

EPIC FUNDRAISING PLAYBOOK



For Club Champions and Fundraising Leads 2025-26

You'll see a LOT of good ideas and resources here. It could be overwhelming, but think of it as a marvelous menu. Just bite off whatever looks good. Bon Appetit!

EPIC fundraising is the easiest thing ever! It's not a traditional "fundraiser"... there's no committee... nothing to organize, buy, sell, auction... no tax receipts to issue (we do that for you)... and you net a hefty 85% to help expand your club's service budget. EPIC doesn't compete with fundraisers, it complements them. **And it can have a BIG impact!**

EPIC FUNDRAISING – TOP CLUBS in 2025			
Gold	Denver Southeast - CO	\$78,450	101 Members
Silver	Southington - CT	\$8,637	37 Members
Bronze	Denver Metro South - CO	\$5,655	28 Members

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A. EPIC'S WEBSITE BRINGS IN DONATIONS TO YOUR CLUB

It's your online giving system, all set up and ready to go. It can accept two types of donations for your Club:

1. DONATIONS DURING VOLUNTEER SIGNUP.

When community and club members sign up to volunteer for your project, they're asked if they'd like to make an online donation to your Club. The "ask" explains that the money will help expand the service you do year-round. Community volunteers will often donate, as will club members if they aren't already tapped dry. One Club with 100 members raised almost \$50,000 by making this their big annual ask of members.

2. DONATIONS FROM FRIENDS & FAMILY ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

Have you ever received an email from a friend doing a charity walk and asking for a donation? This is similar, but instead of walking we're organizing an annual day of service for our communities worldwide. When your Club members sign up for your project, they each automatically receive 3 tools:

Tool 1 – A Personal Fundraising Page.

It's like a GoFundMe page, but it's on the EPIC website and all set up for the member. It can be customized with a photo, fundraising goal, and personal message, but it works great as-is. Donations are flat amounts - \$25, \$50, etc. - rather than based on the # of service hours. When friends donate, we instantly notify the member so they can thank them.

The screenshot shows a fundraising page for Pat McGuckin's EPIC Day of Service Fundraiser. The page includes a title, a description of the campaign supporting the Rotary Club of Denver Southeast Foundation, a photo of the fundraiser's family, and a progress bar showing \$5,387 raised towards a goal. A list of recent donations is displayed on the right side.

Donor Name	Amount	Time Ago
DAF GIVING 360 DAN & KATHY MURPHY	\$1,717.00	4 months ago
DAN AND LISA MC GUCKIN	\$1,000.00	5 months ago
LAURIE BROCK	\$150.00	6 months ago
ROB & LORA LOUISE BROADY	\$250.00	6 months ago

A Personal Fundraising Page

Tool 2 – An Email ready to send to Friends & Family.

It's already written, including the link to the member's page. Members just send the email and watch the donations roll in. If your Club's fundraisers have already tapped your local friends, these emails can expand your reach to a new source of funding from friends nationwide.

Tool 3 – Social Media buttons.

Buttons make it easy to post in a medium that reaches the next generation of Rotarians.

Your members fundraise effortlessly. No auction items to solicit, no tickets to sell, no money to collect. When members sign up to volunteer for your project, the last page they see is their Fundraising Page. They don't have to use it, but they'll see how easy it is.

Note that Community Volunteers do not receive the three tools and are not asked to send emails to friends and family. That seems like a bit much to ask of non-Rotarians.

Donations all pass through the EPIC Day's 501(c)(3) Foundation. We send donors their tax receipts for you. After the EPIC Day, we send you all the donations raised by your Club in one big check, less 15% to cover the: credit card processor's fee; website provider's fee; and reimbursement of Foundation expenses. Everyone involved with the EPIC Day Foundation is an unpaid Rotarian volunteer, but expanding the EPIC Day globally does involve some hard costs.

Fundraising is optional. Clubs and members don't have to fundraise. But if your volunteers have the option to donate, some are likely to do so. Let's not look a gift horse in the mouth.

B. TO TURN ON FUNDRAISING FOR YOUR CLUB...

When you register your Club on the EPIC website, just fill in the info on your Club's 501(c)(3) Foundation:

- **Foundation Name**
- **EIN**
- **Mailing Address** - where we can send your check.

This info is not required, but **the website won't take donations to your Club until it's entered.**

What if your Foundation info isn't handy? Register your Club without it and fill it in later.

What if your Club is a 501(c)(4)? That's not the same as a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation.

