

# IMMERSION

## FUNDRAISING GUIDE

Whether you have already joined a team or are just checking things out, we're here to ease some of your fundraising fears. In this guide, we've combined some of the best ideas from previous team members with tangible resources to help you reach your goals. Use these exact ideas or tailor any of them to fit your own interests and community. Above all, we hope these ideas help kickstart your fundraising creativity!

### WORDS OF WISDOM

#### 1. DON'T BE INTIMIDATED

▶ You'll have to invest a good deal a lot of your own time, money and energy into preparing for IMMERSION, but you'll also learn to trust God in new ways, relying on him to provide the right connections and spark the creative ideas. **Be bold** as you step out and share your story with other people. Tell them about how you're relying on God to provide and how they can be a part of that story.

#### 2. MAKE A PLAN

▶ While you should be hopeful about fundraising for IMMERSION, **you need to be realistic**. The best reality-check is to develop a detailed plan for how you want to raise the money. Follow the EM payment plan and set monthly goals. The best first step is to set in motion the "Do these first!" items on the next page as soon as possible. This will give you a good roadmap and realistic picture of the work you will need to do.

#### 3. GET CREATIVE

▶ It's great to have large, one-time gifts, but **you will need to get creative about fundraising**. Think specifically about the network of people in your life. *Part of a sports team or church group that could help you host a yard sale? Good at sewing custom-made aprons?* Think of what you love to do and the places you're already connected. You'll be amazed how willing people are to help when you give them a unique way to get involved!

#### 4. WE'RE HERE TO HELP

▶ If you come to the end of your creativity and start to get discouraged, we're here to help you strategize and jump back in. Contact your **EM Fundraising Coach** and we'll happily give you advice and encourage you towards meeting the benchmarks on your payment plan.



# WHAT TO DO FIRST

## 1. CREATE POTENTIAL SUPPORTER LIST



Your ability to successfully fundraise will be directly related to the **quality of your list** of potential supporters. *Helpful reminder: People want to give to good causes, and you are a good cause!* So, open up a Google Sheet with these columns and start collecting info: Name, Address, Email Address, Phone Number. This will make it easy to send out emails, texts, or letters to everyone.

### ▶ *Who makes a good “potential supporter?”*

- 1. Family** — parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, godparent
- 2. Friends** — lifelong pals, roommates, classmates, teammates, co-workers
- 3. Adults who care about you** — friends of parents, parents of friends, youth leaders, mentors, coaches, neighbors, bosses, etc.

## 2. SET UP ONLINE FUNDRAISING PROFILE



Sign in to your MyMission account at [experiencemission.org](http://experiencemission.org) and click to Edit your Fundraising Profile. There, you will be able to edit your photo, create a custom URL, and write a short version of why you're doing this trip and what you hope to see, do, experience, and come away with. **This page makes it extremely easy to accept and keep track of donations!** Plus, the credit card fees are lower than comparable fundraising websites.

## 3. SEND OUT PHYSICAL SUPPORT LETTERS



**Yes, in the mail!** Letter writing is one of the oldest and most effective ways to fundraise. Especially in this age—letters in the mail being few and far between—receiving a personal letter from someone you know and love is a joy. Do this as soon as you are done putting together your potential supporter list, giving your supporters the most possible time to respond. *Check out the next page for our best support letter writing tips!*

## 4. YOUR 1ST FUNDRAISER: “ADOPT-A-BOX”

*Outside of support letters, you may fundraise in any number of different ways, but we believe every team member should start with this incredibly simple and affective idea. Check out “Fundraising Idea #2”!*

# LETTER WRITING



## WHERE TO START

While you are asking for financial support, **think of your letter as a life update from you.** Currently, the biggest and most exciting part of your life is the IMMERSION program you'll be joining in the near future. You think about it often and, hopefully, it is a stepping-stone to what you see yourself doing in the future. With this in mind, craft your support letter in a way that tells the story of *what you have been up to* and *where you're going*. Once you've done that, invite your supporters to join you in it. They can be a huge help not just by giving money, but also by committing to pray for you and being willing to hear your story when you return.

