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RESOURCE GUIDE

EVENT FUNDRAISING DURING COVID-19



A message from our founder

Dear fundraising professionals,

The current situation with COVID-19 is very challenging and rapidly changing. We know event organizers and charitable staff members are working quickly to assess their plans and redirect resources as needed.

This is a difficult time around our world and we know, more than ever, how important your fundraising initiatives are for your organization's mandate. We built this FREE resource guide for all charitable organizations who need it regardless of if you are a customer of Trellis or not.

Our team is committed to helping our industry stay informed about the current situation with COVID-19 as it relates to your fundraising events and offering any tools and resources we can, to support along the way.

Within this resource guide, you'll find the following tools:

- **Next steps to assist if you cancel your fundraising event**
- **Resources to have a successful event amid COVID-19**
- **New turnkey fundraising solutions for your organization**
- **Additional alternative fundraising ideas to secure your revenue streams during the outbreak**

As we navigate through uncertainty, we can hold onto the knowledge that we are stronger when we work together and support one another. At Trellis, we promise rain or shine, COVID or not, we'll have your back.

We welcome your insight as we support our charity partners across the country.

Sincerely,

Justin Goodhew
Founder and CEO
support@trellis.org

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Important COVID-19 Information

Canceling your Event

If you decide to cancel your fundraising event, use the following resources to make an informed decision and communicate with your attendees.

In this section, you'll find tools to help assess the risk of your event, messaging to communicate with your event attendees, and a suggested refund policy with tips to help convert your cancellations into donations for your organization.

If you decide to cancel your event, make sure to [connect with our team](#). We've got solutions and alternate fundraising ideas for your organization! To learn more about these ideas [click here](#).



Should I Cancel My Event?

The COVID-19 Event Assessment Guide

It is important to consider the date your event is scheduled and the expected risk of your event when deciding how to proceed. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), decisions regarding mass gatherings and events can be considered on the following scale.

- Make no changes, continue as planned with your fundraising event.
- Provide enhanced communication with attendees to address concerns they may have, and inform them of the heightened precautions your event team is taking in light of COVID-19.

See below for [sample messaging to send to your event attendees](#).

- Implement risk mitigation strategies for your event, without canceling your fundraiser.

[To share this message with your event attendees](#), see below.

- Postpone or cancel your event. With a canceled event, you can still ensure your organization receives funds through different revenue-generating channels.

See below to [learn how to implement new fundraising approaches](#).

[Public Health Authorities \(PHA\)](#) have enabled varying levels of self-isolation depending on location and are discouraging events and gatherings of any size. Please note that gathering restrictions will differ by region or state, and it is advised to check with your local health authority for more information.

If you are hosting in-person events, read further in the guide for tips to ensure you have a successful event during the COVID-19 outbreak when it has been deemed safe to do so. Additionally, should you have to cancel your event, below you'll find [alternative fundraising ideas](#) to recover the revenue lost through canceling your fundraiser.

Controlling the Message

Informing your Event Attendees about your Cancellation

We welcome you to use this sample message to communicate with event attendees that you will be canceling your event.

Dear Ticket Holder,

With **[insert your event name here]** approaching on **[insert date of the event here]**, we have decided to cancel our event to protect the safety of our speakers, partners, sponsors, and attendees like you.

Although we are disappointed to cancel our fundraising event at this time, we know that it is for the better.

Thank you for choosing to support our organization by purchasing tickets to our event. We will be refunding those tickets, but if you would like to donate your contribution to our organization instead, we would gladly accept the donation. Our organization does rely heavily on the funds from this and other fundraising events, and now that this event is canceled we will need our community's support more than ever.

With uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, this is a difficult time for our community and country, and we hope you stay safe. However, we know that this will pass and we look forward to connecting with you at future events.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Event Cancellation Refund Policy

Converting Cancellations to Donations

Ticket sales to events contribute to a large portion of fundraising revenue for your organization. With a canceled event due to safety reasons, this loss in revenue can have a large impact.

We encourage you to ask your event attendees to donate their refunded tickets to your organization as the event will no longer be taking place.

Use the following Questions and Answers to communicate with your event attendees about the positive impact of their donations.

At **[insert your organization name here]** we care deeply about our community of supporters. Given the current outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), we want to provide as much clarity as possible on how this impacts our organization and events.

The **[insert your event name here]** has been canceled or postponed.

What happens now?

As the **[insert your event name here]** is canceled, you will be protected and your order will be refunded in full. Your order will be refunded to your original payment method within one week of the event officially being canceled and we will also send you an email when your refund has been processed. If you have any questions or concerns around this please don't hesitate to reach out to our team.

