to raise funds. Ask a local bowling alley to sponsor or partially sponsor the event. Charge a donation to participate and organize a friendly competition with prizes at the end of the evening.

Tournaments

Golf tournaments, fishing tournaments and similar competitions can be effective fundraising events. Collect a donation from participants and offer prizes at the conclusion of the event.

Grow a mustache

Some fundraising campaigns encourage participants to grow a mustache for a month while collecting sponsorships from friends, family, and colleagues. Similar campaigns have been used to raise funds and awareness for a variety of charitable causes and can be adapted to support your Habitat build.

Selling stuff

There are countless creative ways to sell products and raise funds. A few popular ideas are listed below, but don't be afraid to get creative.

Yard sale

Being part of a Habitat build is a great excuse to clean out your closets. Host a yard sale and ask friends and neighbours to donate items. Be sure to advertise that all proceeds will support Habitat for Humanity. If you have children who want to get involved, consider adding a bake sale or lemonade stand. You could even let buyers decide how much they want to donate for each item. You might be surprised by people’s generosity.

Virtual craft show

If you are an artist or craft maker, consider selling your handmade creations. Host an online event and invite friends and family to visit your online store, with all proceeds supporting Habitat for Humanity.

T-shirt sales

Design a T-shirt to promote your build and fundraising efforts. You could create an iron-on design and apply it to second hand T-shirts in good condition or low-cost new shirts. then sell them at events or online. You might also choose to give them to your donors as a thank you gift.

Host an auction (silent, live or online)

Organize an auction and ask seek donations of unique items, vacation stays, handmade crafts, gift cards to local businesses, or services such as massages and facials.

There are several ways to auction your items:

- **Live auctions:** Hold a live auction at your workplace during lunch or as part of a larger fundraising event, party or concert.
- **Silent auctions:** A silent auction can be run for as long as you like. For example, you could host one at your workplace for a month, or run one during a single event such as a party or concert.
- **Online auctions:** Online auction platforms can help you reach a wider audience. Promote the auction through social media, email and your personal network. Share the auction link, highlight featured items, and remind supporters when bidding opens and before it closes. Afterward, thank everyone who donated items or placed bids, and let them know how much was raised through their support.

Other creative ideas for spreading the word and raising money

While this handbook is full of fundraising ideas, our ultimate goal is to build support for Habitat for Humanity's work. That means raising awareness about the global housing challenge, inspiring advocacy, and encouraging people to get involved with Habitat in a variety of ways, whether through Global Village builds, volunteering with a local affiliate, or shopping at a Habitat ReStore. As you work toward your fundraising goal, keep the big picture in mind: there are many ways people can engage with and support our mission.

The ideas below are designed to raise awareness and introduce more people to Habitat's work. Of course, they can also help you raise funds!

Speaking presentations

Ask anyone and everyone you know whether you can make a presentation to their group, such as a civic organization, club, class, workplace or community group. Build your presentation

around a Habitat video, your own slideshow, or a video about your build. This can be especially effective before and after your build.

Share why you have chosen to invest your own time and resources in this experience and what inspires you about Habitat. Be sure to have information available about your fundraising page and how people can donate by cheque or online. As with any event, use a sign-in sheet and follow up to thank participants for their support.

Community newsletters

Use your company, organization, or campus newsletter to promote your Habitat build. Consider writing a series of articles about Habitat for Humanity and your build experience, perhaps one before your trip, one during, and one after.

Include information about how people can support your fundraising efforts and provide a link to your fundraising page. Remember: you'll always raise more when you ask.

Local businesses and community groups

Don't forget to approach local businesses you frequent, civic organizations, faith communities and other community groups. They may be willing to support your efforts in a variety of ways, from allowing you to leave a donation jar near a cash register to taking up a special collection during a community gathering.

Media

Take advantage of local media opportunities while fundraising, including newspapers, radio stations, television stations, online news outlets, and community bulletin boards. If you're hosting a particularly creative event, local media may be interested in sharing your story.

When speaking with the media, be sure to highlight the work of Habitat for Humanity and, where appropriate, mention the local Habitat organization and its efforts to help families access safe and affordable housing.

Employer matching gifts

Many employers offer matching gift programs that can increase the impact of employee donations to Habitat. Check your employer's matching gift guidelines and speak with the appropriate company contact or human resources representative.

Before submitting a matching gift request, confirm that your build is eligible. If matching gifts are available, ask your employer to include your name, build destination, and build event code with the payment. Be sure to notify your team leader so matching gifts can be properly credited toward your fundraising goal and your team's fundraising efforts.