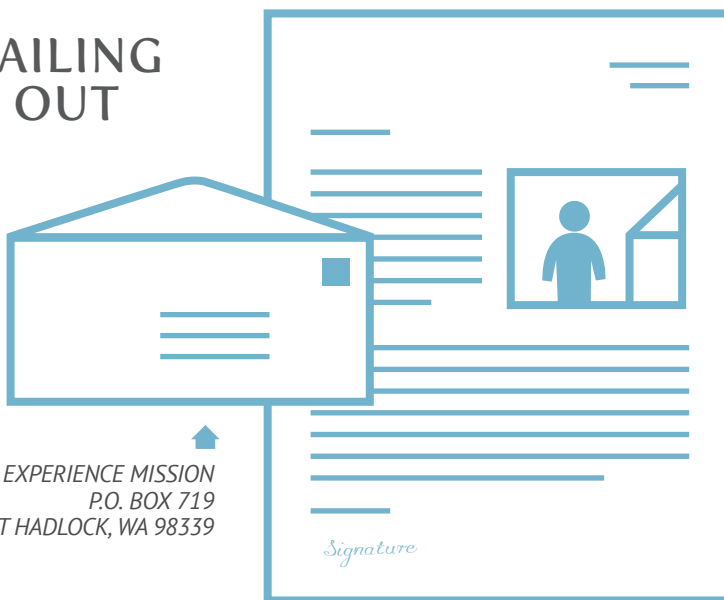
➡ **TIP: Consider the presentation of your letter**

*Make it a fun and interesting piece of mail! Most mail we receive are bills and bank statements—plain text on white paper. Don't be afraid to change up the format. Add a picture of yourself. Add a map of the country you're going to with a star on your destination. Be creative, get to the point (we recommend one-page letters), and above all, be yourself!*

### EXAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

*Check out our example letter on the last page of this guide. Feel free to use it as a template, but definitely make your letter personal and unique to you!*

## MAILING IT OUT

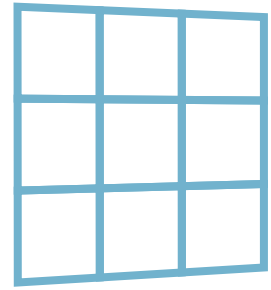


EXPERIENCE MISSION  
P.O. BOX 719  
PORT HADLOCK, WA 98339

### IN THE ENVELOPE

- 1 Letter with info, photos, how to donate (online or by mail), and links to the EM website to learn more.
- 2 Donation envelope stamped and pre-addressed to EM—in case your supporters prefer to donate by check instead of through your online fundraising profile.
- 3 Optional, but extremely helpful—a small note card with your name, IMMERSION program, and trip dates, to be included in the envelope with any check donations.

# ADOPT-A-BOX



## HOW IT WORKS

This simple idea has helped dozens of IMMERSION participants break into fundraising in a simple and effective way! **Adopt-A-Box uses social media, email, and text messages** to ask donors to “Adopt” one or more boxes on a grid, which means they commit to donating the amount equal to the number inside the box or boxes they choose. **Set a deadline goal** (1 month is a good amount of time), then share your Adopt-A-Box graphic (examples below) *as many times as necessary* in that timeframe. The crunched timeline and visible goal will encourage people to take action and make their donations!

## GRID EXAMPLES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
97		98		99		100	

**TOTAL: \$5050**

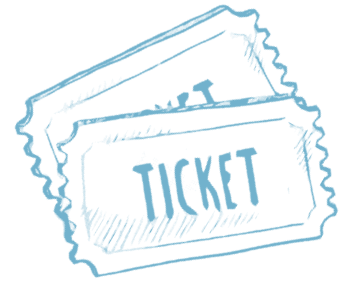
*(recommended for 1-Month programs)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104
105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112
113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120

**TOTAL: \$7260**

*(recommended for 3-6 Month programs)*

# HOST AN EVENT



## GET YOUR PEOPLE INVOLVED

Basic event recipe: **Plan a fun activity, invite the neighborhood, explain why you're doing it, and help give a larger group of people a small way to help you out.** Some events already provide easy ways for people to contribute, while others may work best with **cover charges** that provide guests a specific amount expected of them to give. In both cases, hearing your story may inspire attendees to support you in bigger ways than just their pocket change!

### MOVIE NIGHT



Get the neighborhood, church, or friend group together for a movie on the lawn! (Option 2: Roomy living room or garage with a projector.) Pick a classic or something relevant to your trip, charge a small entry fee, and provide free popcorn to your guests.

► **TIP: Flick to pick?**

*If you're inviting families with kids, all-ages and kid-friendly movies are sure to draw a bigger crowd!*

### COOK-OFF



Pit your friends' cooking abilities against each other in a good ol' fashioned cook-off. Whether it's soup, dessert, or gourmet chili dogs, charge a small entry fee for participants and eaters, and have the best dinner of your week!

► **TIP: Winner winner**

*If it's a contest, we suggest finding a fun prize for the winner. Everyone loves a good healthy competition!*

### YARD SALE



You and your friends and family probably have more things lying around than you currently need. De-clutter and turn that excess into \$\$ for your trip! Ask ahead for item donations (preferably decent things), pick a Saturday, and hang out in the sun. A day in the yard could make a big fundraising dent!

