

# The Marshall University Foundation Crowdfunding Guidelines & Policies

*The Marshall Foundation reserves the right to revise these guidelines and policies at any time. Before crowdfunding, it is the project lead's responsibility to review and understand the following Marshall University Foundation, Inc. crowdfunding guidelines and policies.*

The Marshall University Foundation, Inc. in its sole discretion will determine the eligibility of participating projects on the crowdfunding platform at <https://give.marshall.edu/>. The Marshall Foundation may discontinue an active fundraiser at any time because of a project's failure to comply with these guidelines. Crowdfunding projects are to help ensure philanthropy and raising funds for the greatest needs on campus.

To ensure compliance with the Marshall Foundation guidelines, all projects must have an approved philanthropic gift fund set up through the Marshall Foundation to which donations can be accepted and then distributed to the corresponding fund. Groups may use a gift fund associated with a sponsoring unit, such as a department, program or center, with the approval of the fund manager in that area. If an appropriate sponsoring unit gift fund is not available, the Marshall Foundation will determine whether the project qualifies for its own gift fund as long as there is a fund manager available to manage the account. Gift funds must be approved before the project can begin fundraising. The form to request a new fund is available [HERE](#).

Project campaigns run for 30 days, but projects generally require up to 10-12 weeks of focused, intense work before and after the campaign. The successful project creator will provide updates and remain actively engaged by utilizing social media and through email blasts. It is recommended that the project leader commit 60 minutes per day and each team member commit 30-60 minutes per day during the length of the active phase of the campaign.

All monies must be used for the project's stated purpose. Individuals are strictly prohibited from keeping any portion of the funds raised as profit or compensation. All projects must be non-profit in nature. All expenditures must comply with the Marshall Foundation's disbursement procedures.

Projects must support the university's programs and initiatives. Funds cannot be redirected to a third party, external charity or other non-profit. The Marshall Foundation cannot act as a "pass-through" entity to provide funding to other charities.

When applying for a crowdfunding project, the project lead agrees to submit a completed Crowdfunding Application [HERE](#) and provide the following:

- Project description and case for support
- Seed money (described below)
- Ongoing outreach via social media, email, phone calls and on-campus to promote the project after launch
- Images for project page, social sharing, and outreach
- YouTube/Vimeo video link (optional, it will be the project lead's responsibility to provide)
- Project updates throughout the campaign

The Marshall Foundation will support the project by:

- Creating the project page with the provided content
- Offering strategy and guidance throughout the term of the project
- Processing gifts received through the online giving platform and directing the money into the designated fund
- Adding any offline fundraising gifts to the online giving platform
- Providing a gift acknowledgement to all donors

The Marshall Foundation must approve all content on project pages. The Marshall Foundation has the right to edit, or require project content edits at any point in the campaign.

Projects should have specific goals and be driven by tangible accomplishments - for example, purchasing new equipment, funding travel fees, or providing student workshop opportunities. Projects without a specific goal are generally less successful and may not qualify for their own page.

It is up to the project team to market its campaign and provide outreach. The larger the crowdfunding project group, the more likely it will be successful. Groups should consist of at least three people that will focus on marketing and outreach.

In order to ensure the success of each new project, seed money must be verbally obtained and documented prior to launch. Documentation must be provided to the Marshall Foundation at least two weeks before the expected launch date to ensure the goal can be reached.

Seed money is a percentage (usually half) of a team's total crowdfunding goal that they are certain will come in once the campaign is live. Seed money ensures that the project appears successful from the start. Donors are more likely to support a project that looks like it is on track to meet its goal. Seed money can either be a verbal or written commitment. If the donor is willing to give the donation directly to a team member immediately, the Marshall Foundation can add the amount to the project as an offline donation. In some cases, the donor will simply commit to a certain dollar amount once the project goes live. In this situation, the donor will have to go to the crowdfunding page to fulfill their gift after the project launches. The team may need to follow up with them to ensure that they fulfill their commitment.

Seed money is secured from people that team members know personally. Seed money can be secured in a variety of ways: phone calls, emails, social media, or face to face. It is important that a direct ask is made for a specific amount in order for it to count as seed money. All outreach should be done no less than two weeks prior to the launch date. Start putting lists of potential donors together for outreach. This list can include but is not limited to:

- Former members of your organization (Alumni)
- Family, Friends and Peers
- Professors, Advisors, Co-workers and Mentors

Each member of the team should attempt to put together a list of 10-12 contacts. Since seed money is a verbal/written commitment, it must be documented. Documentation can be done in any way the team sees fit. It is important to record the team member who contacted them, the donor's name and address, the amount that they agreed to support, as well as their email, social media, and phone contact information to check back in with them and remind them of their commitment once the project launches. Make sure to report any seed money collected to Griffin Talbott at [foundationservices@marshall.edu](mailto:foundationservices@marshall.edu) or (304) 696-6214.

The Marshall Foundation does not provide any contact data on alumni, parents, friends or students. It is up to the project team to contact their personal connections and contact lists.

Most gifts will be raised online through <https://give.marshall.edu/>. Gifts received offline will be counted towards the campaign goal if it comes in during the allotted campaign duration. Offline funds may be used toward the project's goal. This includes, but is not limited to, cash, checks, and other funds awarded or received during the crowdfunding campaign. All funds raised from outside of the Marshall Foundation crowdfunding platform must be delivered to the Marshall Foundation for deposit. This is to ensure that the donor receives proper credit and receipts. If this occurs, please notify Griffin Talbott at [foundationservices@marshall.edu](mailto:foundationservices@marshall.edu) or (304) 696-6214. Crowdfunding projects cannot count gifts from pledges, bequests, gifts already allocated to another fund, or money raised through sales, such as bake-sales, car washes, or other "give-to-get" fundraising. All gifts must be collected prior to the project's deadline.

Projects will be hosted on the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz ScaleFunder crowdfunding platform for 30 days. Some exceptions may apply. Shorter campaigns tend to drive urgency and perform strongly. The same group may not fundraise in consecutive campaigns, but may be eligible for future crowdfunding efforts.

If the project is not fully funded within the allotted timeframe, any monies raised will still be allocated to the project. All funds, even without meeting the goal, must be spent on the promoted project. Projects leaders should notify their donors and inform them how their donations will be spent.

All projects must be consistent with the institution's mission. Projects cannot violate any laws. The Marshall Foundation reserves the right to decline any project based on content or discontinue an active campaign at any time due to changes in the group's eligibility status.

For questions regarding these guidelines, please contact Griffin Talbott, Director of Annual Giving, at [foundationservices@marshall.edu](mailto:foundationservices@marshall.edu) or (304) 696-6214.