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# THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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WASHINGTON, DC

## Student Organization Crowdfunding

Colonial Crowdfunding harnesses the power of social media and the GW community of students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends to provide visibility for, and philanthropic support of, student organization and department projects and ventures. The platform will allow student organizations to propose ideas/projects to be funded and, via the online Colonial Crowdfunding platform, bring the idea to the university community and the general public to raise monetary donations from individuals who support the idea.

Projects featured on Colonial Crowdfunding are selected by the GW Crowdfunding Committee, which consists of staff and student representatives. The fundraising project must be demonstrated as acceptable based on the GW Crowdfunding Policies and GW's mission.

### *HOW TO APPLY*

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1. Review the Colonial Crowdfunding Policies to ensure your organization's project is eligible
2. Complete the online Colonial Crowdfunding Application form. Be as detailed as possible. If selected, the content in the application will be used to generate your Colonial Crowdfunding page.
3. Once a project is selected, the primary point of contact will be notified. Chosen projects will have 3-6 weeks on the platform (as determined by the GW Crowdfunding Committee).

### *COLONIAL CROWDFUNDING POLICIES*

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Before fundraising, please review the following Colonial Crowdfunding Policies. The George Washington University reserves the right to change these policies at any time.

GW's Crowdfunding Committee, in its sole discretion, will select the participating projects for GW's online crowdfunding platform, Colonial Crowdfunding. The George Washington University reserves the right to discontinue an active fundraiser at any time for any reason, without notice, including, and without limitation, because of a group's eligibility status or a group's failure to comply with GW's policies.

Only registered student organizations within the university may apply to host projects on Colonial Crowdfunding.

A project manager must also be appointed for every project. The Colonial Crowdfunding Project Manager (a representative of the participating group) is the primary individual responsible for promoting their project in the following ways:

- Provide photo(s) that represent their group or project;
- Create a video to support the need (videos are encouraged, but not required);
- Clearly write the project's goal;
- Commit to enlisting a minimum of five (5) volunteers to help spread the word through their networks (these volunteers should be members of the organization);
- Prepare personal thank-you messages to donors, and provide updates to donors on how the organization will be spending the funds;
- Project Managers should send out at least one email to a list of organizational members, friends, and contacts soliciting for their cause, one email thanking those that participate, and at least three social media updates via the organization's social media accounts. *Projects that have more outreach are more likely to succeed.*

GW will not provide any contact data on alumni, parents, friends, or students. It is up to the Colonial Crowdfunding Project Manager to contact their organization's network and affinities. For more information on ways to promote your fundraising page, organizations should work with their student organization advisor or contact Anne Graham at 202-994-0177 or [awein@gwu.edu](mailto:awein@gwu.edu).

GW's Office of Development and Alumni Relations team will coordinate the distribution of all official tax receipts to donors.

All monies raised through the Colonial Crowdfunding platform will be used for the stated intention. While 100% of the money raised will go directly to the projects, gifts made on the platform are treated as gifts to The George Washington University. They are tax-deductible under GW's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Funds raised during the project will be deposited into the organization's official GW gift account. Account allocations will be set up prior to launching a project in coordination with the Center for Student Engagement and the Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

Premiums and services are not to be used to induce gifts. Incentives and sales, such as, and without limitation, bake sales, t-shirt giveaways, car washes, or similar events or activities, are not permissible, as it affects a donor's right to a full tax deduction for his/her gift.

Colonial Crowdfunding Project Managers are strictly prohibited from keeping any portion of the funds raised as a profit or compensation.

Each project will be hosted on the crowdfunding platform for a pre-determined amount of time, approximately 4-6 weeks, though some exceptions may apply. If the project is not funded within the allotted timeframe, the funds raised will still be allocated to the organization and must be used for the

stated intention; however, GW will remove the project from the crowdfunding platform and will no longer actively market the project. Any monies raised, even without meeting the final goal, should be spent to offset the cost of the promoted project.

The same student organization may not fundraise in back to back semesters; however, it may be considered again following its project end date.

Colonial Crowdfunding Project Managers are responsible for promoting their organization's campaign to their group's own prospects via social media, email communications, and on campus, when appropriate; preparing personal thank-you messages to donors; and submitting regular updates on their project to the Crowdfunding Committee and donors.

When possible, Colonial Crowdfunding Project Managers should provide the University their list of potential donors at the time of project submission. This may help the Crowdfunding Committee determine the eligibility of a project.