If the event is postponed, your tickets will be valid for the new event date. Similar to a cancellation, if this happens we will confirm the changes and contact you over email with an update.

How does this affect **[insert your organization name here]** and how can I help?

Our organization does rely heavily on the funds from this and other fundraising events, and with this event canceled we will need our community's support more than ever.

If you would still like to support our organization here are a couple of great options:

1. Transfer your ticket into a donation! Help us reach our fundraising goal by converting your entire ticket or a partial amount into a donation and receive a tax receipt for that amount.
2. Make an additional donation to our cause! We would really appreciate your support as we navigate the uncertainties of COVID-19 and want to continue supporting those who rely on our services.
3. Start a fundraiser of your own! Want to really help give our fundraising a boost? Together, we can easily create an online fundraising page to champion this cause to your community. Choose a fundraising goal and easily share your page with your friends, family, and colleagues to amplify support for our mission.

If you do have questions, please contact our team to learn more about how to support our organization during this time.

We wish all of our wonderful community the best of health. We are eternally grateful for all of your incredible support and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]



Saving your Event

Congrats! You've decided to keep moving forward with your event. Below are some resources to use as you plan for your fundraising event to make sure it's a success.

In this section, you'll find guidelines to hold a successful event including tips to keep attendees safe throughout your event, an infographic to share quick safety reminders with your attendees, an emergency operations and communication plan for your event staff, and social media resources to share with your followers.

As you navigate hosting an event amid COVID-19, talk to our team and [book a fundraising strategy session](#) and determine options for additional revenue as you move forward.

Please note: Our team is excited you have decided to continue hosting your fundraising event. However, we urge event organizers to only do so when it is considered safe by Public Health Authorities. If your organization decides to proceed with its event prior to that time, Trellis Social Enterprise Inc. is not responsible for that decision.

Hosting a successful event amid COVID-19

Next steps to move your event forward *depending on when your event is scheduled*.

When it has been deemed safe by Public Health Authorities, it is still recommended to take additional precautions to keep guests and staff members safe.

Below are three actions that you can take to make sure your guests feel comfortable when attending your event.

1. Communicate

As an event planner, be clear about the risks of your event and identify methods of communication to keep event attendees aware of your next steps.

Let your event attendees know how you are proceeding with your event amid COVID-19 and what their options are if they do not feel comfortable attending. We've crafted messaging to send to your event attendees below to help share this message. Be prepared to receive questions and concerns from your attendees following your announcement as ticket purchasers process your information and decide how they would like to move forward.

[For a sample Question and Answer section, click here.](#)

2. Extra Event Preparation

At your event, take extra steps to keep guests feeling safe and comfortable. Provide hand sanitizer, and access to hand-washing stations wherever possible. Add signage to remind your attendees to keep respectable distances between one another. And offer alternatives for greeting each other like a wave, nod, or smile.

[To download your event safety poster click here.](#)

3. Adjust the Event

Where possible, change your activity schedule to reduce risk. Remove or shorten times for networking and mingling, opt for smaller gatherings for dinners, or introduce elements virtually so people can participate remotely.

Without moving your event to be completely virtual, these small changes can help to reduce the time spent together in confined spaces, helping attendees and staff stay safe.

Social distancing will help slow the spread of this outbreak, but we know people still require social interaction and as long as the risk is low and event attendees and staff are safe it is possible to host a fundraising event successfully amid COVID-19 depending on when your event is scheduled.

Event Attendee Communication

As you communicate with your event attendees, it is encouraged to provide clear communication regarding how COVID-19 impacts your event and your attendee's safety. Make sure to offer options for event attendees to decide how they would like to proceed.

Informing your event attendees about your ongoing event

We welcome you to use the sample messages below to connect with your event attendees regarding how the situation is being handled and your assessment of the risk. Please adapt the wording as necessary to meet your needs.

Dear Ticket Holder,

With *[insert your event name here]* approaching in *[insert month of event here]*, we have just released our formal **Health and Safety Policy (PHAC)** as it relates to the **COVID-19** (in line with recommendations from the **Public Health Agency in [Canada](#) and the [United States](#)**).

Our registration numbers are tracking well! That said, we are taking the initiative to ensure our speakers, partners, sponsors, and attendees like you feel comfortable.

As 90% of our attendees are from the regional/local market, we expect the level of risk will be low in line with recommendations from PHAC that assesses the public health risk associated with COVID-19. 0% of our delegates are from overseas and in fact, most are arriving in their own cars.

