



Hosting a Fundraiser in Your Home

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I. Introduction

There is no more effective way to cement a good relationship with a lawmaker or potential lawmaker than to participate in his or her election or re-election campaign.

Most candidates take a very personal view of their election efforts, because their careers are at stake. If you make a financial investment in their campaigns, and/or volunteer your services, you will have an excellent chance of becoming one of their valued constituents and friends.

Fundraising events are very important to candidates for public office, because they serve a dual purpose in their campaigning efforts. Obviously, and most importantly, they help the candidate raise money. Campaigning, even at the state level, is expensive, and can range from several thousand to several million dollars depending on the office the candidate is seeking. As a result, candidates must spend a significant amount of their time and energy focused on fundraising; even after they have been elected, they must retire debts and prepare for the next election almost immediately.

Therefore, they appreciate and remember those who have helped them in their efforts. Additionally, fundraising events, especially those held in the candidate's district, give them the chance to meet and talk with voters — an opportunity that will never be passed up!

Conducting a fundraising event for your candidate can be fun, and the ways to raise money are limited only by your imagination, the candidate's schedule, and a few legal considerations. More importantly, however, fundraising is an investment in your candidate's career and future — something very serious to them — and an investment in the political future of dentistry. The friendship you and your fellow colleagues develop with your lawmaker while organizing and conducting their fundraiser could have a positive and far-reaching impact on dentists, their practices, and their families.

Always consult with the MDA before you decide to host a fundraiser. When everyone's activities in the MDA grassroots effort are coordinated, the profession will be much more effective and successful in achieving its legislative and political goals.

A carefully-planned, well-organized home fundraiser will be a political success for your candidate and a good time for all who attend — including you.

A. Advantages of Conducting a Fundraiser in Your Home

There are a wide variety of ways to host a candidate fundraiser, but one of the simplest and most effective is to host a fundraiser in your home. There are several advantages to conducting a home fundraiser:

- It makes a clear statement to your friends, your colleagues, and to the candidate that you are supporting his or her campaign and investing in his or her career.
- It can be more personal and intimate, and foster a closer relationship between you and your colleagues and the candidate.
- It will have more of an impact on the candidate. He or she will have been the guest of honor at a party you organized, and a guest in your home as well.
- It will give the candidate the opportunity to meet and speak on a personal basis with potential voters they might never have met otherwise.

You and your colleagues are in an ideal position to host a home fundraiser and to further enhance your relationship with your representative or senator, or with a challenger or open seat candidate who has a reasonable chance of getting elected. The MDA encourages your district/component to consider conducting a fundraiser in the home of one of your colleagues, and has assembled this "how-to" kit to help you and your fellow members organize and

communicate with other dentists and constituents in your district/component. In addition, the MDA executive office is available to answer questions and give you guidance in conducting a successful and enjoyable event.

B. Legal Considerations

Depending on the office the candidate is seeking, state ethics laws limit the amount of a contribution that can be accepted. All state candidates can accept personal, corporate or political action committee (PAC) contributions. Below are the limits pertaining to each office:

All State-wide Offices

\$1,275 contribution for the primary election and \$1,275 contribution for the general election

State Senate Offices

\$650 contribution for the primary election and \$650 contribution for the general election

State Representative Offices

\$325 contribution for the primary election and \$325 contribution for the general election

Party Committees (ex: Senate Majority Fund, HRCC, State Party Committees)

All party committee can accept unlimited contributions; there are no limits

C. Planning the Fundraiser

Once you have decided to host a fundraiser in your home, your next step will be to decide what type of event you will sponsor. Your primary goal is to raise the largest amount of money for your candidate for the least amount of work and expense. Because it is your home, your choices are limited only by your imagination, the candidate's schedule, and the size of your house!

A small, private event such as a dinner or reception with 8-12 colleagues and spouses will allow the candidate to spend quality time with you and your colleagues to learn more about the issues that interest you and other dentists. It will also help you to solidify the close relationship you wish to establish with your candidate. Small events like this, however, may require high price tickets (more than \$200 each) to make this a successful fundraiser for the candidate.

Keep in mind that candidates like to meet a lot of potential voters, too. Consider hosting a barbecue in your backyard, a theme party, a cocktail reception, a breakfast or brunch buffet or a potluck supper to which you invite a large number of voters for the candidate to meet and address. The ticket price for an event aimed at a larger attendance should cost less. Charging \$50 - \$100 per person for events such as these could raise as much money for your candidate as a small dinner with only high-level contributors.

