

Support Raising Instructions for Fundraising Event Participants

We are excited that you are partnering with Reliant to attend and fundraise for an international event with your local church. To help cover program costs, each participant is required to raise financial ministry support for the mission trip. This could be attained through one large or many smaller donations, or you may choose to donate to the event to cover the fundraising goal. Each participant is responsible for reaching their support-raising goal. The instructions below will help with reaching that support-raising goal. If you have any questions regarding fundraising, please contact Reliant by emailing events@reliant.org.

Contributions given to Reliant by donors are not considered personal gifts to you as an individual. The donor is giving to the specific Reliant mission trip fund that you are attending. All contributions are the sole property of Reliant Mission; Reliant's desire is to honor the donor preference of the contribution, but Reliant needs to have complete discretion and control over the use of the donated funds for a contribution to be considered tax deductible by the IRS.

We wanted to provide you with all the information you might need for raising support.

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Biblical Perspective on Fundraising

Some Christians feel uneasy about fundraising. "I don't want to impose on others" or "Everyone struggles with money, why should they give to me?" are common objections. Here are a few key reflections to set our minds right:

Fundraising is modeled in Scripture that (God's) workers are worthy of (God's) their wages.

- 72 disciples sent out are to depend on the hospitality of others while on mission. (Matt 10:5-15)
- Corinthian Christians give generously towards missionary work in Jerusalem. (2 Cor 8:6-15)
- Apostle Paul thanks the Philippians for sending money towards his missionary work. (Phil. 4:14-20)
- 1/10 of all was given to Levites, full-time workers in the temple. (Num.18:21)

Fundraising is on behalf of others.

Even when we are directly involved in the ministry, the funds are given towards the work of God through us. It is not for selfish gain. It is a privilege to ask boldly on behalf of others.

Fundraising teaches us dependence on God.

We learn to trust God to provide the needs of the mission project. Donors learn to trust God as they give generously. This can challenge our overemphasis on "self-reliance."

Fundraising involved the whole body of Christ in the mission.

Not all can go, but all can participate. The opportunity to give can be a blessing to those who become true "partners" from a distance.

Ask Specifically.

In Nehemiah 2:1-8, after spending much time in prayer, Nehemiah asks for very specific things to support the rebuilding of the walls in Jerusalem.

In Matthew 7:7-10, we are told to ask, to see, and to knock.

The goal of developing a support team is to meet a genuine need in God's kingdom by actively challenging people to heartfelt, generous, and cheerful giving.

"And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Colossians 3:17

"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." Colossians 3:23

Name-storming a List of Potential Ministry Partners

Begin with an open mind and an open sheet of paper or spreadsheet.

Pray that the Lord will bring your attention to names of individuals whom you should contact.

Start by developing an initial list of potential mission donors. Fundraising is built on people connecting to people. Most of us already know a great number of people: friends and family, co-workers, Christians at church. All of these are candidates to contact.

Brainstorming rules

- No name is disqualified!
- Do not limit based on who might be able to give.
- Do not limit based on who might have specific interest.
- No need to add contact information - that comes later. It will slow you down now.
- No need to sort or prioritize - that comes later. It will slow you down now.
- Let it sit. Throughout each day, as names come to mind, write them down.

[Download the Namestorm list here.](#)

First Contact:

Communicate briefly with potential partners about your program and ministry by phone.

Ask potential partners clearly and confidently if you can send them information about the program you will be attending by mail or email.

- People partner with people. Making first contact emphasizes one-on-one connection. Mass mailings do not.
- People partner with those who are passionate. Making first contact shows initiative.
- People partner with causes they know about. Making first contact begins the learning process.
- People partner with causes that stand out. Making first contact will highlight your letter in a sea of information.

What to say on the phone call

[Download a sample phone call script here](#) to have a template to follow.

Always identify yourself. Acknowledge how you know them as needed.

Ask if you have called them at a convenient time. Wait for their response.