We have relaxed our cancellation and substitution policies to facilitate risk-free registration for our guests nonetheless. We will continue to follow best-practices and keep you informed as decisions are made about our event as the day draws closer.

Thanks,
[Your Name]

Event Safety Infographic

Use this poster as a resource to share with event attendees, encouraging them to stay safe during your event amid COVID-19.

Event Attendee Question and Answers

Use the following Questions and Answers to communicate with your event attendees about your upcoming event.

Is the *[insert your event name here]* still scheduled to go on as planned?

It is our hope that our events do go on as planned, in which case please note health and safety is our top priority and we will be taking all necessary steps to assure our events are safe for our community supporters.

What precautionary measures can I take to support a healthy community and a safe event?

If you are unwell at all, please do not attend the event. If you are attending, please wash your hands or use hand sanitizers frequently, cough/sneeze into your elbow (vs. into your hands), and always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using warm water. You can also avoid shaking hands and other forms of physical contact; we recommend opting for a friendly wave or nod instead.

What are my other options if I don't go to an event due to the coronavirus?

We understand this is a challenging time and that you may decide you feel more comfortable staying home or that you're no longer able to attend. If this is the case, we completely understand and we will happily refund your ticket in full. Although we would be happy to refund your ticket, we would ask you to consider converting your ticket into a donation to our cause. This will be a difficult time for our organization as we navigate COVID-19, and we would appreciate your support.

Emergency Operations and Communications Plan

Fundraising Staff Members Question and Answers

Use the following Questions and Answers to communicate with your internal fundraising team about your approach to COVID-19.

Additionally, review the following websites to make sure your event venue is ready for your fundraiser.

- WHO workplace readiness [guidelines](#)
- CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection [Recommendations](#)

At *[insert your organization name here]* we care deeply about our team and their wellbeing. Given the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, we want to provide as much clarity as possible on how this impacts our upcoming events and our team.

Is the *[insert your event name here]* still scheduled to go on as planned?

It is our hope that our events do go on as planned, in which case we will be implementing additional measures to ensure the safety of our event attendees and team. As we get closer to the event date, we will continue to update you on the status of our event based on recommendations from Public Health Authorities.

What can I do to help *[insert your organization name here]* remain safe from the COVID-19 outbreak?

We encourage you to implement the following [everyday preventive actions](#).

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.

We will have extra supplies on hand for event staff and participants, including hand sanitizers, tissues, and sinks with soap.

Is *[insert your organization name here]* prepared for staff absences?

We have developed a flexible attendance and sick-leave policy. Staff that are still required to come to work may stay home when they are sick or are caring for children or a sick household member. Essential job functions and positions have been identified and a plan has been put in place to ensure these responsibilities are still handled.

How are we protecting our event attendees at *[insert your event name here]*?

Prior to our event, we will be discouraging those who are sick or showing symptoms of COVID-19 from attending the fundraiser. We will be offering full refunds to the tickets for those who choose not to attend. During the event, we will designate a space for staff and participants to isolate themselves if they cannot leave the event immediately. Additionally, we will encourage individuals to avoid physical touch and have extra supplies available including hand sanitizers, tissues, and handwashing stations for event attendees and staff to use.

How are we communicating with our event attendees about the status of *[insert your event name here]*?

We will be communicating with our event attendees to let them know the current status of our event and sharing important information as it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak. Please be prepared for increased questions and concerns from our event attendees about the status of the event and the level of risk. Additionally, please know that we will only be hosting this event if it has been deemed safe by Public Health Authorities.

Social Media and Marketing Resources

Use the following ready-to-use [social media images](#) to inform your followers about your response to COVID-19.

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Wash your hands often

Wash your hands to protect yourself and others from getting sick.

Source: World Health Organization

Icon: surang

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Cover your mouth and nose

When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue

Source: World Health Organization

Icon: freepik

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Avoid close contact and seek a PHA

When experiencing cough or fever, avoid close contact and seek medical care early.

Source: World Health Organization

Icon: srip

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Avoid physical greetings

Instead of a handshake or a fistbump: wave, nod, or bow to greet others

Source: World Health Organization

Icon: freepik

Your Turnkey Fundraising Solutions

In this season, we remain committed to helping our charity partners find new and innovative ways to continue raising funds while remaining safe. With the increase in technology and social media usage, there are countless ways you can engage your donors and raise money for your cause.

We know you have a lot to manage right now, but we have your back. Use our latest turnkey fundraising solutions created specifically for organizations like yours. We've created all the resources you need to launch a Stay at Home Gala or virtual gala event, and everything you need to host the Haircuts for Good online donation campaign.