What if your Club doesn't have a 501(c)(3) foundation? We're only able to send funds to a 501(c)(3), but here are some possible solutions:

- **Does your District have a 501(c)(3) Foundation?** Ask if it would be willing to serve as a pass-through to your Club. If so, enter the info for the District's foundation and we'll make the check out to them.
- **Does your Club have a favorite charity you support?** If they're a 501(c)(3), enter the info on their foundation and we'll make the check out to them.
- **If you can't find a 501(c)(3) foundation, your Club could:**
 - Set up a ClubRunner or DACdb page to accept donations
 - Accept checks or cash
 - Sell Sponsorships - see more below
 - Do a Project that can generate revenue - see more below

What if your Club is outside the United States? Due to U.S. tax reporting requirements, we're only able to forward donations to U.S. non-profits. Otherwise, the process would be like that for RI grants; you'd need to send a request for your money detailing how it would be used, then we'd have to collect follow-up reports from you on the results. We just don't have the capacity to do that for hundreds of Clubs. Next year we plan to trial a reporting workaround in a few countries... stay tuned. In the meantime, your Club could:

- Set up a ClubRunner or DACdb page to accept donations
- Accept checks or cash
- Sell Sponsorships - see more below
- Do a Project that can generate revenue - see more below

C. TWO MORE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

Neither of these options involve the EPIC website, so you don't need to have a 501(c)(3) or be in the United States. These options can bring in significant dollars for your Club.

1. PROJECT REVENUE. Some projects can generate their own donations. For example, the Cherry Creek Valley Club of Parker (CO) organized a free electronics recycling event. Club members walked up and down the long line of waiting cars, describing all the great work their Club does and asking if they'd like to donate. **They raised \$13,000!**

A drawback of such projects can be that they may not need many community volunteers (i.e., potential new members). If membership is a higher priority for your



Club than money, try to find a project that will appeal to, and have a need for, a lot of community volunteers.

If nothing else, when people arrive at your EPIC Day project, have a donation bucket on the sign-in table and ask everyone if they'd like to drop in \$20.

2. SPONSORS. Club Members who operate businesses may be willing to sponsor your Club. So might other entities. For instance, a big health care provider sponsored one Club's EPIC Day in part because the provider's mental health initiatives fit with the proven social benefits of bringing people together in service. Clubs can set any price they want for Sponsorships, and can recognize Sponsors in their communications, on their Club website, and with a sign at the project. **The sign here represented \$35,000 in sponsor funding for the Denver Southeast Club.**



D. FUNDRAISING SUCCESS IS EASY!

Club Leaders just need to set goals and expectations and encourage members to act. The EPIC Day offers resources to help.

1. IDENTIFY WHO WILL LEAD CLUB FUNDRAISING

This topic is covered in the [EPIC CLUB PLAYBOOK](#). Be sure it's clear who is responsible.

2. SET GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

a. DONATIONS. First, how often has your Club already asked your members to "donate". That's different from how often they've been asked to "purchase" something. With a ducky derby, a peach sale, or a golf tournament, members get something of value for their money, and the Club typically nets a fraction of the purchase price. Donating, on the other hand, is a selfless act, with nothing expected in return except the satisfaction that comes from supporting Service Above Self. Experiencing that satisfaction is a big part of why we all joined Rotary.

If your members are already tapped out, maybe don't expect a lot of donations. Perhaps 10% of members will donate an average of \$25 - \$100. If they aren't tapped out, 30% - 40% at \$100 is not unrealistic. Last year's top Club achieved over 50% of members donating at \$400 each on average. It was their one big "ask" of members for the year.

Community members are also asked if they'd like to donate during signup for your project. We suggest treating this as icing on the cake rather than setting a goal. Results depend on how many volunteers you attract. We don't yet have advice on how many might donate, but typical donations so far have been \$25 - \$50.

b. FUNDRAISING FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY. Even if members are tapped out, every member can send emails to their friends. Most of us have happily donated to our friends' worthy causes... it's time to get a return on those donations for our own worthy cause!

Results depend on how much the Club encourages members to send the emails. A one-time ask might get 5% - 10% of members to act. Repeated requests will generate more. In last year's top Club, about 20% of members sent emails, raising over \$1,200 each on average. The top member raised \$4,647.

c. TOTAL FUNDRAISING GOAL. Aim high... a lofty goal helps drive results. **Before finalizing your goal, read the rest of this Playbook...** you'll have a better feel for how audacious a goal you might be able to reach. Make sure the Club President, Champion, and Fundraising Lead are all on board.

d. SET EXPECTATIONS WITH MEMBERS. In addition to sharing the Total Fundraising Goal, consider announcing a goal of 100% member participation in fundraising. Everyone can donate according to their ability, whether that's \$25 or \$1,000. And since everyone has friends & family, everyone has the ability to send the emails.