In deciding what type of event to host and what the ticket price should be, consult with your candidate's campaign for advice as well as the MDA. Your event also might be dictated by the candidate's schedule and preference as to the kind of event. A variety of factors should be considered, e.g., incumbents may command a higher ticket price than non-incumbents; and incumbents who hold positions of leadership may be able to attract more dollars than those who do not. The campaign staff also should be able to advise you how to design an invitation response device that meets the candidate's preference and appropriate title.

D. Tips for Hosting a Successful Home Fundraiser

Be Organized Before the Event

The first step you should take in hosting a fundraiser in your home is to let the candidate know you would like to do it. On some occasions, the campaign staff may approach you and ask you to take on this assignment. However, more often than not, you must take the initiative and contact the candidate and their campaign to let them know of your interest.

To arrange a fundraiser with the candidate, you should contact the candidate, the campaign manager, the fundraising chair and/or the campaign scheduler, depending upon how the campaign is organized. Together you can determine the type of event to be held, and set a date and time. Candidates have very busy campaign schedules, so you will need to allow significant lead time of up to two months if at all possible. Make sure that the candidate can attend rather than a surrogate representative of the campaign!

A critical step in organizing and planning a fundraiser in your home is to develop a host committee to assist in selling tickets to the event, especially if you plan to have a large fundraiser. Your colleagues, friends, neighbors, and local political party activists are good choices to help out. Remember, the more people you involve on the host committee, the better the odds that you'll have a good turnout to the fundraiser.

Be Organized at the Event

Although planning and organization are important in the days and weeks leading up to the event, they are critical on the day or evening of your fundraiser as well. As with any event that you host in your home, you want everyone to have an enjoyable time; so like any good host, you must work to keep things running smoothly. Developing an agenda for the event and following it in a flexible way is a good idea (see sample agenda).

During the course of the event, you should make sure that:

- The candidate has enough time to meet and speak with everyone attending the event, and that they do, in fact, speak to everyone. You should help the candidate circulate through the crowds and avoid being monopolized by just a few people. Anyone who has paid money to attend your event and leaves without meeting the candidate will be frustrated!
- The candidate has time to address the group at large and respond to questions.
- You or one of your colleagues present checks to the candidate. This is the main reason why you've held the event and one of the most important moments of the evening for both you and the candidate — so make it a show! You might start by presenting the candidate with a check from all the attendees of the event, follow it with the presentation of your own additional personal contribution, and close with a check from MoDentPAC. (Don't forget to contact MoDentPAC well before your event to request the PAC's support and assistance.)
- Any campaign literature about the candidate and/or campaign items such as hats, buttons, bumper stickers, or yard signs are distributed. You should consider setting up a table for people to pick up these items.
- Don't forget to have a photographer on hand as well, to take photos of your guests and your candidate. The candidate will appreciate receiving a photo; and the MDA would like to have photos to share in the *Focus MDA*.

II. Fundraiser Timeline and Checklist

In planning any successful event, you will need to develop and follow a timeline for your fundraiser that details and sets deadlines for every activity to be completed. The following timeline can be used as a guideline.

Six Weeks from Fundraiser

- Confirm event with MDA and your local colleagues.
- Determine the date, time, location and ticket price for the event in conjunction with the candidate/campaign staff.
- If necessary, secure a caterer for the event.
- Confirm the event and date in writing with candidate/campaign staff.

Five Weeks from Fundraiser

- Determine and recruit individuals to serve on the host committee, and advise them to schedule the event on their calendars. At this time you need to be specific on the amount you would like each member of the host committee to raise for the candidate.
- Draft invitation and approve correct spelling of names on host committee and correct title and spelling of candidate's name. (Samples provided).
- If necessary, get cost estimates from printers for producing the invitations.
- Compile invitation list:
 - a. past contributors from the campaign
 - b. lists of dentists and spouses in the district/community
 - c. lists of physicians/others in the medical community
 - d. business/industry lists
 - e. targeted lists available from campaign
 - f. neighbors and friends

Four Weeks from Fundraiser

- Print invitations.
- Purchase postage for invitations.
- Recruit volunteers to address, stuff, stamp and seal invitations.