All you have to do is get started (and we've made that incredibly easy too).

Host Your Own Stay at Home Gala

We know charitable organizations across Canada are looking for new options for their gala events due to COVID-19. We'll show you how to host a virtual gala with all the familiar elements your attendees love including motivational speakers, entertainers, musicians, and even an optional dinner (delivered to guests doors).

The [Stay at Home Gala](#) model was built out of the desire to inspire community and togetherness while being physically distant. It was designed to raise funds for local communities and support small businesses, while entertaining and encouraging event attendees. The first Stay at Home Gala was held in Kelowna, Canada run by an amazing group of volunteers that Trellis was lucky enough to partner with. Using this exact model, the Stay at Home Gala was able to raise over \$23,000 in 5 days with more than 200 households tuning in for an evening of engaging speakers, amazing musicians and lots of inspiration. Afterwards, the Stay at Home Gala team took the event across Canada and raised over \$560,000 for local Canadian charities and organizations in less than a month.

We know this model works, and we want to see your organization benefit from it as well.

We've created a [comprehensive event planning guide](#) with information, insights, and best practices around the following areas:

- Event Flow
- Speakers and Entertainment
- Branding as Stay at Home Gala
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Sponsorships
- Creating your Fundraising Event Page
- Silent Auctions
- Food and Drinks
- Technology

Additionally, our team is offering free [Virtual Event Live Q&A Support Sessions](#) throughout the week, giving you support along the way for your virtual event. We look forward to supporting you as you plan your Stay at Home Gala or virtual gala event!

STAY @
HOME
Gala

Your Next Online Campaign

Haircuts for Good

Right now, time is tight and revenue is more important than ever before for charitable organizations. We've created this easy and fun campaign to engage your donors and generate support for your organization. It's extremely easy and quick (try 5 minutes!) to get started.

The [Haircuts for Good](#) campaign, with three branches; Haircuts for Good, Haircuts for Health, and Haircuts for Hunger, has been designed to support different frontline organizations powering COVID-19 relief efforts. Use this campaign to challenge your supporters to get or give a much-needed home haircut and donate the money they would've spent to your frontline organization instead.

There are options to make this a Peer-to-Peer campaign, or keep it simple as a donation campaign with a custom fundraising page to direct donors back to. All campaigns will also be added to our [interactive map](#), making it easy to see which communities are participating in the campaign.

We've created a complete [Haircuts for Good Resource Guide](#), giving you the resources you need to launch your campaign with ease. Included in the guide you'll find next steps to get started, ready to use [social media and branding assets](#), and best practices to ensure your campaign is a success.

Additionally, we are offering [Haircuts for Good Live Q&A Support Sessions](#). Offering regular opportunities to connect with our team and learn the latest best practices to host successful online donation campaigns and set up your fundraising page for success.



Alternative Fundraising Ideas

Smart strategies to save your fundraising budget without running your event.

For the foreseeable future, fundraising events are being put on hold causing significant uncertainty and concern for fundraisers and their organizations. Our team is prepared to support your organization as you navigate your next steps and work to keep raising funds for your cause.

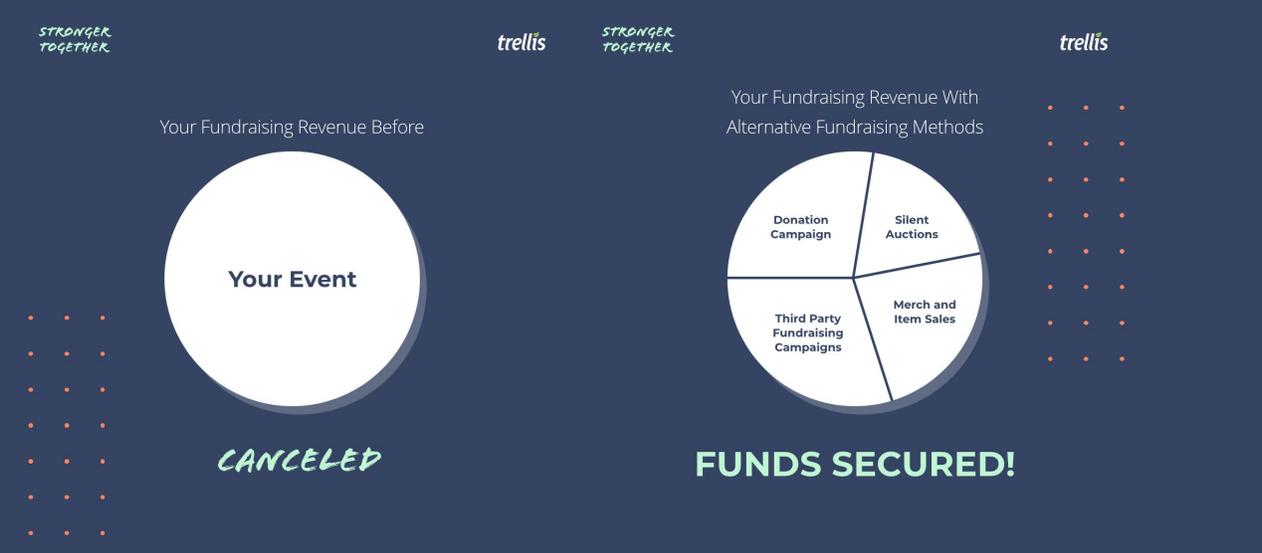
Beyond the fundraising solutions provided above, use these alternate fundraising ideas to recoup lost revenue, as you make up for canceling your big fundraising events.

