



Team Imerman Angels 2015 Bank of America Chicago Marathon

Steps to Get You Started Towards Crushing Your Fundraising Goal!

Set Your Fundraising Goal: When joining Team Imerman Angels, all team members agreed to a *fundraising minimum* (for those who joined prior to April 21, the minimum is \$1,250 for those accepting a complementary entry and \$1,050 for those who paid for their own entry. For anyone registering after April 21, the amount, as mandated by the Chicago Marathon office, is \$1,500). Team Imerman Angels will be there to assist you in reaching and surpassing this goal with your own personalized fundraising page and fundraising ideas and guidance. You will be surprised how many people will want to support you. Many people you reach out to have had cancer impact the lives of those that are close to them such as family and friends. And, in some cases, cancer has impacted them directly.

Now, let's be honest, it may seem like it will be challenging to reach your minimum. If you are feeling that, you are not the only one. It is not that different from the feeling that many have when they think of the marathon itself. It seems like a long way to run. But no one is going to run that distance on the first day or the first month – we go week by week, month by month and come October 11, we are ready for one of the most amazing days of our lives, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. Your fundraising goal may seem challenging until you realize that you can break this down into parts just like training for the event itself.

Some like to think of it this way: the fundraising minimum of \$1,250 covers the cost of Imerman Angels providing nearly four connections for cancer fighters, survivors and caregivers or nearly five connections at the \$1,500 level. So when you reach your fundraising minimum, *you will be the reason that four, five or hopefully even more people get connected*. It's an extremely tangible goal knowing that your participation *directly* results in specific cancer connections. Others might break down fundraising in other ways such as 26 (yep, the marathon distance) people each donating \$50 dollars with some donating a larger amount which would bring you in well past the fundraising minimum. Don't be surprised when some people donate larger amounts such as \$100 or more (but don't be afraid to ask).

Team Imerman Angels Fundraising QUICK TIP

Update your personal email "signature" with a link to your personal fundraising page and add text with that link such as "I'm running the Bank of America Chicago Marathon with Team Imerman Angels – for more information on Imerman Angels and to donate, click this link." Also, update your status on social media such as Facebook and Twitter to keep everyone informed.

So, a bit about your *fundraising goal*. For many of you, your goal, at least at this stage, is likely your *fundraising minimum* and that is a great goal. You will be making a huge impact. That said, please consider setting a goal, perhaps after you start fundraising, which is higher than your minimum. Aim high with your goal as the minimum does not need to be the finishing line for fundraising. When you signed up to do the Chicago Marathon, you did something that is more than merely "noteworthy." It's a significant challenge and a bold personal statement saying that you are determined to do something amazing this fall. Think about a fundraising level that will equal the challenge of the marathon itself. But if you're uncomfortable going beyond a certain amount, you can adjust your goal when you see how successful you are. Let your potential donors know your goal and that you aren't just raising much needed funds; instead, *every time you raise \$350, you have made it possible for a cancer fighter to be connected to a Mentor Angel – someone who had the same cancer, same stage and is now living proof that life after cancer can be amazing (or a caregiver to a fellow caregiver)*. Maybe your goal is \$1750 which will ensure that five people impacted by cancer are matched with a Mentor Angel.

Personalize Your Fundraising Page: When you signed up for Team Imerman Angels, you created a DonorDrive fundraising page. This is the page that your donors will see when you send your link in an email or through social media. This page can be created and personalized in less than ten minutes (and edited/refreshed as often as you like). Here's what you can do very quickly:

- Tell "your story" by letting people know why you're running the Chicago Marathon and why you chose Team Imerman Angels. It might be that cancer has impacted you directly or a family member or friend. You might be doing the Marathon to honor someone or some people you know that have fought cancer. Or it can be a more general approach that focuses more on the organization itself and its mission to connect cancer fighters, survivors and caregivers.



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- However you decide to write it, remember that it's your story and your chance to tell your donors about something that you are doing to make a difference. And, remember, it doesn't have to be "perfect" – you can and should edit it as often as you like. Remember that most people are giving because of *you* – they admire what you are doing, why you doing it and who you are doing it for.
- Let your donors know a bit about Imerman Angels and the 1-on-1 cancer support that is its mission.
- Add some photos and maybe even a video. DonorDrive allows you to place an initial photo on your page and then you can also place other photos or a video in the "body" of your story.
- Refresh your page occasionally with updates on your training and/or your overall fundraising.

Use your DonorDrive page to reach your potential donors. Include the link in your emails or in social media posts. While most will likely donate directly to your page from this link, you can, of course collect "off-line" donations such as cash or checks. In those cases, we will credit your fundraising page manually within a week to ten days of receiving that donation. Please send any offline donation to the Imerman Angels office using the *Team Imerman Angels Offline Donation Form* (attached to the email).

Develop a Plan: the first thing you may want to do in developing your plan is to make an initial list of key donor prospects and reach out to them. This can include your immediate family; other relatives such as aunts, uncles and cousins; friends, neighbors and colleagues. These are the people that are closest to you and the ones that will likely make a larger donation to you. The next part is to reach out to them – the key is to be as personal as possible. If you have the opportunity to see them in person, that typically works the best. Otherwise, an email and a follow-up call can work as well. And don't be shy about asking them for a higher donation and offering some donation "choices."

