



Relay For Life Sponsorship Implementation Guide for Volunteers

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Each year, thousands of businesses and organizations across the country join the American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement as event sponsors in an effort to help lead the fight against cancer. The support of business and organizations makes a big difference, and it's important that we continue to engage with them in meaningful ways that help meet their objectives and offer a consistent experience, no matter where the Relay For Life event takes place.

In an effort to enhance the Relay For Life sponsorship experience, a work group developed a standard and competitive Relay For Life sponsorship proposal. We hope you find these recommendations will give your sponsors some strong benefits and help you maximize your sponsorship potential! This guide outlines the case for the program and how you can use the program for your event.

Reasons to Embrace the Relay For Life Sponsorship Now Program

1. Sponsorship at an American Cancer Society Relay For Life event anywhere in the country is a valuable opportunity for companies to show goodwill in their communities, and the benefits we give to these companies need to have a donation dollar amount that reflects this high-value opportunity and partnership.
2. A consistent sponsorship package allows staff and volunteers to spend more time recruiting sponsors, building relationships through the consultative sales process, engaging them in the Relay experience, and recognizing them for their support.
3. This package offers a wide range of opportunities to support the Relay For Life program, which shows businesses across the nation that the American Cancer Society is well-organized, and that we provide them with the same sponsorship amenities regardless of which Relay event they choose to support.
4. With these tools, we can more quickly and efficiently pursue and/or respond to opportunities to engage Relay event sponsors at a local, state, and/or Region levels.
5. A sponsorship package with the same benefits across all Relay For Life events allows us to leverage our buying power for recognition items (e.g. signage, awards, etc.) and ensures compliance with nationwide branding and procurement standards.
6. We have provided all the materials needed to be successful and to fulfill all the benefits for each sponsor as easily as possible.

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Talking About the Sponsorship Now Program with Others

The American Cancer Society and Relay For Life program are powerful brands. It sends a powerful message to the community and their customers when a business or organization aligns with us. We should all be proud of the promotional and branding opportunities we offer to our sponsors. It is our

job to help them see value in their Relay For Life sponsorship – becoming a sponsor allows them to get involved in the fight against cancer while benefitting their organization at the same time.

As an organization, we are flexible and want to meet the needs of our constituents and sponsors. When meeting with a sponsor that would like to be involved in a different way, or if they want to tailor the partnership to better fit their business needs, your staff partner and his/her senior manager are available to help tailor the sponsorship package to meet the needs of your event and community.

Sponsorship Collaboration Recommendations

Successful sponsorship partnerships are the result of building a relationship with the company and matching the sponsorship package to the needs of the company.

When possible, partner with other volunteers and American Cancer Society staff to present sponsorship opportunities. For example, if you need to meet with the local hospital about renewing its Relay sponsorship each year, be sure your Society health systems partner is aware and can get it on his or her calendar to attend with you.

If your staff partner lets you know that your community has a larger market team and has other staff leading up the partnership efforts for a particular business or organization, it is recommended that you work together to ensure your potential sponsors are not already included in market account plans, and/or you can get involved in the bigger partnership.

As you are working on your prospective sponsor list, please check with your staff partner to ensure that any company you are looking to approach is not part of a larger enterprise account plan. If you

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have any questions about who you should or should not approach for sponsorship asks, please reach out to your staff partner.

Documents Available for Sponsorship Presentations

We have many documents for helping to recruit event sponsors. Ask your staff partner for these resources:

- Cover letter templates– available for past sponsors and for general use or potential sponsors
- Pitch Kits – condensed versions of our sponsorship packages that are perfect to use when you are first establishing a relationship with a potential sponsor, or introducing Relay For Life sponsorship for the first time
- Sponsorship packages for both campus and community events – available for tier one, tier two, tier three, and tier four –available in a printed booklet or pdf file, and Spanish versions are available
- Commitment forms that can be customized if you are adding supplementary levels for tier one, tier two, tier three, and tier four
- Contracts –instructions and templates available for presenting, platinum, gold, silver, bronze, signature, or custom level
- Custom level template for supplementary levels
- Media Sponsorship package templates

Making the Ask

Sponsorships are not just a great way for your event or team to fundraise, but an opportunity to grow your event and create more awareness about the work the American Cancer Society is doing. Successful sponsorship partnerships take time and are the result of building a strong relationship with the company and matching the sponsorship package to the needs of the company.

You are valuable in the sponsorship potential within your community because you already have unique local relationships with different business and organizations that could be potential sponsors, and you have passion and excitement about what you help the American Cancer Society do in the fight against cancer. You frequent banks, salons, doctors, insurance companies, schools, etc. so the

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relationship is already there: Now it is just a matter of starting the conversation, building on that relationship, and sharing with them the opportunity of joining your Relay For Life event.

Building these relationships is about making it personal. So, when making your ask, be sure to tell your personal story. Let them know that the sponsorship dollars we raise through Relay For Life helps the American Cancer Society fund research and provide programs and resources that help people not just in your community, but everywhere.

Paint a picture of why you got involved with the Relay For Life program and what volunteering means to you. Talk about how your experience has impacted you, your loved ones, and your community.