Here are the top fundraising strategies you can use to meet your fundraising goals:

- Shift your event to an online donation campaign
- Host an online silent auction
- Launch an eCommerce store
- Empower your champions to fundraise for you

We know that just one of these strategies alone may not take the place of your marquee event. However, by combining these fundraisers together you will not only meet your fundraising goals but find a whole new opportunity to generate the donor support you need.

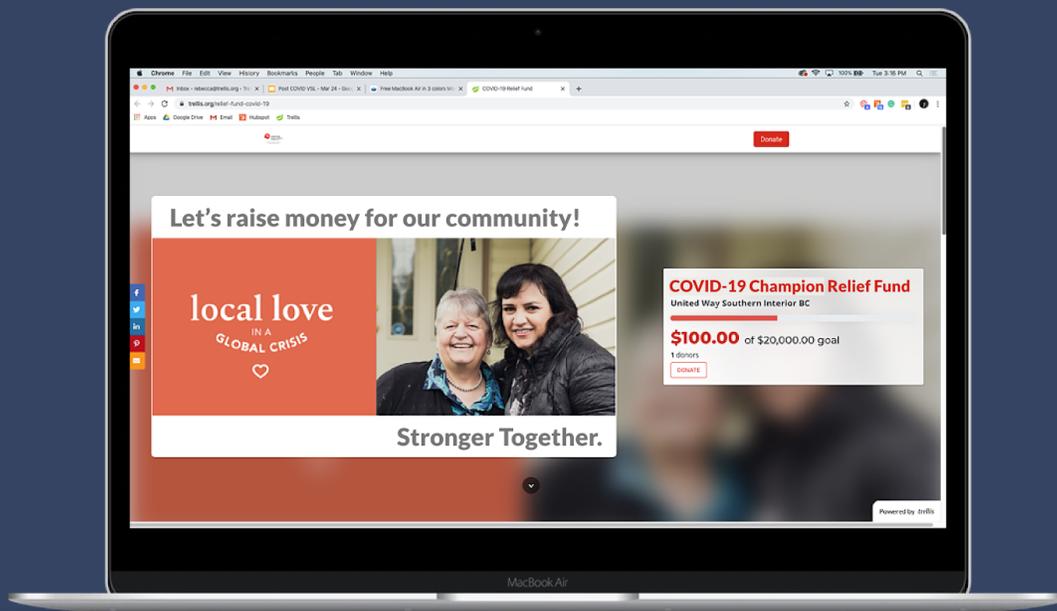
Let us support you as you create a new fundraising strategy during COVID-19. Register [here](#) for our upcoming live Alternative Fundraising Strategies Session.



Shift your Event to an Online Campaign

Your event might not be happening but you can still rely on your community's support. Leverage this momentum by hosting an online giving campaign and invite your attendees and community donors to still take action to support your cause.

Ticket refunds should be available to everyone, but not everyone may want a refund. Give your attendees a chance to donate to your cause by offering to convert their ticket purchase into a donation with a tax receipt! [See how to do that here.](#)