Explain why you are calling briefly and clearly in just 1-2 sentences.

Ask directly: I would like to send you some information that would explain more and give you the chance to get involved. Would that be okay?

Pause.

If they hesitate or say "no," assure them there is no obligation and ask again. Be sensitive but bold.

If they say "yes," thank them.

Confirm contact information, including:

- email address
- postal mailing address
- phone number ("Was this the best number to reach you?")
- Confirm how they would like to receive the information. Email or Post Mail

Confirm your final actions:

- You will send that in the next day or two.
- You'll plan to get back in touch.

Save "catch-up" or other topics for the end of the conversation.

If no one answers your call, it may be because they do not recognize your number. You can immediately send a text to quickly explain why you were calling.

Maybe something like this...



Facebook

A Facebook message can also work as a first contact before sending your letter (instead of making a phone call).

Many of us know that people are busy, and we have to talk to people multiple times before they hear our whole message. The "phone-letter-phone" (distance) strategy does exactly that. The first phone call is simply to introduce a letter — "I'd love to send you some information about our ministry..." The letter is the informational piece, and the follow-up phone call gives us a place to ask for a decision. In the process, we get three connections with a potential partner before a decision is made.

Facebook is particularly good at the first part of the "phone-letter phone" strategy, making it "Facebook-letter-phone." A private Facebook message: "Hey – it's been a long time! I'm support-raising to attend an international training program, and I was wondering if I could drop you some information about what we're doing. What's your best email address?" can be quick and simple.

Ministry Team Letter

You can send this either in the mail or via email, depending on which way they mentioned was the best way to send the information.

This is a personal letter from you representing your mission trip. It is important to realize that the funds raised go for team expenses as well as the trip cost itself. Remember to tell donors that you are raising support for your ministry to send you on a mission trip, not personal funds for yourself to simply go overseas.

Use the template letter provided (for either a mission trip or an international summer program) below to edit as your own. Please use the highlighted portions at the bottom of the template Word doc in your own letter.

- [Download the Mission Trip Support Letter Template Here.](#)
- [Download the extended summer-long program Ministry Team Letter Template Here.](#)

When writing a ministry team letter, the personal segments in the sample letter obviously must be rewritten. However, the body of the letter should always include:

- A specific date (ex., do not say this summer, but use your event's exact dates).
- Your greeting must be a specific person (not "dear friend").
- Acknowledge your relationship with the reader. What can you say that will help the person identify with you?
- Briefly bring your reader up to date on what you're doing.
- Educate your reader. Explain what the mission trip is, and the needs that are of concern.
- Tell your part. Why you have decided to participate, and what you hope to see God accomplish.

- Explain the financial need. The purpose of your letter is to give your reader an opportunity to help. Make sure you explain exactly what is needed. Your event needs to raise funds (in partnership with Reliant) to send people like you. Use specific dollar amounts.
- Then, involve your reader by inviting them to take specific action. "Would you prayerfully consider giving?" Give the deadline for when the funds are needed.
- Acknowledge your relationship again with an emphasis on thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership, and commitment. This ties your opening acknowledgment to your request.
- Close the letter, and if it is on paper, sign each one personally. Add a "P.S." Commit yourself to a specific action you will be taking. Ex. "I'd like to call you next week so I can answer any questions you might have." If you are sending this in the mail, you should handwrite your P.S. to make the letter more personal.
- Do not delete (or change) the statement at the bottom about gifts being tax-deductible, etc., provided by Reliant.
- Highlight a few key parts of the text that are the most important parts of your letter. However, use these sparingly.
- Add a picture especially if you have one that shows you doing similar ministry work in the past. Smiling is best!
- Your contact information should be somewhere in the letter. Many people put it in the footer.
- Enclose the instructions for online giving or sending their gift in the mail with the HOW TO GIVE pdf/link that was emailed to you.
- If you mail out a letter, it is very helpful to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the donor to mail back their Reliant contribution to you.