The truth is that if you give people a list of facts, you'll be lucky if they remember one or two of them! Put those facts into a story; however, and you'll have a much better chance of the information sticking. Nothing is more inspiring for someone who is considering getting involved than hearing you communicate (and being passionate about) your own personal experience. The best personal stories are real, organic, consistent, friendly and interesting! Write down your personal story talking points and speak from your heart, in your own words, when presenting. Your story will bring the facts and figures of the good work of the American Cancer Society to life and will help you make personal connections with people. It is important to make these connections because cancer is personal to most of the people you will share with and hearing your story will help create a more meaningful reason for them to get involved.

Sponsor Stewardship Recommendations

It is important to create a consistent stewardship experience for Relay sponsors to build upon these valuable relationships. This stewardship process is our way of showing our sponsors that we have been responsible with the resources they have provided, and that we have fulfilled our share of the sponsorship agreement. This process should be followed for all event sponsors no matter who recruited the sponsor.

- As soon as a commitment form is submitted, a sponsor thank-you letter should be customized and mailed to the sponsor contact by your staff partner.

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- All sponsors from the previous Relay For Life event year and all sponsors who have already committed to supporting the upcoming Relay event should receive an invitation to the Relay For Life kickoff.
- Two weeks prior to the Relay For Life event, all sponsors should receive an invitation to attend the opening ceremony and sponsor recognition lap.
- During the Relay For Life event year, sponsors should be recognized pre-event, at the event, and after the event as outlined in the sponsorship package chosen. Your staff partner has more details and can share them with you.
- After the event, it is important to provide each sponsor with a thank you note handwritten by staff or sponsorship or recognition lead – your staff partner can order some for you, or you can use your own stationary.
- Within two months post-event, each sponsor that contributed more than \$1,000 (or the top three sponsors from the event if there were no sponsors at the \$1,000 level) should receive an in-person visit from the staff partner and/or the sponsorship chair. During this visit, a customized Relay For Life Stewardship Report (prepared by your staff partner) should be presented and reviewed. This visit is also a great opportunity to share other ways businesses can partner with the American Cancer Society.

Area/Market Level Sponsors

Area/market level sponsorships are available for sponsors that support multiple Relay events in an area or market for a total donation of \$10,000 or more. The sponsor chooses which events and levels to sponsor and will receive only those corresponding benefits at that level per event.

For example, if a sponsor chooses to be a presenting level sponsor of a tier four event, and gold level at a tier three event (\$10,000 total), they receive presenting level benefits at the tier four event and only the gold level benefits at the tier three event. In addition, because of the larger commitment to the Society, the regional/market sponsor will receive additional benefits.

Your staff partner can provide these additional documents when presenting an area/market sponsorship, along with the sponsorship packages:

- Sell sheet



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- Event list template
- Commitment form
- Multi-event selection form
- Contract

Region/State Level Sponsors

Region/state level sponsorships are available for sponsors that support multiple Relay events in a state or Region for a donation of \$100,000 or more. The sponsor chooses which events and levels to sponsor and will receive only those corresponding benefits at that level per event.

For example, if a sponsor chooses to be a presenting level sponsor of 10 tier four events and platinum level at five tier two events (\$100,000 total) they receive presenting level benefits at the tier four events and only the platinum level benefits at the tier two events. In addition, because of the larger commitment to the Society, the Region/state sponsor will receive the additional benefits.

Your staff partner can provide these additional documents when presenting a Region/state sponsorship, along with the sponsorship packages:

- Sell sheet
- Event list template
- Commitment form
- Multi-event selection form
- Contract

In-kind and Media Sponsorships

If an individual or corporation contributes merchandise or other resources, excluding money, the item is considered a contribution, but is not included in the gross income of the event. Recognition for this donation should be provided at 50% of the Fair Market Value (FMV) of the donated goods or services.

Example: Gourmet Catering provides all of the food for an event; this in-kind donor should be recognized for their donation at your Relay event. If they donate \$5,000 of food at a tier three event,



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they would be recognized at the \$2,500 cash level. For this example, Gourmet Catering would receive all the benefits of a \$2,500 silver level sponsorship.

Media sponsors (newspapers, radio stations, television stations, etc.) should be recognized at 100% of the FMV. Be sure that you receive reports as to when your ads are run, if radio or television, so you can be sure that we are getting good air time for the recognition they will receive from us. Additionally, if you are approaching a radio or television station that covers more than your immediate community, please be sure you discuss with your staff partner first. We do have a media sponsorship package template available through your staff partner.

An in-kind donation form is also available through your staff partner.

Training

Training is available to help you be successful. Visit the Volunteer Learning Center at volunteerlearning.cancer.org for all training opportunities. Log in with the same credentials you use to log in to your Relay For Life participant center.

- American Cancer Society Volunteer Orientation Video:
<https://volunteerlearning.cancer.org/course/view.php?id=170>
- [RFL Sponsorship and Fundraising Lead Training](#)
- RFL Sponsorship [Part 1](#)
- RFL Sponsorship [Part 2 – Engaging Sponsors](#)
- RFL Sponsorship [Part 3 – Implementation and Retention](#)
- RFL Sponsorship Prospecting, Cultivation & Closing:
<https://volunteerlearning.cancer.org/course/view.php?id=457>
- Partner with your community development manager for one-on-one or area sponsorship training