

FRIENDS OF THE POOR® WALK

Guide to Getting Started



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Is there a national fee/cost to host a Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run?

Starting in 2019, a flat fee of **\$150 per walk event location** was implemented, which is paid when a walk coordinator registers their Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run. The National Council uses this money to help offset the cost of the event at a national level, including website maintenance/updates, bank/credit/debit card fees for the collection and distribution of online funds, national staff support, and much more.

What are the rules, or policies, of the FOP® Walk/Run?

By participating in the Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run, all SVdP Conferences and Councils are subject to compliance with all policies established for the Walk/Run. Please see the Official Policies document at www.fopwalk.org (under Resource Toolbox).

How can Conferences and Councils ensure that their information is correct in the national database so they can register their walk location and receive their funds?

Conferences and Councils participating in the Walk/Run must ensure they are correctly registered in the SVdPUSA national member database; incorrect names and addresses will inhibit a walker's ability to select your Conference as a beneficiary of funds, as well as inhibit your receipt of online Walk/Run pledge funds. Because many local Conferences do not have physical locations of their own and use parish addresses or the personal addresses of their presidents to receive mail, make sure the appropriate higher-level Council to update their portions of the national membership database. For access, Council presidents should email Wendy Jones of the National Council's IT Department at wjones@svdpusa.org. In addition, every Conference and Council receiving funds must have their EIN information updated in the database, to ensure that they are legally able to accept donations being passed through the website.

Who will receive the money walkers raise?

When a participant registers online, they designate support to a particular Conference or Council. All money raised by the participant is paid to that Conference or Council. Participants may choose to walk/run in one location, but fundraise for another local Conference/Council.

How are walks/runs coordinated between Conferences and Councils?

Walks/Runs can be organized and implemented by Conferences or Councils. Conferences may host a local event by themselves, or in conjunction with other Conferences. Additionally, some Councils choose to host an event, thus providing logistical support to ensure a potentially larger and more lucrative event. Regardless of where the participant actually participates, pledges will be credited to the Conference or Council of their choice, designated by the participant in the Beneficiary section when registering.

National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.

66 Progress Parkway • Maryland Heights, MO 63043-3706 • (314) 576-3993 • www.svdpusa.org

Can we pick another date for our event?

If the national date (Saturday, September 25, 2021) for the Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run is in conflict with another community event, you may pick another date within a 30-day window, before or after, from the official national walk/run date. Please advise Nathan Martin at nmartin@svdpusa.org if you need to host your event on another date.

How do we get people to participate?

The easiest way to get a base of participants is to enlist the support of your Conference members. Ask each member to attend with at least five friends or family members. That will be your core group.

Since many people enjoy competition, you might issue a challenge between multiple service clubs, schools, or other organizations to see who can get the highest percentage of participation. Send a press release to local news media (see sample local press release on the website). Use your personal and work email to invite friends, family, and coworkers. Send a short message inviting them to walk with you or make a financial contribution. Also, ask your email contacts to bring friends or pass along the word about your event. Invite prominent community leaders to talk about the walk/run at meetings and events. Also ask their participation, and mention them in the press release.

How are walkers/runners registered to participate in the walk?

After the walk location has been registered, participants can register online at www.fopwalk.org, or directly with their respective Conference/Council using the paper registration forms found online.

Where do I get the Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form?

All participants and volunteers must sign the Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form provided on the website in the Resource Toolbox. Any participant who registers online has already agreed to this Accident Waiver, and will not need to sign a hard copy on the day of the event. If a participant registers online at www.fopwalk.org, they will be required to accept the waiver in order to finish their online registration.

What is the benefit of using the online registration/pledge system?

The online system is convenient and easy to use. Participants can register, invite pledges, and view their progress. Online registration dramatically reduces the amount of work for your Conference or Council by eliminating data entry work, manual credit card processing, receipt generation, tracking, and report generation. Also, the National Council covers all credit/debit card processing fees, so you get back 100% of donations made online.

What is the registration fee for a walker/runner?

There is no official registration fee required to register as a participant on behalf of the National Council Office. We encourage participants to fundraise as a “pledge-a-thon” event, rather than collect a flat registration fee.

How does the website work?

