Thanks for riding with the Vote Solar Climate Ride team! Your support helps us with hard-hitting campaigns to put solar to work in the U.S.

We want to help you with your fundraising efforts in any way we can. Keep reading for tips, tricks and best practices. And for extra support or coaching, please contact Ashley at ashley@votesolar.org
Fundraising is easier and more rewarding than you’d think. Your friends, family and colleagues will be glad that you included them in such an important, personal cause. There are many tools and tricks out there to help your fundraising efforts, but the main thing to remember is to ask your contacts one-on-one either in-person, on the phone or via email (or even snail mail!). Oh yeah, and don’t forget that you can’t spell fundraising without FUN.

Here’s how to get started fundraising for Climate Ride with the Vote Solar Team:

SET UP YOUR ONLINE FUNDRAISING PAGE ON CLIMATERIDE.ORG
Your online fundraising page on the Climate Ride website will be the nucleus of all your fundraising efforts - all your solicitations should inform the donor how to find it. It’s important to personalize this page with your photo, your fundraising goal, your inspiration for riding and any updates you’d like to include along the way.

WRITE A PERSONAL SOLICITATION LETTER
Personal is the key word here. Write from the heart to tell people why you’re participating in Climate Ride on the Vote Solar team and how their donation will make a difference. There’s a sample solicitation letter at the end of this toolkit to help guide you, but add your own voice to inspire your peers with your passion!

If you’re like most people you’ll be emailing it, so don’t forget to include a Vote Solar video or links to your favorite recent news for more impact!

MAKE A LIST, CHECK IT TWICE
Make a list of everyone you can think of to send your letter to, and not just the people you think will donate to you. You could be surprised at who comes through with their support!

GET ON THE PHONE
For folks you know well – parents, grandparents, BFFs – make sure you give them a call and explain to them your goals and why this cause is important to you. The thought really does count.

FOLLOW UP
Remember that list of potential donors you made? Don’t forget to follow up with reminder calls or emails to the ones who have yet to donate. Inboxes get crazy and lives get busy, so you’ll likely need to make your appeal a few times before you get a response – just don’t take it personally.

TWEET IT, SHARE IT, TAG IT
Social media is a great way to supplement your fundraising strategies. Share the link to your fundraising page, tag supporters who have already donated and post pictures and updates of your fundraising or training events. Keep reading for many more social media tips!
Who to Ask

Friends and family are the usual suspects when it comes to peer-to-peer fundraising like this. But who else in your network may be interested in supporting you?

YOUR DOCTOR, DENTIST, MECHANIC, FITNESS INSTRUCTOR, AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS
Ask them to sponsor you or give a matching donation

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES/RESTAURANTS YOU FREQUENT
Ask the corner store if you can set out a donation jar by the register
Ask your favorite bar to donate proceeds from a happy hour
Ask theaters or restaurants for gift certificates that you can sell or auction off

ALUMNI OR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
Your fraternity/sorority, alumni association or other membership group you belong to may have a newsletter - call and ask them to donate ad space asking for donations

For any businesses that support your efforts, don’t forget to repay the favor by encouraging your networks to go visit them!

In the Workplace

Always check with management first, but most workplaces will probably allow you to set up a donation jar or pledge sheet in your break room. Other options include asking your employer to sponsor you or match donations or hosting a brown bag lunch with your coworkers and making a presentation to them about Climate Ride and Vote Solar.
Who doesn’t love a good party for a good cause?

Get creative and make giving fun for your friends: consider planning a BBQ, happy hour, movie night, bike ride, talent or sports contest, auction (use those donations from local businesses!) or other exciting event to help raise funds for Climate Ride.

Charge an entrance fee ($10-20 minimum is suggested) or simply make a pitch and pass around a hat to collect donations. And don’t forget to publicize the event with flyers, in newsletters, or with e-vites and Facebook event pages.

Take advantage of special occasions to get your friends together:

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Local festivals
- Your birthday or anniversary (request donations instead of gifts)

Sell Yourself

Have some extra junk lying around? Have a yard sale and use the proceeds towards your goal! Better yet, encourage your friends and neighbors to join you too!

