

Fundraising Schedule

The Chicago Polar Plunge may seem far off, but now is the perfect time to get started on fundraising! Start your plan today so when it's time to jump in the lake, you're able to focus on having a fun-filled day!

- **3 months (December)**

- Home for the Holidays: In lieu of presents for the Holidays, ask your family and friends to contribute to your Chicago Polar Plunge fundraising page or ask them to join you team and take the plunge with you!

- **2 months (January)**

- Host a fundraising event: Plan an event or activity, where all you current and potential donors can come together and support your fundraising efforts. Partner with a local gym and host a spin class, coordinate a pub crawl, participate in a trivia night with donations at the door, or host a chili cookoff! Our team at Special Olympics Chicago have contacts and other creative ideas if you need assistance. See the "Kick Start Fund-raising Events" section for more examples!
- Send thank you cards: Because supporters will be donating to your campaign at different times, don't forget to thank them promptly! Write a thank you note- handwritten notes send a more personal message, letting your donors know you took the time to thank them.
- Utilize Matching Gift Programs: Matching gifts are an easy way to double or even triple your fundraising dollars! Check to see if your company matches gifts to Special Olympics Chicago by reaching out to your Human Resources department. Check out the Matching Gift section for more information on where to send donations.

TIP: Stay organized! Keep good records of all offline donations (checks or cash) before sending them to Special Olympics Chicago. That way, you will have an accurate and up-to-date record of both your online and offline donations.

TIP: Check out our printable Offline Donation Form under the Resources Tab, which is available for supporters who would like to donate offline via check, money order, or credit card.

- **1 month (February)**

- Follow up: Make sure to follow up with anyone on your list that has not yet responded to your emails/letters with a friendly reminder. Include any updates to keep your donors aware and engaged. Continue to post on your social media platforms and invite friends/family to the 2020 Chicago Polar Plunge. Spectators are welcome!
- Check out our postcards that you can send to donors before the event with that final ask and/or send it post-event as a thank you!
- Ask your friends and family to forward your fundraising letter to their own networks. You can even give a small prize to the person who helped you get the most donations. Having smaller, internal incentives for your donors can encourage them to share and donate even more!
 - Get a \$5 Starbucks card and put supporters who donated more than \$10 in a raffle to win.
 - Venmo your top donor "Coffee on me today! Thanks for donating to my cause!"
 - Feature a family member or friend who donated to your page with a Facebook shout out.

- **Post event (March- April)**

- Send Thank you's: Send personal notes or emails to all of your donors, thanking them for helping you reach your goal and furthering Special Olympics Chicago's mission of providing athletes with intellectual disabilities more opportunities. Share your experience; including your fundraising total and pictures of you/your team Plunging, from our free photo download link.