



Relay A-Z Fundraising Ideas

A

- Ask: The easiest way to raise money is to ask your friends, neighbors, relatives, and anyone you know to make a donation to the American Cancer Society Relay For Life event which you are taking part in. Explain your commitment and why you are involved – maybe because of a loved one battling cancer.
- Art Sales: Have preschool and elementary students produce art that you display at a show. Parents and friends buy back their budding artists' masterpieces.
- Auctions: Many teams put together live or silent auctions. Teams can make a whole event out of it by working with an auctioneer who will donate his/her time and holding a live auction. Some teams have had success in hosting silent auctions during their family reunions, while others are putting them together at sports auctions. Collectibles are popular!
- Auction Off the Boss: Have your boss, department head, or company executive volunteer to do something embarrassing, like being someone's assistant for the day or letting employees throw pie in their face. Employees bid to be the lucky winner, with proceeds benefiting your fundraising efforts.

B

- Baby-sit: Do extra baby-sitting and give your pay (or at least part of it) to your team's effort. Or baby-sit as a team during a community event.
- Bake Sales: Hold a bake sale at work or a busy public place (e.g., bank, grocery store, town square, etc.). Or have a No-Bake sale where co-workers pay so they don't have to bake goodies.
- Balloon Day: This is good for students. In exchange for a \$2 donation, students take orders for Relay balloons with special messages attached and deliver the balloon messages to the student of their choice.
- Bank For a Year: Get everyone on your team to put in \$2 each week beginning the week after this year's Relay event. In 50 weeks, each team member will have his or her \$100. Or, bank 50 cents every day, and in 50 weeks you will have saved \$175. Add just two more friends giving you 50 cents each per day, and you will now have a total of \$525 in 50 weeks!
- Bingo: Hold a bingo night at a local club, church hall, or at your place of business. Participants receive bingo cards in exchange for a donation. Ask local restaurants and businesses to donate food and prizes.
- Birthday Party with a Purpose: Have your birthday party, and state that in lieu of gifts, you would like guests to make a donation to your Relay For Life fundraising efforts to benefit the American Cancer Society.
- Block Party: Put together an old-fashioned block party in a parking lot (with permission from the owner), or close off a neighborhood street (with permission from the city). Ask a local band to donate a few



hours of their time for entertainment, provide BBQ, and offer activities like face painting, hay rides, etc. This lets you have fun and raise money for your team!

- **Book Sales:** Do it in conjunction with a publishing house that will donate books, or have everyone on your team bring in good condition, used paperbacks or hard cover books. Get permission to set up a table in a local mall or plaza, or if you work for a large employer, set it up in the break or lunch room. People come by the table and receive the book of their choice in exchange for a donation.
- **Boss for the Day:** Get permission from your boss to allow coworkers to bid on being boss for the day. The highest bid wins.
- **Bounce-a-thon:** Elementary students take a collection envelope home to collect pledges for bouncing a basketball for half an hour. Each class in the school takes turns gathering in the school's front hall throughout the day to bounce their basketballs.
- **Bowl-a-thon:** Hold a bowl-a-thon. Ask people to pledge to donate a certain amount per pin participants knock down. Ask your local bowling alley to donate lanes for a few hours.
- **Bowling Chance:** One dollar gives you the chance to throw two balls (toy bowling set). If you strike, your name is entered into a drawing twice. If you throw a spare with your second ball, your name is entered into the drawing once. Solicit a nice prize for the winner. This could be held on-site at the Relay event.
- **Breakfast With:** Put together a breakfast with Santa, the Easter Bunny, or a local mascot. Work with a local restaurant or hold the breakfast in a hall or club. Sell tickets and let kids have their pictures taken with the special guest. This would also work as a breakfast with the mayor or another high-profile person.
- **Brown Bag Lunch Day:** Everyone brings in their own lunch and donates the money they would have spent to the Relay For Life fund.