Projects should have specific goals and be driven by tangible accomplishments – for example, buying new club equipment, funding travel fees, or providing student workshop opportunities. Projects without a specific goal are generally less successful and may not qualify for their own project page.

The GW Crowdfunding Committee will review and approve applications. All content on project pages will be approved by GW. GW has the right to edit, or require edits by the Colonial Crowdfunding Project Managers, at any point in the campaign.

The George Washington University reserves the right to decline any project based on content or discontinue an active fundraiser at any time due to changes in the group's eligibility status.

The George Washington University is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational institution with a mission to excel in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge. The University values a dynamic, student-focused community stimulated by cultural and intellectual diversity and built upon a foundation of integrity, creativity, and openness to the exploration of new ideas.

In order for Colonial Crowdfunding Project Managers to ask for a gift of any amount to the University:

- all gifts must be compliant with the institution's mission
- projects must align with GW's purpose
- projects cannot violate any laws
- all gifts must be spent on the project's expenses as stipulated on the project's crowdfunding platform and in the anticipated timeframe per campaign
- projects must support GW programs and initiatives
- funds cannot be redirected to a third-party, external charity such as the ALS Foundation, the Red Cross, etc.
- funds cannot be raised as a "Pass Through" to other charities.

Any student organization found in violation of these policies will have their project removed from the Colonial Crowdfunding platform may face revocation of organization status and/or and judicial action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

### **COLONIAL CROWDFUNDING FAQ**

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- **What type of projects can be submitted?** All types of projects can be submitted, however, only registered student organizations may submit project applications.
- **What is the appropriate funding level to set my goal?** Project goals will vary, but the most successful will be between \$2,000 and \$10,000. Project goals of over \$10,000 will be considered on an individual basis. Projects with a fundraising goal of less than \$2,000 will not be considered to ensure crowdfunding is used for maximum impact.
- **What happens if the project does not reach its goal?** Even if a project does not reach its goal, all funds raised will go toward the project.
- **What if the project exceeds its goal?** All funds raised will go toward the project and can help provide additional resources and opportunities for the cause.
- **How much information should we submit?** As much as possible. Work with your student organization advisor to prepare your application. The most successful projects will include photos, videos, and clear goals, reasons, and information about what you are fundraising for as well as a list of potential donors.
- **What's the best way to ensure success?** The more people that you have spreading the word about your project, the more likely it will be to succeed. Videos on your project page also help to make the donor feel engaged and connected with your project. In addition, regular email communication and social media posts will keep your project relevant and create a sense of urgency. Try to send out an email at least once a week to your student organization's network, as well as posting on social media at a minimum of once a week.
- **How do we access my funds once the project has been completed?** Funds will be deposited into your organization's gift account at the completion of the project. You may access funds from this account by submitting spending requests through OrgSync in accordance with CSE Financial Policies.
- **Will GW help my student organization advertise our project?** The Division of Development and Alumni Relations may promote the site as a whole and highlight active projects, but organizations should not rely on this as the sole method of generating traffic to their project page. The student organization and the Colonial Crowdfunding Project Manager must work to promote the project page via social media and communications with friends, family, and other connections.
- **Do gifts to projects on Colonial Crowdfunding count as a contribution to GW? Are these gifts tax-deductible?** All gifts made through GW's Colonial Crowdfunding platform go directly to the University and are tax-deductible. If you give online donors will receive an electronic confirmation that can be used for your tax records. Donors who give by check will receive a tax receipt in the mail.

- **Will 100% of donor gifts go towards the cause that I support?** 100% of donor gifts will go directly to student organization in order to fund the project being supported.
- **What type of information will my organization receive about donors and how frequently?** GW will provide student organizations basic donor information (First Name, Last Name, email) halfway through their project and at the end of their project to allow teams to appropriately thank donors. By signing up for Colonial Crowdfunding student organizations agree to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of donor data; to ensure that this data is stored securely and disposed of appropriately after use; and to not share this information with unauthorized users or in a non-secure manner.
- **Can I pay by check in the mail?** Yes. Checks should be made out to The George Washington University. Please note on the check the Colonial Crowdfunding project the donor is supporting so that we can ensure that the contribution goes towards the project's totals. Checks should be mailed to:

*Colonial Crowdfunding  
ATTN: David M. Anderson  
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Washington, DC 20052*