> *"Helping Canadians achieve affordable homeownership is crucial to tackling the housing crisis, and should be a public policy priority."*
>
> Pedro Barata
> President & CEO
> Habitat for Humanity Canada

After returning from your build

Fundraising and awareness-raising are most effective before your build. However, continuing your fundraising efforts after you return can also be highly impactful.

For those who have never participated in a Habitat build or who don't feel comfortable fundraising until they have experienced this program firsthand, fundraising after returning home can be a meaningful way to turn inspiration into action. The funds you raise and the stories you share can have a lasting impact on the community you visited for years to come.

Many of the ideas in this handbook work just as well after your build as they do before.

For example, instead of saying, *"I'm raising funds for a community in Nepal, where I will be helping build homes in two months," you might say, "I recently returned from a Habitat build in Nepal. The experience was so inspiring that I have committed to raising funds to help support additional housing projects."*

While you are traveling, be sure to document your experience and think about how you can share it with others once you return.

Remember, people are often inspired by the passion and experiences of others. Give them meaningful ways to get involved. They may choose to support your fundraising efforts, learn more about Habitat, join a future Habitat build, volunteer with a local Habitat organization, or support Habitat in other ways.

Thanking your supporters

Supporters who donate to Habitat for Humanity Canada by credit card or by cheque will receive an acknowledgment letter and tax receipt. Donors who give online will also receive an automated confirmation that their donation was received. Donations are non-refundable.

Donors who contribute event space, food, auction items, or other in-kind gifts, or who purchase items at a yard sale, will not receive an acknowledgment letter from Habitat for Humanity Canada. The same applies to funds given directly to you rather than donated to Habitat by cheque or credit card.

Regardless of how people choose to support you, we encourage you to thank your donors personally. Some meaningful ways to acknowledge their support include:

- Sending a handwritten thank-you card after receiving their gift.
- Including donors in build updates before, during, and after the build, if they would like to receive them.
- Sending a personal email after your build with a photo and a message of thanks.
- Hosting a thank-you gathering after returning home and sharing stories, photos and videos from your build.

- Bringing back a small token of appreciation, such a handmade item or special memento from the community you visited.

Whatever approach you choose, make it personal, sincere and heartfelt. Most importantly, let your supporters know how their generosity has made a meaningful difference for families and communities.

Strategies for making your one-time supporters into longtime supporters

Almost half of the people who participate in a Habitat build are repeat team members. They have the opportunity not only to travel and build homes with a Habitat team year after year, but also to inspire their networks to support Habitat's work around the world. This section is for those who plan to participate in multiple Habitat builds over time.

What if you had 50 people who supported your fundraising efforts every time you participated in a build? What if your supporters actually looked forward to receiving your annual fundraising appeal? It may sound impossible, but it's not.

Building a loyal base of supporters who feel connected to your journey and Habitat's work takes time and effort. Here are some of the best practices shared by our most successful team leaders:

- **Build relationships.** Focus on people you know well or those with whom you would like to build a stronger connection. Take the time to understand what matters to them, and share why Habitat's work matters to you. The more they understand your passion, the more likely they are to be inspired by it.
- **Personalize your communications.** Avoid relying solely on generic “Dear friend” emails. Consider segmenting your contact list so that you can follow up personally with donors and ensure future communications feel relevant and meaningful.
- **Share your journey.** People who contribute to your fundraising efforts often want to know what happens before, during and after your build.
- **Keep them informed by sharing updates** about your preparations, what you're learning about the project, reflections from the field, and stories and photos when you return.
- **Report on the impact.** Donors want to know how their support made a difference. When possible, learn how funds are being used and share stories, photos, and examples of the impact being made in the communities served. Showing supporters the results of their generosity helps strengthen their connection to Habitat’s work.
- **Stay in touch.** Don't limit your communications to fundraising appeals. Share occasional updates throughout the year about Habitat's efforts, your past build experience, or future opportunities to get involved.

If your supporters feel that their contribution made a meaningful difference and that their experience as a donor was rewarding, they will be much more likely to support future fundraising efforts.

Habitat for Humanity Canada works to ensure that donations are used effectively and responsibly. However, we cannot build personal relationships with every donor. Your communication before, during, and after your build plays an important role in creating a meaningful and inspiring experience for your supporters, helping them stay connected to Habitat's mission for years to come.