How does a donor give?

Because you are not employed by Reliant, the gifts will be given directly to the event (mission trip) fund and not to you as an individual. The donor should specify your name when they give by check so that you know how much support has been raised towards your goal. Or they can also give online at reliant.org under the name of the program, and they will select you as the participant. Each mission trip will have its own reliant.org webpage for receiving donations. The detailed directions for donor giving for your specific program are in the HOW TO GIVE pdf you received in the initial email.

You will soon receive a Google doc that will update you with who the donations have been given from so that you can know if you are meeting your fundraising goal and also who to send thank you letters to, etc. It will be automatically updated a few times a week.

Gifts to support these fundraising events sponsored by Reliant Mission are tax-deductible. Donors may give online or by check. If Reliant receives a check donation in the mail, we will then mail the donor a receipt. If a donation is made online, then the receipt will be emailed and found online.

Sometimes, the donor will choose to send the checks to you with a note, etc. As long as the check is written to Reliant, you can then mail the checks to Reliant (check to make sure that it has your event fund number and your name listed on the check in the memo line)- if it doesn't, please include a note to Reliant explaining that). If the check was written out to you, you will need to ask them to re-write the check to be written to Reliant. This is for tax-giving purposes.

Reliant's address is **11002 Lake Hart Dr., Suite 100, Orlando, FL 32832.**

You should have received a HOW TO GIVE link for your donors in an email from Reliant with instructions on How To Give towards the program, including a direct link for online giving. You can print the PDF to include in your ministry letter mailing or attach the PDF or link to an email.

How do I know if a donor has given to the program on my behalf?

You will receive a Google Doc that will automatically update multiple times a week and list the donors and amounts that have donated to the event that have specified your name.

Thank you and Reporting Back

Avoid ingratitude. If you fail to thank people, you communicate that you don't care about them.

We suggest sending brief, handwritten thank-you notes the same day you connect with them.

When to send thank-you notes

- After initial phone call
- After financial gifts have been received by Reliant

- Send thank you notes within a prayer letter update

Thank you note contents

- Acknowledge the gift, its amount, and its purpose
- Express appreciation; "....impossible without you..."
- Achievement because of their support

Reporting Back

Once your program is completed, take time to write, call, or visit each of those who were gracious in investing in your call to serve the Lord through missions.

Refunds/Excess Funds

Unfortunately, donor refunds are not given for gift donations due to IRS rules on charitable giving. In order for a gift to be considered tax-deductible, it must be under the control of the ministry and not an individual.

Should the participant raise excess funds, since the funds are not actually the participant's- they are given to the event fund stating that they would prefer that it goes towards that participant- it is up to the event director to either put those funds towards general event fund costs or help balance out the lack of support coming in for another participant.

If a participant does not raise enough support and/or has to back out of coming to the event, the donors will typically not receive refunds for the participant's cancellation. The donors gave to the event fund (the intent may have been for the participant), but the gift was given to the event. So it is up to Reliant management and the event director's discretion for how to use the funds from that withdrawn participant.

In the unlikely event of a change or cancellation to the event itself, funds would go back into the church's mission trip general fund.

Making up for fundraising shortfall.

Three weeks prior to the start of the program, participants struggling with reaching their fundraising goal may receive an email from Reliant (or may be contacted by their event leader) asking for their plan for how they will complete their fundraising goal. Participants who are not fully funded by the fundraising deadline date chosen by the event leader may also choose to donate to the program, and may give online and choose themselves as the participant within the specific program fund. In this case, that donation would be tax deductible for the participant as well because you are giving to the event fund (not directly to the participant's fees).

Participants may also elect to opt out of support raising altogether and may just make a donation payment on reliant.org and choose themselves as the participant within the event fund. In this case, that payment would be tax deductible for the participant as well because you are giving to the event fund (not directly to the participant's fees).