C

- **Can and Bottle Drive:** Set up at a central location and collect cans and bottles. Return for deposit at the nearest redemption center. You will need pickup trucks to carry the cans, or ask a local redemption center or local store if you can set up in their parking lot so you don't have to carry the cans to be redeemed.
- **Candle Sales:** Offer scented votive candles to fellow employees and friends in exchange for a donation.
- **Candy Bar Sales:** Sell candy bars at work, or have someone at a business let you set up a little display box (beauty shops, store check-out counters, etc.). You can purchase box kits from wholesale warehouses such, or ask a candy store to donate them.
- **Car Washes:** This is another good idea for everyone – students and adults, especially in the spring when everyone wants the mud off of their cars. Accept donations instead of charging a set price.
- **Car Smash:** Secure an old car and write in large bold letters CANCER across the car. For a \$1 donation, people get to "smash cancer" three times with a sledgehammer.



- Challenges: Challenge another team to raise more money than you. Some radio stations may gladly put your challenge on the radio.
- Change Makes a lot of Cents: Ask your bank or credit union to donate the cents from their deposit to the your Relay For Life team and help fight the war against cancer. For example, if someone's check total is for \$187.67, they could donate the 67 cents.
- Chili Cook Off: Host a chili cook off in your neighborhood. Cooks can submit their chili in exchange for a donation, and everyone else donates to receive a spoon for tasting.
- Christmas Party: Play carols, serve cookies, decorate a tree, and offer pictures with Santa. People can attend in exchange for a donation.
- Christmas Tree/Wreaths: Ask a local retailer to donate \$1 for every tree and wreath sold to support your Relay team. Or make your own wreaths as a team using princess pine you find in the woods.
- Coffee & Company: Enjoy coffee and a chat with your friends, and raise money, too! Invite your neighbors to your place for a mid-morning coffee break. You supply the coffee and treats, and ask them to donate to your Relay team. Try having a few luminaria bags handy so friends can donate and decorate right then and there in honor or memory of a loved one.
- Coin Drive: This is especially good for students to do at schools. Have everyone give them their change in the lunchroom. Set up a coin jar at the beginning of the school year, and see how it grows.
- Coin Toss: Get permission from the local mall to collect all the coins tossed into the fountain for a designated time period. Be sure to have signs state that the coins will be donated to the American Cancer Society Relay For Life.
- Comedy Club: Ask a local comedy club to host an evening in support of the Relay For Life event and invite all teams to sell tickets. The teams would get a portion of the proceeds for the tickets they sold.
- Concession Stands: Volunteer to run a concession stand or booth at a community event or school sporting event during the year in exchange for your team getting a portion of the profit.
- Corner Collections: Consider staking out a popular intersection with signs that say "We won't stop Relaying 'til we reach our goal!" and ask cars stopped at the intersection for a donation.
- Craft Fairs: Have your team set up a craft table or raffle at a craft fair or festival.
- Christmas Crafts: In a festive mood? Create tree ornaments, stockings, or decorations for people in exchange for a donation.
- Cut-a-thon: Have a beauty salon or vocational school hold a cut-a-thon for you.
- Cutest baby: Have a Cutest Baby Contest either on-site at the Relay event or beforehand at your place of work. Place a photo of each team member or coworker as a baby on a display board. People donate \$1 to vote for the cutest. Ask a local business to donate a prize for the winner.



D

- Dances: Students can hold a school dance. Adults can put together a dance at a local club or hall. Get a band or DJ to donate their services. People can attend in exchange for a donation.
- Day of Cleaning Raffle: Team members donate a suggested five hours to clean homes in the spring or fall, with homeowners donating \$5 each to the team.
- Day Spa: Raffle off a day of beauty, or, for a set donation, provide haircuts, manicures, and massages.
- Decorating Service: Who has the time to decorate for the holidays? Provide a holiday decorating service! Offer to put up holiday lights on houses in exchange for a donation. This is a job many people would like someone else to do.
- Deliver Flyers: See what businesses distribute sales flyers in the weekly paper or through the mail and offer for your team to deliver them within the town (at each house) for a donation. It costs these businesses a lot to mail them out, and they would be able to save money by having you distribute them personally. This is another good idea for a student team.
- Die Cut Cards: The suns and moons paper cutouts or the footprint cut outs (available through your staff partner) can be provided to businesses and retailers for people to dedicate to a loved one in exchange for a \$1 donation. They can also be used during the holidays to place on a memorial or honor tree.
- Dog Walkers: Have your team walk the neighborhood dogs for a donation. Many pet owners would appreciate the opportunity to let someone take their dog for a long walk.
- Dog Sit: While the owners are on vacation, it saves them from sending their pets to the kennel.
- Donut Days: Get donuts donated from a bakery every Friday and give them out at school or the office in exchange for a donation!
- Dress Down Days: Allow employees to dress down for a day if they make a certain donation. This is also a good fundraiser at parochial schools or other schools that require uniforms. For a specified donation, the student doesn't have to wear a uniform to school that day.
- Dunking Booth: Set up a dunking booth at a local event festival, fair, picnic, etc., and recruit local celebrities to sit for you. People can donate \$5 for three throws. See if you can get the dunking booth donated by a local vendor.