100% participation may feel unlikely. Every Club has "underactive" members who are seldom heard from. But setting this expectation can help motivate at least the active members to act! And the EPIC Day does offer an "All Hands On Deck" opportunity to engage ALL your members.

3. INTRODUCE THE EPIC DAY TO YOUR CLUB

As soon as Club Leaders decide to participate in the EPIC Day, announce it to the Club at a meeting and in a follow-up email. Let them know what's coming and start to build excitement.

This is covered in the [EPIC CLUB PLAYBOOK](#) and is typically led by the Champion. Fundraising Leads should be included in the planning, since each resource below touches on Fundraising.

EPIC CLUB INTRODUCTION RESOURCES	
EPIC Club Introduction Slides	Even if you prefer not to use slides, these offer ideas for talking points. Ask members to Save the Date.
EPIC Postcard	Print and put on tables?
EPIC Flyer	Print and put on tables?
EPIC Club Introduction Email	Reach those members not in attendance, and encourage everyone to visit www.epicdayofservice.org . Attach the Postcard and Flyer.

4. MAKE FUNDRAISING PREPARATIONS

These ideas can help turbocharge your fundraising:

1. **SET UP A FUN CHALLENGE?** In one Club, members with last names starting with A to L challenged those starting M to Z: who could donate and raise the most money? Each Team chose a Captain and a funny name. The losing Team had to sing a funny song honoring the winners at a Club meeting, with the Captain wearing a silly costume.
2. **ARRANGE A MATCHING FUND?** If you have some big donors in your Club, ask in advance if they'd be willing to commit to a "match" to encourage other members to donate. For instance, they could donate \$1,000 early on and commit to matching another \$500 in donations from other members. It may be best to wait to announce the match. It can be an effective tool in persuading last-minute holdouts to get in the game.
3. **LINE UP CLUB SPONSORS?** Identify any Club members who run businesses that might be willing to sponsor your Club's EPIC Day. Also identify other organizations that might be aligned with the EPIC Day and/or your Club's project. The EPIC Day could be a good fit for many organizations with social responsibility and community giving goals. In particular, the proven social benefits of bringing people together in service may be a marvelous match for entities involved in the mental health field.

In addition, many organizations encourage employees to perform community service. With the EPIC Day, your Club can offer an off-the-shelf project that multiple employees can serve on together without having to organize it. Or maybe they'd like to help your Club organize it? Either way, this could be a good way to gain an organization's attention before asking about sponsorship.

Consider what you can offer in return for a Sponsorship. Some will want recognition:

- A sign or banner at the project.
- Recognition on your Club’s website (but not on the EPIC website... with over 1,200 Clubs expected to participate this year, it’s not feasible to feature all their sponsors).
- Recognition in any local news coverage your Club is able to arrange.
- Recognition in any local ads your Club may place.
- Recognition at multiple Club meetings
- What else?

Others may want something other than recognition, or in addition to it. If you ask, you may be pleasantly surprised.

How much you charge for sponsorships is up to you. It’s helpful to offer multiple levels at different price points. The level a Sponsor chooses will be less about what they get in return and more about what they’re inclined to spend. Levels could be named the usual, like Gold - Silver - Bronze, or something more fun, like EPIC! - REALLY EPIC! - REALLY REALLY EPIC! Who doesn’t want to be REALLY REALLY EPIC?

5. KICK OFF THE EPIC DAY FOR YOUR CLUB

It’s typically the Club Champion who enters your Club’s Project on the EPIC website and Publishes it on the FIND A PROJECT Map. People can then start signing up. You’re ready!

Club Kickoff is covered in the [EPIC CLUB PLAYBOOK](#) and is typically led by the Champion. The Fundraising Lead should be included in the planning. If you’ve set up a fun challenge, now is the time to introduce it.

EPIC CLUB KICKOFF RESOURCES	
EPIC Club Kickoff Slides	Even if you prefer not to use slides, these can offer ideas for talking points.
EPIC Fundraising Flyer	Encourages donating and sending Friends & Family emails. Print and put on tables?
EPIC Member Signup Instructions	Insert direct link to Club’s Project Signup page?
EPIC Club Kickoff Email	To reach members not at the meeting, and to give everyone the link to www.epicdayofservice.org . Attach the Fundraising Flyer and Instructions.

6. PRESENT REGULAR ENCOURAGEMENT

This is essential to fundraising success! Rotarians are notorious for procrastinating. If your Launch by itself leads to 5% of your members signing up, donating, and fundraising, we want to know your secret! It may drive you crazy, but do something at least every other week. Keep at it and they'll eventually act. They'll end up applauding you for the Club's success!