Appendix 1

Sample appeal letter

Traditional:

Dear [Name],

I hope you're doing well. I saw on Facebook that you recently welcomed a baby girl into your family. Congratulations!

I'm writing because I'll soon be participating in a Habitat for Humanity Global Village build in Nepal and am seeking support for my fundraising efforts. Through my volunteer experience with Habitat, I've seen firsthand how safe, decent and affordable housing can help families build stronger futures and create healthier communities. During this build, our team will work alongside local families and community members as they build safer, more secure homes.

Habitat's approach focuses on long-term, sustainable solutions. Families contribute their own labour and resources, and work together through community savings groups to make homeownership more attainable. I'm honoured to be part of this experience and to support Habitat in helping more families access safe and decent housing.

My fundraising goal is $5,000, and every donation will help support Habitat's work. If you're able to contribute, please visit my fundraising page: [link]. Thank you for considering a gift and for supporting a cause that means so much to me. I look forward to sharing updates from the journey.

Sincerely,
[Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

Reminder email:

Hello [Name],

I'm reaching out with a quick update on my Habitat for Humanity Global Village fundraising. I'm nearing my goal and would be grateful for your support.

If you've been meaning to contribute but haven't had a chance yet, you can donate here: [link]. Every gift helps Habitat work alongside families to access safe and affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration and encouragement.

Warm regards,
[Name]

Appendix 2

Tax deductions for donations

Habitat for Humanity Canada is a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency. For Canadian residents, donations made to support a Habitat build may be eligible for a charitable tax receipt.

Because tax laws and interpretations can change over time, Habitat for Humanity Canada cannot provide tax advice. We encourage you to consult a qualified tax professional regarding the eligibility of your donations and any build-related expenses.

Residents of other countries may be subject to different tax rules based on local laws and the charitable status of Habitat organizations in their country. If you have questions about the tax treatment of your donations or build-related expenses, please consult a tax adviser or other qualified tax professional.

Appendix 3

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Building a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live

Our story

As a member of , a global housing organization working in more than 60 countries, Habitat Canada plays a vital role in advancing safe and affordable housing solutions both here at home and around the world. With billions of people living without adequate shelter, we are part of a global movement united by a simple but powerful vision: a world where everyone, everywhere, has a safe, decent and affordable place to live.

Our work in Canada

Since our founding in Canada in 1985, we have helped thousands of families in every province and the North build their life on their own terms through access to decent, affordable housing.

For generations, homeownership has been viewed as a pathway to financial security and stability. Today, however, many Canadians view it as unattainable. Some even describe owning a home as a luxury.

A shortage of housing supply, rising construction costs and higher mortgage rates have driven up the cost of buying a home. At the same time, incomes have not kept pace with the rising cost of housing, food, clothing and transportation, and other essentials, making it increasingly difficult to save for a down payment.

The latest census data show that renting is growing twice as fast as homeownership in Canada. Renters are also far more likely than homeowners to live in unaffordable, overcrowded, or inadequate housing, often without affordable alternatives nearby.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Canada's gap between housing costs and incomes has doubled since 1987. No other G7 country has experienced such a significant decline in housing affordability.

Meanwhile, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) estimates that Canada must build an additional 3.5 million homes by 2030 to restore housing affordability.
At Habitat, we believe that access to safe and affordable homeownership provides the foundation for long-term economic and social well-being, and we have the data to demonstrate its impact.

Research* on Habitat for Humanity's *Affordable Homeownership Program* shows that Habitat homeowners experience stronger economic and social outcomes than comparable Canadians who continue to rent. These outcomes also contribute to Canada's productivity and economic growth.

- The majority of Habitat homeowners report improvements in mental and physical health, education, employment, community involvement and financial security.
- Families who own a Habitat home saw their incomes grow **nearly 30% more than** if they had continued renting.
- Every year, Habitat households contribute an **additional $35 million** into Canada's economy as a result of becoming homeowners.

Habitat's program is helping to build a healthier, more inclusive, and more prosperous Canada for generations to come.

**Habitat for Humanity Canada and Deloitte study*

Building a better future together

Every day, we work alongside families, communities and partners to break down barriers to affordable homeownership and create lasting change. Our programs reflect the diverse needs and circumstances of families in Canada and around the world.

Our ability to further our mission depends on volunteers becoming informed advocates for safe and affordable housing. The more you share your story and experience, the more people you can inspire to take action and support housing solutions in Canada and beyond.