► **TIP: Small ticket items**

*Keep prices low or go "by donation" only! Lots of little sales beat a couple big ones every time.*

### MINI TOURNNEY



A tournament is a fun way to raising much-needed funds. Pick something that appeals to your friends (or their friends)—basketball, flag football, ping-pong, video games. Charge an entry fee and provide snacks. Grab a prize or wacky trophy for the winner!

### BBQ OR PASTA FEED



Turn up the backyard speakers, and invite a crowd over for lots of cheap food together. Ask for an entry fee and set up a QR code to donate to your trip. Combine with a holiday to maximize the fun and people looking to hangout for the evening!

### KARAOKE NIGHT



Print out lyrics or just look up sing-along YouTube videos, and invite your performers and big spenders for a night of belting it out for a good cause. Spice it up by having people either pay to see others sing or pay to get out of it!

# SELL GOODS



## ITEMS TO REMEMBER YOU

Whether it's a carwash for a sports team or donuts for ASB, we're all familiar with the idea of selling something to raise money. Having goods to sell gives your supporters an easy reminder to pray for you and your trip while you're away. It also provides a way for people to support your trip who don't even know you, merely because they like what you're selling.

### HOME-MADE



You may have the skills to make desirable items, even if you've never sold any of them. Paint canvases, create greeting cards, crochet hats or scarves, sew aprons, sell photography prints, build pallet furniture, or do almost anything else! Get creative!

### CUSTOM GEAR



One of the best ways for people to show their support (and spread the word about your trip) is by giving them something to wear. EM partners with Fund the Nations to help participants create and sell custom T-shirts and more, including tote bags, stickers, bracelets, sunglasses, patches and hats. Visit [FundTheNations.com](https://FundTheNations.com) to get started!

### BAKE SALE



Got the baking bug (or know people who do)? Pick a date for your sale and start stockpiling baked goods. Set out a table on your street, at your church, or at the park, and sell your baked goods for donations to your trip. Put out a QR code or link to your fundraising page to make it easy to support you!

### LEMONADE STAND



Go old school and sell lemonade on your street or college campus. Talk about your upcoming trip while providing cold drinks on a hot day. Ask for "donations only" to get considerably more for each cup than your standard lemonade stand!

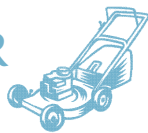
# WORK FOR IT



## FROM ODD JOBS TO YOUR 9-5

At some point, you will most likely have to earn some much-needed money towards your trip—but this is good for you! **“Sweat equity” towards your trip will help you see it as something of value.** Much like how you feel when you study all night to pass a test, you value reaching a goal much more if it took sacrifice. You may already have a job that takes a lot of your time, but if you don’t or work part-time, here are a few ways to earn some cash on the fly (while probably getting to know your neighbors in the process! Bonus!)

### OUTDOOR WORK



There is always work to be done outside. You can mow lawns or pull weeds. Rake leaves or shovel snow. They’re simple tasks, but many homeowners are happy to support a good cause to avoid having to do the work.

► **TIP: How much?**

*Working for “donations only” gives you a great reason to explain why you’re raising money. It may even bring out people’s generosity!*

### WASH CARS



All you need is a hose (and maybe a bucket, a sponge and soap). Many people don’t have time to wash their cars and would be eager to say Yes when you knock on the door, ready to go. Add sparkle up someone’s life as you get to know them better too.

► **TIP: Air dry**

*Spring and summer are better seasons for this, unless your neighbors are fans of frozen soap!*

### BABY-SITTING



This is easier for people who spend time around families with young children, but there are also listings online for nannies and baby-sitters (though mostly for women). If it was a legitimate means of income for you in middle school, it can still be a great way to fundraise for IMMERSION!

► **TIP: Have a job?**

*Taking a night off to babysit is maybe not your best option. But babysitting on an off day might bring in some much-needed extra dollars.*

### HOUSE KEEPING



Play the role of maid with a vacuum and duster to earn some extra cash here and there. Cleaning services are normally quite expensive, so you may be surprised how much people are willing to pay for your time!

### MR./MISS FIX-IT



Do you know a lot about cars or bikes? Offer to change the oil or brake pads in your friends’ cars for less than the local garage. Or give your friends and family’s bikes a tune-up, repairing flats, cleaning chains, fixing brake lines, etc. All for a small fee, of course!

### SAVINGS PLAN



If you are not reliant on 100% of your income, it is a good savings practice (and go-to money-saving strategy) to choose a % of each paycheck to go towards your trip. Even 5% each time will add up to a significant contribution.