Three Weeks from Fundraiser

- Address, stuff, stamp, seal and mail invitations.
- Give each member of the host committee five to 10 invitations for personal recruitment.
- Begin recruiting volunteers to make follow-up phone calls.
- Recruit photographer and entertainment (if desired).
- Set the menu for the event and give an estimate number of attendance.
- Follow-up with MDA on status of PAC check.

Two Weeks from Fundraiser

- Follow-up with host committee on the progress of recruiting individuals to attend.
- Begin volunteer follow-up phone calls.

One Week from Fundraiser

- Continue host committee follow-up.
- Evaluate status of ticket sales, and what plan of action must be undertaken to meet fundraising goal.
- Complete volunteer follow-up phone calls to all those invited who have not responded to invitations.
- Recruit volunteers to work the event.

- Follow-up with MDA to make sure PAC contribution has been mailed directly to you to present to candidate at the fundraiser.
- If necessary, call caterer with final head count for event.

Day of Fundraiser

- Check physical arrangements and logistics.
- Secure materials for volunteers.
- Set up a microphone (if needed).
- Have name tags available and already addressed.
- Have a master list of invitees.
- Display candidate's campaign material.

Fund-Raising Event

- Have a table set up near the entrance of your home to take checks and pass out campaign literature.
- Plan to introduce candidate to all attendees.
- Plan for candidate to make approximately 15 minutes of comments midway through the fundraiser.
- Plan to present checks to candidate from attendees, host and/or MoDentPAC.
- Allow the candidate to mingle freely with the guests and help avoid a few people dominating the candidate's time.
- Make sure no one contributes more than the legal limit to the candidate's campaign.

Post Fund-Raising Activities

- Follow-up with a note of thanks to candidate for making the fundraiser a success, and reiterating your support for their candidacy. (Sample included).
- Send thank you letters to host committee and volunteers. (Sample letter included).
- Follow up all pledges.
- Write up a summary of event with any recommendations concerning future fundraisers in the dental community.
- Refine master list for next fundraiser.
- Report back to MDA about the outcome of your fundraiser.

II. Home Fundraiser Evaluation Form

The information below will be instructive for the MDA in helping other members who plan to host home fundraisers. Please complete and return this form as soon as possible after your fundraiser. Your efforts in organizing this fundraiser will help ensure that the voice of dentistry is heard clearly in Missouri state government. The MDA and the members of the dental profession thank you for a job well done!

Office Candidate is Seeking (please include district): _____

Name of Your Current State Representative: _____

Name of Your Current State Senator: _____

Candidate for Whom You Sponsored the Fundraiser: _____

Date of Event: _____

Name and Address of Fundraiser Host: _____

Number of Dental Colleagues Who Helped Organize Event: _____

Number of Dental Colleagues Who Attended: _____

Total Number of Attendees at the Event: _____ Ticket Price: _____

Total Amount of Personal Contributions Raised For Candidate: _____

Please rate the outcome of your home fundraiser: Very Successful 1 2 3 4 5 Not Successful

What worked well in planning and conducting the fundraiser? _____

What would you improve, if you conduct another fundraiser? _____

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Business Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Please return this form to:
Aaron Washburn, Missouri Dental Association
3340 American Avenue | Jefferson City MO 65109

IV. Sample Communications

A. Sample Agenda for Home Fundraiser

45 minutes: Introduce candidate to attendees and allow them to mingle and converse.

15 minutes: Candidate addresses the group and responds to questions that the guests may have. If you are hosting a small dinner, this should be done when the meal is finished.

10 minutes: Present candidate with checks from the attendees, the host, and MoDentPAC.

20 minutes: Introduce candidate to any attendees they may not have met and allow them to circulate among guests.

Remember: Be flexible! Candidates on the campaign trail often have very full days and tight schedules of running from one campaign event to another. Be sensitive to your candidate and their time restrictions.

B. Sample Letter to Candidate's Campaign to Confirm Event

Dear (Name of Campaign Manager):

My (spouse or colleagues helping with event) and I are delighted that (candidate's name) has agreed to be a guest in our home. As we discussed, we plan to hold a (type of event) in (his/her) honor, and request contributions of (amount) to attend.