E

- Email: Email your friends and associates for donations.
- Envelope at Restaurant table: Ask a local restaurant to help you generate donations by placing a Relay For Life envelope at every table during a designated time period, stating "Please support our Relay For Life team and the American Cancer Society". Waitresses check envelopes after each seating and find surprising results. You can get Relay envelopes from your American Cancer Society staff partner.



- Errand Service: Some people never have time to get all their errands done! In exchange for a donation, help people knock some errands off of their to-do list.
- Event parking spaces: Get permission from a local business to provide parking spaces in their lot for community events. Ask for a \$10 donation from each car in exchange for allowing them to park there.

F

- Face Painting: Set up a face painting booth at a local event, fair, or festival and ask for donations. Kids love it!
- Fashion show: Work with clothing stores to hold a fashion show. You could have it at the store, or use a club or church hall. Ask local celebrities to model the clothes, and offer admission in exchange for a donation. See if a local restaurant will donate refreshments.
- Fry Day Friday: On a Friday prior to your Relay event, ask a local restaurant to donate a dime to your team for every order of fries sold.
- Flamingo Alert: Place pink flamingos in someone's yard with a note that they will "fly away" once a donation is made to your Relay For Life team. They can even donate a specific amount to select the next person the flamingos go to, or people can purchase "flamingo repellent" so they will not land on their yard. Other lawn ornaments could be used.
- Flower sales: Work with a local florist or wholesaler to give out bouquets, potted flowers, or individual stems (carnations or roses) at your place of work or school in exchange for a donation.
- Flower bouquet Raffle: Ask a local florist to donate one bouquet of flowers each month for a three-month period (or go to three different florists and get one per shop). This is a good fundraiser for corporate teams with a large staff, especially during the winter months, to take a chance to win some "springtime" for their desk.

G

- Game Night: Have a game night, a party with a purpose. Everyone comes to your house to play board games, charades, etc., They receive entry to the party in exchange for a donation.
- Garage Sales: Work individually or as a team to set up garage sales. Clean out your attic and raise money for the American Cancer Society at the same time!
- Glow Sticks: At your Relay event, give out glow-in-the-dark sticks that can be worn as necklaces or carried in exchange for a donation to your team.
- Go Door to Door: Go door to door and ask for donations. Canvas your neighborhood, or work as a team to canvas the town.
- Golf Tournament: Have your team put together a golf tournament! Ask a local golf course to donate the time and use of their links. People enter the tournament in exchange for a donation.



- Gym Day: Work with a local fitness center to hold an open house with a variety of toning and aerobic classes offered throughout the day. People can participate in exchange for a donation. This is great exposure for the gym, as they may secure new members. Consider also including a silent auction and babysitting service.

H

- Hat (or Cap Day): For a donation, students at your school can wear a baseball cap to school for the day.
- Haunted House: For Halloween, organize a haunted house and charge a donation admission. Or organize a haunted forest. Ask a local restaurant to provide refreshments you can provide to attendees for a donation.
- Hoagie Sale: Hold a hoagie sale at work or around town, taking orders ahead of time. See if you can get the sandwiches donated or at a reduced price.
- Hole-in-One: Set up a portable putting green at your office or in a popular public place. For a donation, people can try to putt it in. This could also be done as an on-site fundraiser at your Relay event.

I

- Ice Cream Social: Plan one at your place of work or for friends, asking for a donation to attend.