Once you have reached out to your closest friends and family, develop another list that includes literally everyone you know. This is a larger list that will include everyone from your doctor to former classmates to your babysitter. It really is everyone you know that is not on the initial list of those closest to you. Don't feel awkward about adding someone to the list - you never know if one of those people has a connection to Imerman Angels already (and will be happy to donate) and, even if they are not connected to Imerman Angels, they will likely see that the mission and work done by Imerman Angels is incredibly important. If any of them has ever experienced cancer in their own lives or in the life of someone close to them, they will see immense value in the cause. Once you develop that list, reach out to them through whatever means you feel will work best for that contact: a one-to-one meeting, a phone call, an email or social media.

Team Imerman Angels Fundraising QUICK TIP

When composing an email (or letter) to be sent to potential donors, spend time to make it's a good one as many people will raise the bulk of their donations just by writing and sending an email. Make sure it's personalized. And you can connect your donors to the cause even more and involve the donor in your effort by asking for the name of someone to run in honor/memory of – you can recognize that person with a name on your singlet, hat or race gear – or by dedicating a mile of the Marathon to that person.

Get Started Now: with training having started, now is the perfect time to get started with your fundraising. The Marathon narrative truly starts with your registration and the start of training – make others aware of this and let them go along with you on this journey to the starting line of the Chicago Marathon. They will see your commitment to the training, the event itself and, of course, the cause – connecting cancer fighters, survivors and caregivers at Imerman Angels. The key is to ask for that first donation. Ask a family member or a close friend and get that momentum started. Here is one thing that worked very well for team members in 2014: make a donation to yourself. If you received a free entry, consider making a donation in that amount that you saved, \$185, to your page. If not \$185, perhaps you can make a \$100 donation to yourself. In this way, when you ask for a donation, your donors can see that you are right there with them.

Does Your Company Offer a Matching Program? If your company will match what you raise, that can double someone's donation to you and make them more likely to donate or to offer a larger donation. Your company may also allow you to do events in your company or department such as a jeans day or another idea where you can involve your colleagues and your office. Don't hesitate to reach out to us for ideas and how they work.



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In addition, it's possible that one of your donors may have company matching for their donation to you – make sure to mention this to them when you contact them.

Don't Feel Bad Asking: there may be things in life (like moving apartments for the third time in three months) where you might feel badly asking someone to help you. This isn't one of them. What you are doing – the Chicago Marathon – is, quite frankly, a big deal and people know that. Why you are doing it – is inspiring. And who you are doing it for is perhaps the most important component. Nearly everyone you reach out to knows the devastating impact of cancer – and they will respect you for having the will to do something about it. And, the worst thing that can happen is that someone says no. Even when that happens, that person was able to learn a bit about what you are doing and about the important work done at Imerman Angels.

Don't forget that it is important to not limit yourself when asking. If you ask someone to donate \$100, you may well get that (and sometimes more). Or they may give you \$75 or \$50. But if you ask for a small amount, you will probably only get that amount.

Host a Fundraising Event: Many Team Imerman Angels participants have been able to make a major dent in their fundraising goal in just one night. All it takes is a well-planned event and a room full of potential donors. Team Imerman Angels will provide you with ideas/tips and contacts to Team members who have hosted successful events.

Team Imerman Angels
Fundraising
QUICK TIP

Follow up is critical to helping you reach your goal: make sure that you reconnect with everyone on your list of potential donors who has not donated. Many intend to donate and just need a gentle reminder. Perhaps, the reminder can let them know about how your training is going or can update them on the status of your fundraising goal.

Use Facebook to Reach Your Friends and to Thank Your Donors: You can use Facebook to push out your story and your fundraising link. It also acts as a news feed for your efforts as well. You can let people know that you just completed a training run (and always include your fundraising link) and this serves as another chance to receive donations. In addition, you can use Facebook to thank those who support you. Every time a Facebook friend donates to you, make sure you thank them and tag them on your page.

None of This Works vs. All of This Works: Whether it's an email or social media or something else, everyone you reach out to is juggling thirty things at any given time and may miss your initial contact. And the key in that last sentence is the word "initial" – it is critical to reach out several times and in several different ways to your friends, family, etc. Consider this likely scenario: you send an email to a friend and they open it on their phone when they are walking to a meeting or on the bus/subway (hopefully not the car). While they may be planning to donate, they will probably not make a donation on the phone while they are busy. Instead, they will wait until later, but later might not arrive because fifteen phone calls and three meetings fill up their day after they see your email. And before they know it, they forgot or can't find your email. Make sure that you connect personally with your friends and family. Last year, one person had great success using a letter with a handwritten signature (remember those?) on it. It worked, she raised over \$2,000 just by writing letters and sending them off to friends and family (and she followed up with a phone call a few days after sending the letters and offered to send the online link). So, *it all works* – emails, social media, phone calls, letters – but not in isolation typically. It just takes a few tries!

Questions? If you have any questions ranging from developing a strategy to setting up your fundraising page on DonorDrive, please contact Dave Louthan at dlouthan@imermanangels.org or 312.273.1312.

You've Got This!