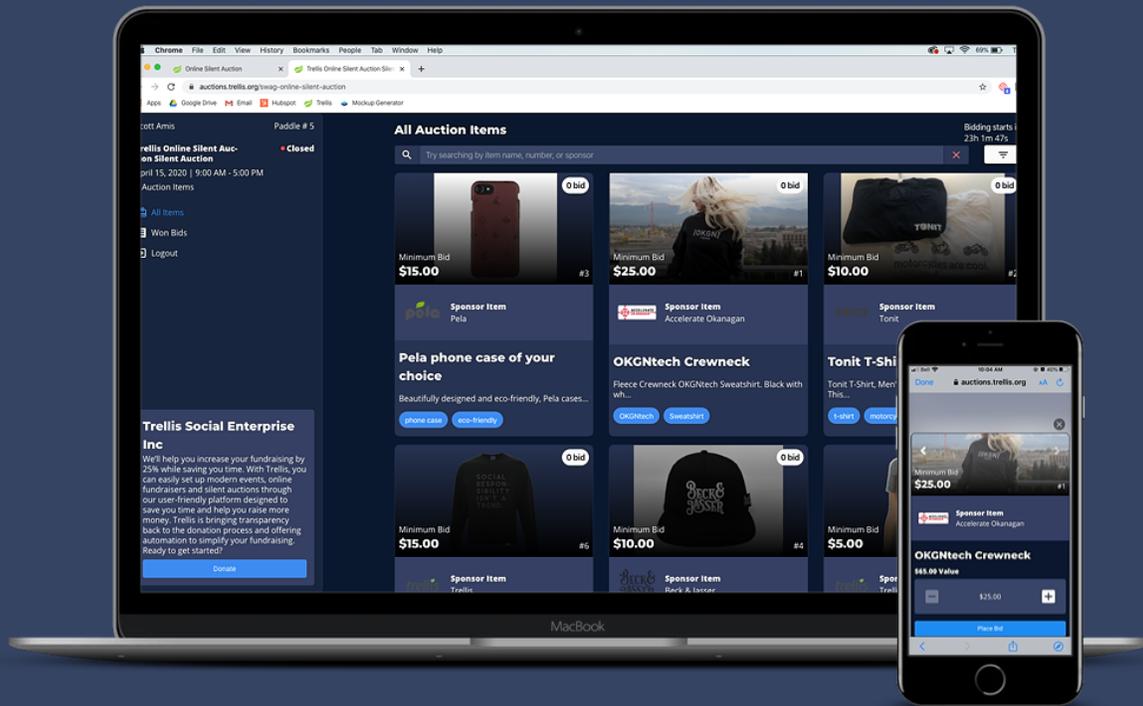


VIDEO: [How to build a beautiful and successful online donation campaign](#)

Host an Online Silent Auction

Your sponsors are just as disappointed as you that your event isn't moving forward, so turn this into a win by still giving them an opportunity to get involved and get positive exposure! Collect a pool of amazing items or in-kind services from your partners and host them through the Trellis online auction tool. Your attendee lists will be just as excited to bid online as attend your event and this way the whole community can be involved!

Using the Trellis Silent Auction platform, we've made it easy to host your virtual silent auction, staggering bid open and close dates, and notifying participants when items are live, and they've been outbid. Collecting silent auction payment has never been easier, and all the funds will go back to your account automatically.