J

- Jail & Bail: For a donation employees can be have a coworker “arrested” and placed in “jail,” which is usually a designated place they must remain. They can donate to “post bail.” Alternatively, employees can have a bounty placed coworker’s head. The coworker is arrested and is not set free until the entire bounty is raised (\$100 or more per person). This activity can also be done on-site at your Relay event.
- Jewelry Sales: Ask people to donate jewelry they don’t wear anymore. Find a jeweler who will donate their time to clean it up, and then host an event for people to come purchase the jewelry in exchange for a donation. This could be done on-site at your Relay event.

K

- Kiss the Pig Contest: Recruit a local celebrity to kiss a pig once a certain amount of money has been raised. You could also make it a contest at school or work! Put a picture of all the teachers or employees on collection jars. Whichever jar raises the most, that person must kiss the pig (could also be a team mascot, goat mule, dog etc.).



L

- Lawn Service: Offer to mow neighbors' lawns for a donation.
- Letter Writing: This is a great way to ask for donations without asking in person. Send personal letters out to your friends and family explaining what you're doing and why. Ask them for a specific amount or leave it up to them. Tell them your personal goal and ask for their help. Some people write letters on behalf of their pets or babies to add a little humor.
- Line Dancing: Work with a local club or facility to offer a night of line dancing. Get a DJ to volunteer their time to play music, and get someone to teach a couple dances. People gain entry in exchange for a donation. It's a fun way to spend a night while collecting donations.
- Longaberger Basket Bingo: Work with a Longaberger basket sales rep to hold a bingo party. Get the use of a hall or other facility, sell tickets ahead of time for a donation, and provide refreshments at the party for a donation. Tickets can be sold for \$15-\$20 each, which entitles the ticket holder to 20 games. Each game winner is awarded a Longaberger basket, donated by the sales rep.
- Lunch with the CEO: Auction off lunch or a round of golf with your company CEO or president.

M

- Massages: Ask a massage therapist to donate their time to offer massages for a donation at the Relay event. This could also be done at your place of work for a pre-event fundraiser.
- Matching Gifts: Ask your company to match what you raise for the American Cancer Society. Some companies have a matching gift policy, check to see if your does at matchinggifts.com/acs. If they don't, ask them anyway!
- Money Jars: Set up money jars or coin boxes at a place of business. People donate when they frequent that business. This is a good fundraising promotion for banks, diners and restaurants, hairdressers, and retail stores. Check back to empty frequently.
- Mother's Day: The second Sunday in May will be here before you know it. Beyond your personal Mother's Day plans, consider a way to honor mom and support the fight against cancer. Consider hosting a Mother's Day brunch fundraiser or partnering with a dress shop to stage a fashion show. You could host a flower sale or a ladies-only golf tournament.
- Movie night: Invite your friends over for a night at the movies. You provide the popcorn and soda and charge admission. Or have a movie hour during lunch at work. Charge admission and invite employees to eat their lunch while they watch.

N

- Non-alcoholic cocktail party: Host a non-alcoholic cocktail party at the Relay event and ask for donations. Or, organize a rotating cocktail hour/buffet, where each team has different appetizers and drinks available in their tent. Be sure to have your donation cans next to the refreshments. You could



also do this prior to the Relay event as a team and move from house to house on different weekend nights.

O

- Odd jobs: Call on your neighbors and ask if they have any odd jobs they've been putting off, such as fixing a rain gutter, shoveling their driveway, painting a fence, or raking their leaves. You and your team can perform this service for them in exchange for a donation.

P

- Pancake Breakfasts: Hold a pancake breakfast at a community rec center, at church, or at work on specific days. People get their fill of pancakes in exchange for a donation.
- Parking Space Auction: College students can get permission to auction off the president's parking spot for a day or week. Company employees can also auction off a prime spot.
- Payroll Deduction: Employees can make their own contribution by having it deducted directly from their paycheck. A little each week, can grow into a large amount by Relay time.
- Penny Wars: Compete against another Relay team or between departments in your workplace to see who can collect the most pennies for the American Cancer Society. All silver and paper money in the penny jars count against the total number of pennies, so each team tries to sabotage each other's jars with bills and large coins. Plus they raise more in the process!
- Percentage of Sales: Ask a restaurant or retailer to designate a percentage of one day's sales or proceeds to your Relay team fundraising. Have your team spread the word and let the public know so they will go buy more.
- Personal Bake Sale: Bake some extra delicious brownies and sell them for \$1 donation apiece. Bake a different dessert each week for your coworkers.
- Pet Fashion Show: Have a pet fashion show where you give everyone's pet the opportunity to flaunt its favorite outfit. Charge admission and vote for awards such as best outfit, matching outfits (owner and pet), wildest outfit, etc.
- Photos: Set up a photo booth for people to have their photo taken with a local celebrity for a specified donation. Or use a cardboard stand-in of a major celebrity. This can be done at work or at a local fair or festival.
- Pie in the Face: Hold a "Pie in the Face" contest at school. Students and faculty vote by placing money in a container with a teacher's name on it. The teacher in each grade level with the most money gets a pie thrown in their face by their students. Teachers volunteer and even campaign for their competitors.
- Pie Sales: Much like bake sales, these are very popular, especially around the holidays. Take orders in advance and have team members bake and deliver pies, or set up a table at a busy grocery store or shopping center to sell the pies for a donation.