In accordance with (candidate's) schedule, we have planned our event for (date) at (time) in our home. Directions to our home are enclosed. Over the next several weeks, our host committee will be meeting and organizing the event, and I will stay in close contact with your office to keep you informed of how everything is progressing.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you should have questions or suggestions. We look forward to a very enjoyable and successful event.

Sincerely,

(Your Name and Contact Information)

Enclosure: Directions

cc: MDA

(Insert host name)

Invite you to a
(Insert type of event, ex. lunch/reception)
In honor of

(Insert Candidate Name)
(Insert office the candidate is seeking)

Day, Date
Time

Place
Address
City, Missouri

(Include directions to your home)

E. Sample Reply Card

(Insert Name of Candidate Committee)
(Insert Place of Event)
(Insert Day, Date of Event)

_____ Yes, I/we would like to attend the (lunch/reception) at (insert place) and support (insert candidate) in (his/her) campaign for (insert office). Please accept the enclosed contribution:

- _____ Platinum Sponsor — \$(insert amount) per couple
- _____ Gold Sponsor — \$(insert amount) per couple
- _____ Silver Sponsor — \$(insert amount) per couple

_____ No, I/we will not be able to attend the (lunch/reception) at (insert place), but would like to support (insert candidate) in (his/her) campaign for (insert office). Please accept the enclosed contribution of \$_____.

Please contact (insert name) at (XXX) XXX-XXXX with any questions.

(Please see reverse side of card for more information.)

Missouri law requires political committees to report the following information for contributions that exceed \$25 in an election cycle.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
E-Mail _____ Fax: _____
Occupation _____
Employer _____

Do you have a \$500 contractual relationship with the state/political subdivision? Yes/No

Please make personal, corporate or PAC checks payable and mail to:

(Insert name of candidate's committee)
(Insert address of committee)

(Please see reverse side of card for more information.)

F. Sample Thank You Note to Candidate After Event

Dear (Candidate's Name):

My (spouse and/or colleagues) and I would like to thank you for being our guest at (event). I believe that the (day/evening) was a great success and an enjoyable time for everyone.

As a dentist and a member of the community, I feel that you have a very thorough understanding of the issues important to our profession and our district. I would be very proud to have you represent us in the (insert corresponding office).

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my colleagues if we can provide you with further help or information. I wish you continued success in your campaign, and look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Sincerely,
(Your Name and Contact Information)

cc: MDA

G. Sample Thank You Letter to the Host Committee

Dear (Name):

I would like take this opportunity to thank you for serving on the Host Committee for the (event) for (candidate's name). All of your hard work and support paid off — the evening was a great success for (candidate's name) and an enjoyable time for everyone!

(Candidate's name) has expressed (his/her) deep appreciation for our fundraising efforts, and having the opportunity to meet with many of us from the dental community. I believe that our event will go a long way toward helping to make (his/her) campaign a success.

I hope that you will continue to take opportunities to show support for (candidate's name) and communicate with (him/her) on issues of concern to you when (he/she) is (elected/re-elected) as (insert office/district).

Once again, thank you for all your help.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

H. Sample Script for Telephone Bank

Hi. This is (your name). I'm calling to follow-up an invitation that was sent to you to attend a (event) in (Candidate's) honor. The (event) will take place at the home of (host's name) on (date) at (time). (Candidate's name) will be there, and you'll have a chance to meet and talk to (him/her.)

- ***If person remembers receiving the invitation and still has it:***
 - Do you think you will be able to join us on (date)?

- ***If yes:***
 - Great! I will make sure your name is placed on the attendees list, and I'm sure (Candidate's name) will look forward to seeing you there. You may mail your contribution in the envelope enclosed with your invitation today, or bring it with you to the event.

- ***If no:***
 - I'm sorry you won't be able to attend, but hope you'll still want to show your support for (candidate's name) by sending a contribution. This is a great opportunity for the dentists in our community to make a real impact with (candidate's name), and your contribution will help to make this event a real success.

- ***If person doesn't remember invitation or has lost it:***
 - If you'd like, I'll make sure that you receive another invitation in the mail in a day or two. I hope that you will be able to join us. (Take down person's address and make sure you send information as soon as possible.)

- ***If person still needs time to think about it:***
 - I understand. I hope that you'll give it some thought and decide to join us. It should be a fun and informative evening for all of us. I'll check back with you in a couple of days.

Thank you.

Make a note of the person's response and report all responses, positive and negative, to the host committee chairs.