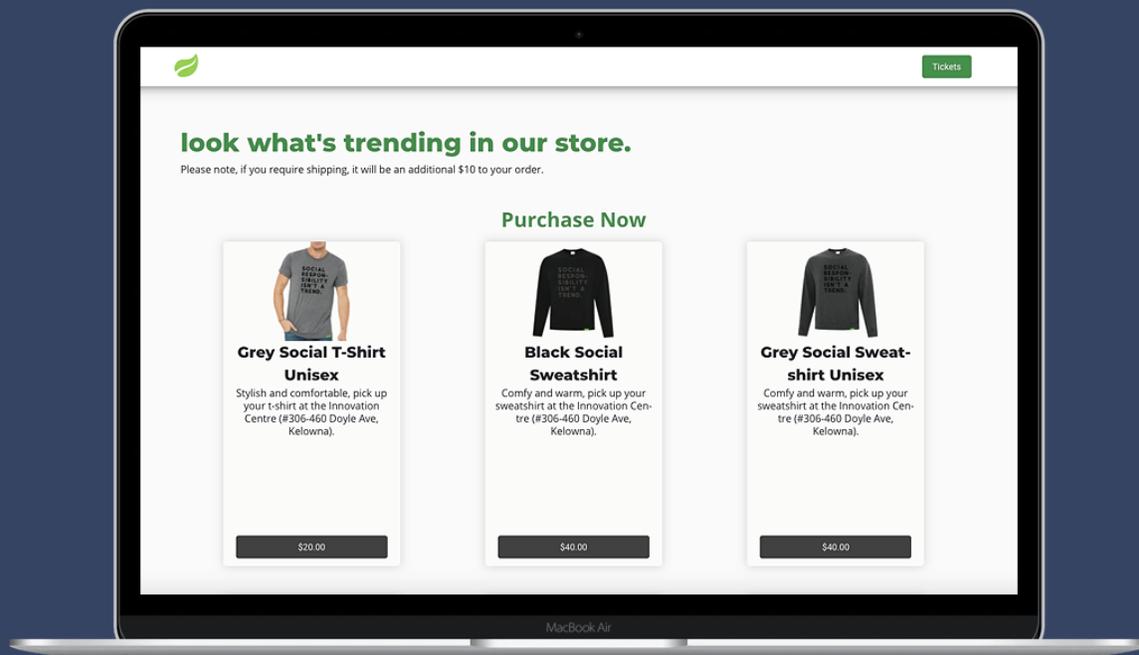
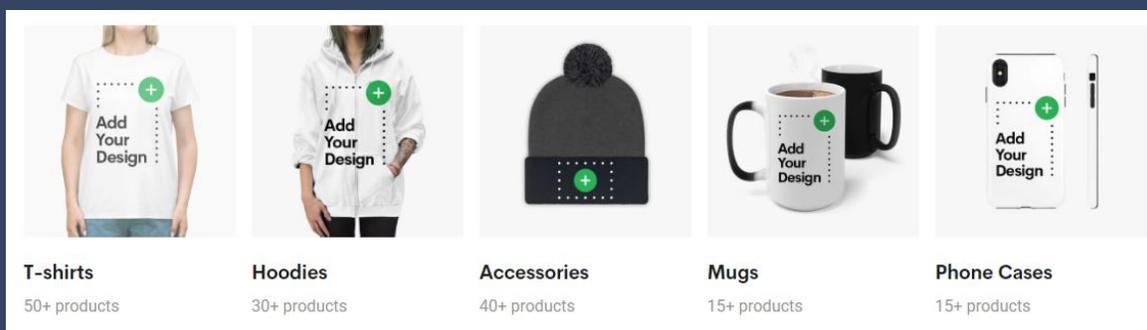


VIDEO: [How to use an online auction to grow your fundraiser exponentially!](#)

Launch an eCommerce Store

Your community loves your cause so why not give them more ways to show that support. By putting together some branded merchandise online, drive additional revenue for your cause and unite your community with some new gear.

Don't have t-shirts, hats, or water bottles to sell? That's okay too! You can use tools like [Printful](#) and [Printify](#) to design and drop-ship merchandise without holding inventory.



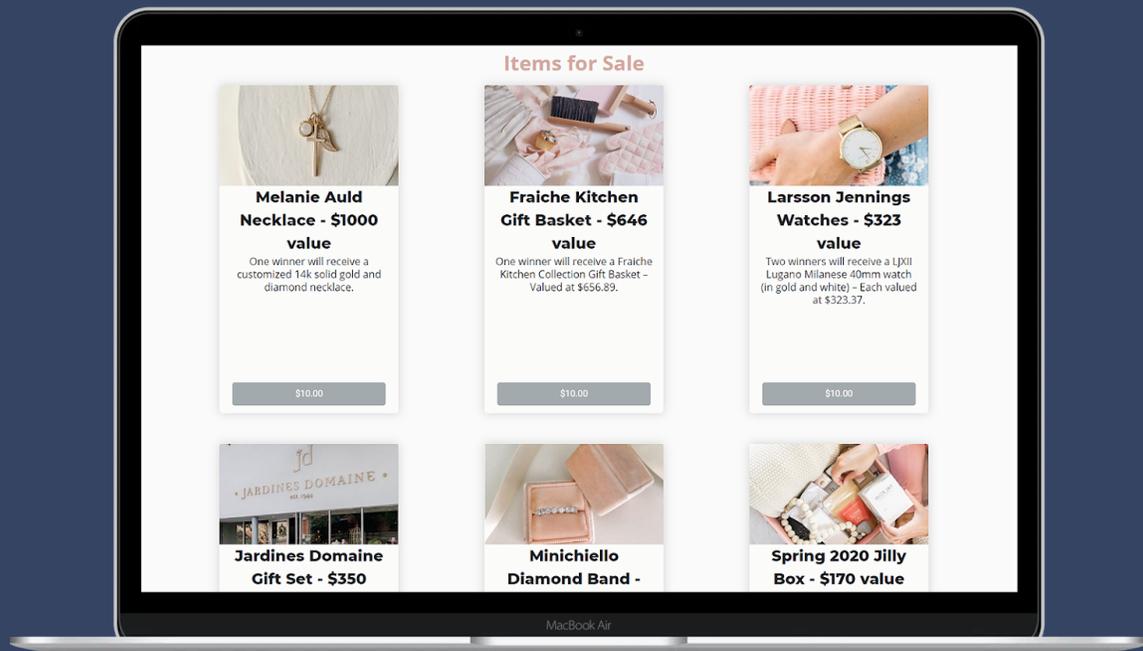
VIDEO: [How to sell merchandise online to fundraise for your cause](#)

Organize an Online Raffle

Raffles are a great way to raise extra money at an event (in-person or virtual), and they can also be successfully run online as a main fundraising strategy.