- Pizza Sales: Work with a pizzeria to give you a percentage of the pizzas you sell, taking the orders and delivering them. Or, put pizza kits together yourself and provide to people for a donation. Work with a wholesaler to get pizzas at a reduced price or donated.
- Place a "Plea": Place a plea in your employee, church, or neighborhood newsletter letting people know that you are fundraising and participating in the Relay For Life event. Place a picture of the person your team is honoring or remembering to encourage participation.
- Plant Sales: Like flower sales, work with local florists or wholesalers to sell potted plants. You can paint the pots and add a bow with a card for a special touch. Sell to family, friends, and coworkers for a donation.
- Pot Luck Lunches: Designate every Wednesday as Relay For Life Pot Luck Day, where team members take turns making chili, salads, desserts, etc., and offer to employees at a set price or donation.

Q

- Questions for a Buck: If your company boss is always being asked questions, have them start charging \$1 for each question they answer. Word will spread throughout the company about what the boss is doing and why, and employees will start asking questions and paying up, happy to support the effort.
- Quilt Raffle: Have your team make a quilt to be raffled off. Or, if you have that creative seamstress on your team, have her hold a quilting class or a quilting night. Quilters like to sew in groups, so make a night out of it and ask for donations.
- Quoits Tournament: Hold a quoits or horseshoe tournament. People gain entry with a donation. Ask a local retailer to donate a prize for the winner.

R

- Raffles: There are so many different types of raffles you could have. Make up theme baskets where everyone on the team brings one item to go in the basket. A summer fun basket could include sun screen, paperback books, sunglasses, bottled water, magazines, etc. An Easter basket could be made up of candy, chocolate bunnies, stuffed animal, etc. A night out package could include gift certificates to the movies or tickets to a play, concert or sports event. Be creative, but make sure to check your local state laws on raffles before proceeding! Your American Cancer Society staff partner can provide guidance.
- Recurring Gifts: Did you know that your Relay For Life website allows your donors to set up recurring gifts to the American Cancer Society? Recurring gifts are donations that can be spread out over a length of time, such as quarterly or monthly. Did someone give you \$100 last year toward your Relay efforts, but this year, they said they can only give you \$50? Ask them if they would be willing to give you \$20 a month for five months! You don't need to do anything special to set it up; just tell them to head to your Relay For Life participant page and set up a recurring donation.



- Restaurant Day: Ask your local restaurants if they will have a “Relay Day.” Either a percentage of meals sold or a the proceeds of the sale of a certain item on the menu will go to your team. Your team should be on hand to talk about the event and ask for donations from the patrons.
- Roll those Pennies: Roll those pennies that have been sitting in a jar on your dresser. While you’re at it, roll the rest of your coins you have been collecting. Take them to the bank to cash and contribute that money to your Relay fundraising.