EPIC CLUB ENCOURAGEMENT RESOURCES	
EPIC Club Encouragement Slides	Even if you prefer not to use slides, these can offer ideas for talking points.
EPIC Member Signup Instructions	People won't be able to find your earlier email, so you'll need to send them again.
EPIC Club Encouragement Email	To reach members not at the meetings, and give everyone the link to www.epicdayofservice.org . Attach the Fundraising Flyer and Instructions.

Update fundraising progress and recognize those who've acted. Who has raised the most? If you set up a challenge, who is winning? Be careful not to embarrass anyone... don't name those who haven't acted, nor show how much people have donated. Take questions. Change it up with different speakers addressing varied topics, and in emails with new messaging:

- “We all joined Rotary in part because we wanted to do more service. The EPIC Day is an easy way to help all of us — our Club — do more good.”
- If a member is especially good at appealing to people's emotions, ask them to talk about a club project that really tugged on members' hearts.
- Address the typical objections to sending out the friends & family emails (see below).
- List all the Club's projects, and point out that this is how we fund them... plus more.
- If you have a showman in the Club, ask them to do something fun. One member wore a circus ringmaster's outfit and strode in to the tune of Emerson, Lake and Palmer's lyrics, “Welcome back my friends, to the show that never ends...”. He proceeded to tell everyone just how it was going to be!
- Offer to “stop with the announcements” as soon as the fundraising goal is met.
- Announce the “Match” if you set one up, but maybe not until the final push.
- Keep it fun. If you have an especially funny member, ask them to come up with something.

7. OVERCOME OBJECTIONS

Some members may have qualms about sending the emails to friends & family emails. These generally fall into two categories.

“Wait... you want me to ask people to pay me to do service?” While charity walks and rides are an accepted thing, the EPIC Day of Service is a new concept. Some helpful responses:

- *“Which do you think your friends would rather support: taking a walk, or serving your community?”*
- *“They’re not paying you to serve... the Club pays for any EPIC Day costs. Donations go to help your Club expand the service you do year-round.”*

“I don’t feel comfortable asking friends for money.” Some people worry that friends will not appreciate it. Some good responses:

- *“When friends ask you for a donation, what’s your reaction? Are you bothered, or is it nice to learn of their charitable pursuits, and are you glad to help with a donation?”*
- *“EPIC’s top fundraiser always invites his friends to tell him if they don’t want to be asked any more. Nobody has ever said stop. They do say things like, “Happy to help”.*
- *“Many Rotarians report getting positive feedback from their emails. We’ve never heard of even the tiniest inkling of a negative reaction.”*
- *“Have you ever supported a friend’s cause? Could you at least ask them to support your cause?”* Once they get over the hump, they may be willing to expand.

E. MANAGE YOUR FUNDRAISING WITH EASE

Club Champions have access to their Club Tools Page, and can also grant permission for other members to access it. The Club Fundraising Report on that page shows who has signed up and how much they’ve donated and raised. It’s easy to track your Club’s progress towards your goals, and who might need a little extra prompting.

F. OTHER QUESTIONS?

WHAT ABOUT CASH OR CHECK DONATIONS?

If you receive cash or checks, no need to send them to the EPIC Foundation. Deposit them in your usual account. **But do go to your Club Tools Page and record the donation there.** That way it will increase your Club’s total and the collective total raised by all the clubs. The bigger the total, the more newsworthy it becomes for all of us.

Also, if friends & family would prefer to send a check, the website does offer the option to mail it to the EPIC Foundation. We ask them to include the member’s name so we can make sure the donation goes to your Club.

WHAT IF MEMBERS CAN’T DO THE PROJECT BUT THEY STILL WANT TO DONATE?

No problem. At www.epicdayofservice.org, they can click **SIGN UP** and follow the instructions.

G. HELP YOUR CLUB NAIL IT’S ROTARY ACTION PLAN!

EPIC fundraising helps your Club succeed in every one of the Rotary Action Plan goals.

ROTARY ACTION PLAN PILLAR	EPIC FUNDRAISING DELIVERS
Increase Your Impact	Funding to expand the service your Club does year-round.
Expand Your Reach	Friends & family learn about your Club, building positive awareness and opening a conversation about joining.
Enhance Engagement	Members get personally engaged, and engage their friends.
Adapt for the Future	Adopt a state-of-the-art online tool for fundraising.

H. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH MORE FUNDING?

What a fun question to ponder. Let’s raise some money and find out!



The Denver Metro South and Englewood Clubs filled school backpacks with meals for children dealing with food insecurity. The Englewood Club supported the Backpack Society with a “BIG” \$2,000 check.