Are you phenomenal baker? Have a good ol’ fashioned bake sale!

Got rhythm? Sell your services as a music instructor.

Handy around the house? Mow lawns or do small repairs for your neighbors.

Pro tip: make sure folks know what you’re fundraising for to increase your tip!

From babysitting to getting crafty to washing cars, there are plenty of ways to use your unique talents to raise funds for Climate Ride.
People like to give to people they know, trust and are inspired by! Incorporating social media into your fundraising efforts can be a great way to show your peers how powerful their donation can be, all while spreading your ask through their networks as well. Here's some tricks and tips for using social media in your fundraising:

**USE THE FUNDRAISING PAGE ON CLIMATE RIDE** that you set up during registration as your landing page. All of your social media posts should direct people to the URL and encourage them to donate to your cause. If it helps, you can use a URL shortening service like bit.ly to make a more easy-to-share link.

**UPLOAD VISUAL CONTENT.** Visuals will make sure your posts stand out. In fact, online fundraising campaigns have been shown to earn up to 4x more when they include a video. You can make your own using your computer’s webcam and there’s no need to worry about fancy special effects – a 2 to 3 minute video of yourself speaking from the heart about why you support Vote Solar and the broader climate movement or a photo of you training for the ride will be compelling enough!

**ESTABLISH A DRUM BEAT.** You should be posting to your social media networks throughout your fundraising campaign, not just when you launch or when your deadline is approaching. Update your followers about new milestones reached, the different impacts their donation can have for Vote Solar’s mission, or just interesting news about solar – but always relate it to your ask. Make yourself a calendar to remind you to post.

**TAG YOUR FRIENDS** that may be particularly interested in donating or are likely to ask their friends on your behalf. And don’t forget to tag Vote Solar in your Facebook and Twitter posts as well.

**POST AT THE RIGHT TIME** to maximize exposure. There are different times of the day and week when your posts are more likely to be seen:

- Mornings: 8 – 9am
- Lunch: 12 – 1pm
- End of day: 4:30 – 6pm
- Nights: 9:30 – 11pm
- Weekends over Wednesdays

**RESPOND, RETWEET, AND RECOGNIZE.** Reply to friends’ comments, reciprocate when followers share or retweet your content and, most, importantly, thank your supporters for their donations with a special video or photo after you’ve met your goal!
Subject line: Support me in my 300-mile bike ride for the climate

Dear XXXXX,

I am writing to ask for your help with an exciting adventure. This September, I will bike 300 miles from New York City to Washington, DC as part of Climate Ride. I will join hundreds of cyclists pedaling in a 5-day ride to raise money for more than 50 fantastic green organizations that are leading the nation in climate change awareness, green energy development, sustainability, and bicycle advocacy, and to raise public awareness around these issues.

In order to participate, I must raise at least $2800 in pledges. Your dollars will help support the work of the innovative organization that I have chosen to support, Vote Solar.

Vote Solar is a nonprofit grassroots organization working to foster economic opportunity, promote energy security and fight climate change by making solar a mainstream energy resource. The challenges facing our planet loom large, but Vote Solar does everything they can to repower our country with clean, renewable sunshine. Check out some of their recent victories and ongoing programs here: www.votesolar.org.

Would you be willing to make a donation, and help support these very important causes? It’s easy to do - visit my fundraising page where you can make a tax-deductible donation online by using the ‘Support Me’ link at the bottom of this email. Or you can go directly to my Fundraising Page here (insert link to page).

Any size donation will help get me closer to my fundraising goal! If you would like to know more, please email me or check out the website at www.climateride.org.

Thank you so much for your support!

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXX
Vote Solar is a grassroots nonprofit organization working to foster economic opportunity, promote energy security and fight climate change by making solar a mainstream energy resource. I’m joining them for Climate Ride, September 20-24, for a 300-mile bike ride from NYC to DC to raise awareness and support for renewable energy solutions.

I hope you will join me and help me reach my fundraising goal of ________________ by sponsoring me at whatever level you can!

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Please make checks payable to Climate Ride. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Thank you for your generous support! To learn more about Climate Ride visit www.climateride.org.