S

- Sell Services: For example, get the best gourmet chef on your team to go to someone’s home and prepare a meal for a donation. Get your vice president to commit to wash an employee’s car, or several if they’re willing. Have the company photographer take a family photo for a donation.
- Shave your head: Commit to shave your head (or get a local celebrity to do it) once your team has raised a certain amount of money. Promote the challenge to the community to encourage donations.
- Shoe Shines: Shine shoes for donation.
- Shutter Bug Mania: Into photography? Take candid shots around the community, schools, etc., to sell for donations. Or take photos of a friend’s wedding, anniversary party, or birthday in exchange for a donation.
- Signed Relay Shirt: For a donation of \$5 (or amount designated by you), the contributor can write the name of the cancer patient they would like to honor or remember directly on your Relay T-shirt. You will walk/run representing the cancer patients listed.
- Skunk Them: Place a stuffed skunk on a coworker’s desk. They need to donate to your team to have the skunk go away.
- Soup Sales: Take orders from your coworkers and have a soup day at work. Offer it to other offices throughout the community. Take orders ahead of time and have an evening of team soup-making.
- Spaghetti Dinner: Have your team put together a spaghetti dinner at a local community hall or club. People can come eat for a donation. Make it a fancy occasion by having team members wait on diners, taking their orders and clearing tables.
- Sports Tournaments: Organize bowling, hockey, basketball, soccer, and other sports tournaments. Teams gain entry into the tournament with a donation. Ask a local business to donate a prize for the winning team.
- Story Time Reading: Have an organized story time reading. Hold it at your place of work where employees can bring their children, or work with your local library to have a special time. Ask attendees to donate to your Relay fundraising.
- Student/Faculty Basketball Game: Set up a benefit basketball game between students and faculty at a school, put together an alumni game, or challenge a local radio/television station to have a team. Charge admission at the door to raise money for your team.



- Super Bowl Party: Have a super bowl party and ask everyone for donations when they get there. It is certainly worth it after all the trouble you go to organize the party and provide the refreshments. The same can be done for the NCAA Championship basketball game, Indy 500, Masters final round, etc. This is a great idea for the team member with a big screen!

T

- Tupperware party: Have the profits from a Tupperware party benefit your team.
- Turkey Raffle: This is a great way to raise money during the holidays! Get a grocery store to donate a turkey for you to raffle off. You could also do the same with a ham at Easter or a BBQ package for Memorial Day. Food is always a good item to raffle off.
- “Cold Turkey” Subs: Encourage sub/pizza shops to donate a set amount (50 cents) from each cold turkey sub sold to benefit your Relay team. This would be a great idea to get all sub shops to participate during the Great American Smoke Out; the third Tuesday in November.
- 30x30x30 Campaign: Try to get 30 people to donate \$30 each on the 30th of the month. That’s \$900 in one day! This can be done individually or as a team. If you have 15 members on your team, ask each member to ask two people for \$30. Make sure they tell people about the challenge to drive excitement and donations. Could also do 20x20x20. Imagine the possibilities if all your team members participated in this campaign!

U

- Ugly Bartender Contest: Get all the bartenders in town to agree to be in your “Ugly Bartender Contest.” People can vote for their choice of the ugliest bartender, and you’ll raise a lot of money for your team. Work with a local business to donate a prize for the winning bartender, and ask them to become an honorary team member.

V

- Vacation Day Drawing: Ask your company if you can organize a drawing for an extra vacation day or day off with pay. Employees donate money to be entered into the drawing, with the money raised from the chances to go to your team.
- Vending machines: Coordinate with your vendor to add five cents to the cost of a snack or soda prior to your Relay event, with the extra nickel going to your team total.
- Vendors: Ask vendors you frequent for cash donations or goods you can raffle or auction off at the Relay event.
- Video Sale: Hold a video sale at work and have each team member bring in videos they don’t watch anymore, especially videos their children have outgrown. Other employees with younger children would appreciate this.



W

- Wait Tables: Work with a restaurant that will let you designate a specific night to benefit your team. Pizza Hut has been known to do this. Your team would be the serving staff for the evening and would collect all the tips. Also try to negotiate receiving a percentage of that evening's profits from the restaurant.
- Wear Company Logos: Tell companies that you will walk around wearing their hat or T-shirt for half an hour for a \$25 donation.
- Wrap Presents: During holidays (Christmas or Mother's Day), set up a booth at a local mall, plaza, or busy department store. Have your team members donate the paper and tape and raise money while helping out the holiday shoppers.

X

- Xylophone concert: Hold a music concert or recital. Pass refreshments and ask for donations or sell tickets in advance.

Y

- Yard Sales: Just like the garage sales, work together as a team, or have one individually.

Z

- Zoot Suit Party: Swing music is in. Hold a swing dance party and give awards for the best zoot suit there.