# GET SOCIAL



## LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

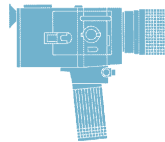
The data is out there: social media is slowly killing us. We're more angry, more lonely, more depressed, and less connected to the world around us than ever before. But the majority of people still find themselves doom scrolling multiple times per day. With your upcoming forray into the wider world of IMMERSION, **you have an opportunity to spread a little hope and encouragement** into a sometimes bleak space. You will soon be traveling to new communities around the world, building meaningful relationships, living with those in poverty, and actively seeking to bring dignity to "the least of these." And right now, you get to invite the people you're connected to *online* to join you in something meanungful and help make this *offline* experience a reality.

### DO YOUR THING



Whether you make viral TikToks or write long meditations on Instagram, keep doing what you do best, but make it about your upcoming trip. Don't just ask for money, but also let people know about your hopes, dreams, and excitements for IMMERSION. Be real and authentic and people will respond!

### GET IT ON FILM



Videos are the most engaging part of social media! So, get in front of the camera and let people know what you're doing! The more updates, the better. Share your Adopt-A-Box campaign, updates about the trip as you know more, fundraising event opportunities and more. Your friends care about you! Seeing you be bold and putting yourself out there will be inspiring.

### GO LIVE



Your fundraising efforts may need an online boost. Go live from your Yard Sale or Cook-Off, inviting people to join or take part by donating from afar. Invite people into your life in meaningful ways by using the online tools at your disposal!

### HELPFUL TEXTS



Despite the potential wide reach of social media, one of the most effective ways to use your phone for fundraising is by sending **personal texts** to the people on your potential supporter list. It starts a conversation people can't ignore!



Dear [Sponsor Name],

Hello from Seattle! As you may know, I am currently in my senior year at the University of Washington, and I will be graduating this coming spring. I can't believe I'm almost finished with school! I'm nervous but excited for what God has for me in the future. One of my favorite authors, Shauna Niequist, writes, "Giving yourself to something you believe in is never irresponsible." For the past few years, I've been trying to discover my purpose and the unique plan that God has for my life. I've enjoyed volunteering while working and going to school, but I recently started feeling like God wanted me to serve in a more long-term way. That's when I discovered Experience Mission and their IMMERSION program. IMMERSION is a six-month program for young adults who want to travel and serve in a cross-cultural setting. It was exactly what I was looking for, so I applied, and the unbelievable happened: I got accepted! Since then, the details have come together so quickly, and I really feel like God is in all of it.

So, I'm leaving in January! I'll join a team for six months, traveling to South Africa, Namibia, and Lesotho in Africa. I never imagined I would get to go to Africa, and I'm so excited to partner with local people and tackle meaningful projects like HIV/AIDS education, water sanitation and church outreach. While we're there, we'll build relationships and learn from local people, living and serving alongside them. Many of the people have a vision for making their community better, so our team will get to help make it a reality. I know we will learn a lot, especially since their cultures are so different from ours. I hope that we will be able to bless them, too.

Now, here's where you come in. A trip like this would not be possible without external support. It's my great desire that I would have a big network of people supporting me through prayer and donations. I've started fundraising and have some creative ideas to get as many people involved as possible. Knowing that people are cheering me on will help encourage me when life gets challenging overseas. I'd love it if you could be a part of that network!

The best way to contribute financially is through a one-time or monthly donation. You can give through the Experience Mission website (which I recommended) or mail in the pre-addressed envelope and giving card that came with this letter. If you mail in donations, make sure you write checks out to "Experience Mission" (with my EM UserID "JSTE1001" on the bottom line) in order to keep donations tax-deductible. (All donations via the website will automatically be tax-deductible.) You can give one-time or monthly donations through the EM website by visiting my personal sponsorship profile here:

[experiencemission.org/sponsor/jaredtoafrica](https://experiencemission.org/sponsor/jaredtoafrica)

Thank you in advance for partnering with me in this big adventure. I know it may be a sacrifice to support me financially, and I want you to know how much I appreciate it! I also want to be clear that your emotional and prayerful support mean much more to me than any donation. I'd love to talk with you more about the IMMERSION program or hear any creative ideas you might have for fundraising. Also, I invite you to follow my blog (listed below) for pre-trip thoughts and updates while I'm gone! I can't wait to see what God continues to teach me through this opportunity. Thanks for being a part of it!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jared Stephens



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 INSTAGRAM [@yourinstagramname](https://yourinstagramname)  
 YOUTUBE [@youryoutubename](https://youryoutubename)  
 EM WEBSITE [experiencemission.org](https://experiencemission.org)