Similar to a silent auction, reach out to your network or local businesses to have them donate items for your raffle. Add pictures and descriptions of each item to get your supporters excited, and set an attractive price point for donors.

Encourage your network to donate for items they want to win, and once the raffle has closed, randomly pick a winner out of the group of donors for each item!



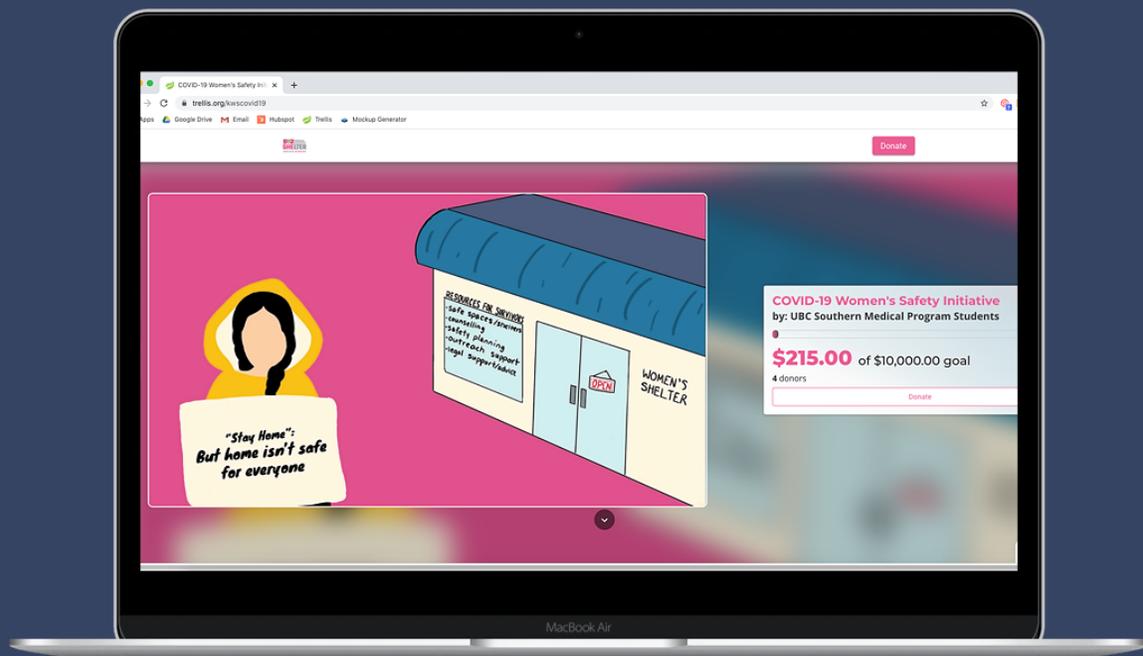
Celebrity influencer Jillian Harris ran a flash online raffle for a local organization called Mamas for Mamas, raising over \$220,000 on [trelis!](#) They kept their raffle ticket prices at \$10, \$15, or \$20, making it easy and enticing for people to participate.

Be sure to keep your donors informed on when the raffle is open and how they will find out if they have won a prize.

Empower Your Champions to Fundraise for You

You've got engaged donors, they were probably the first to buy tickets to your event, and now they will likely come to your fundraising rescue. We like to call these individuals our champions because, let's face it, that's what they are!

With our third-party fundraising tools, you can easily create an online fundraising page and empower each of your community champions to drive donations from their network to your cause.



VIDEO: [How to empower third-party champions to fundraise online for you](#)

Important COVID-19 Information

The resources provided in the toolkit are based on the recommendations for best practices provided by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and WHO (World Health Organization).

Although we encourage you to use the resources provided in this toolkit as you make decisions regarding your events amid COVID-19, we also recommend consulting your local or regional public health authorities for additional considerations being made in your community.

Use these links to get you started.

[CDC \(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\)](#)

- [Situation Summary](#)
- [Mass Gatherings and Events](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself](#)
- [Recommendations for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

[WHO \(World Health Organization\)](#)

- [COVID-19 FAQ](#)
- [Country and Technical Guidelines](#)