The website provides access to the Coordinators tab, with electronic forms that can be downloaded and printed locally. Other materials are also provided to support your local efforts. All monies collected through the online credit card system will be paid, upon final tally, by the National Council to the respective Conferences/Councils, as designated by each walker/runner.

How do the pledges work?

As the Walk/Run is expected to be operated on a fixed-length course (selected by local organizers), pledges are solicited in a fixed amount — not in a “\$ per mile” concept. Pledges are collected at the time they are made, with both online and paper-based systems. Online funds are given back directly to the local Conference or Council, and offline money can be collected the day of the event.

Can I raise money from local sponsors to help underwrite local costs?

Yes! You can also seek sponsorships for products used at your event. For tips and sample forms on how to solicit donations and recognize your local sponsors, see the Coordinators Toolbox on the website.

How can we increase the chances of greater media attention?

The website offers a full list of things to do to achieve the best success in penetrating and growing local media attraction for your event. If you have questions, please contact the National Council Communications Team:

- Jill Pioter • (314) 576-3993 x203 • jpioter@svdpusa.org
- Michelle Boyer • (314) 576-3993 x219 • mboyer@svdpusa.org

Do we need to do any record keeping?

Conferences and Councils are strongly encouraged to maintain complete and accurate contact information for all participants and donors. In addition, accurate receipts of offline monies received should be provided in a timely manner to the donors. A receipt template is provided on the website, for all participants to provide their donors as they make their pledge. At the end of the event, you will be asked to fill out a report form; please see below for more information.

Do I need to do a final report? How does it work?

Any Conference or Council hosting a Walk/Run must report all Walk/Run revenue, total number of participants, and dollars raised, on the required form to Nathan Martin at nmartin@svdpusa.org, or mailed to him at the National Council Office. To ensure timely delivery of online funds, please submit the required reporting forms by the requested dates.

How do the online funds work?

The website will be open for online donations until the end of October. After this date, checks for 100% of the donations will begin being processed, then mailed out directly to the designated beneficiaries.

What are the details on the Walk/Run t-shirts?

The National Council partners with a vendor to produce and distribute youth and adult Walk/Run t-shirts at a very reasonable price. You can still have your local corporate sponsors printed on the back if you wish, although pricing will vary by size. Shirts may be ordered on the Walk website, under the Coordinators tab.

EVENT CHECKLIST

- Identify your Walk Coordinator for this event.
- Register as a Walk/Run location on the walk website by going to the Coordinators tab, then selecting the Establish a Walk sub-tab.
- Ask those willing to assist in leadership capacities to assist as the walk committee (not every walk location has a committee, but it does ease the load of the Walk Coordinator).
- Decide if you want to do the walk on a small scale, or make it a large event with entertainment, walking city streets/park, etc.
- Select a location for the event.
 - a. If first year, and a smaller event, church grounds or a local high school track will require permission, but is typically easy to obtain, and rarely requires permits.
 - b. If hosting event on a larger scale that requires streets to be shut down, police escort, etc., then you will need to obtain necessary permits.
- Check for liability insurance, and make sure you meet necessary minimum requirements.
- Recruit walk day volunteers.
- Identify event needs (such as table/booths, food, water, walk routes, signage, etc.)
- Enlist local business involvement for in-kind donations (water, snacks, etc.)
- Recruit corporate sponsors for the event (the National Council Office has sample letters, levels, and forms for this — it's a great way to bring in additional funds).
- Distribute promotional materials and registration forms to promote participation (promote at city events, after church, parish events, nearby churches, schools, youth groups, outside clubs, and community organizations).
- Order t-shirts (typically four weeks before walk date).
- Send a press release for media coverage of your event.
- Continue promoting walker registrations (sample flyers, brochures, and pamphlets are on the website to help).
- Encourage participants to create a team, bring friends, and continue to ask for pledges for the event.
- Assemble volunteers and confirm their duties for walk day event.
- Set-up day of event.
- Clean-up post-event. (You will want volunteers lined up to assist with this. It's a great way to get youth and young adults involved! Ask the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, high school clubs, etc., to help with this.)
- Post-event evaluation for next year.
- Turn in post-event report form to National Council Office (Nathan Martin) with your results.