VisionWalk Toolkit

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is *pounding the pavement* to increase awareness and raise critical research dollars for preventions, treatments and cures for blindness through VisionWalk, the Foundation's signature fundraising event.

Put on your Walking Shoes!

VisionWalk is a fun-filled, family-friendly walkathon fundraiser. All walk routes are wheelchair and stroller accessible.

Ready? Set. Go!

- Lead a Team
- Walk on a Team or as an Individual
- Volunteer on Walk Day
- Become a VisionWalk Sponsor
- Make a Donation
- Visit VisionWalk.org for the latest information
- **Help us reach our goals!**



The Foundation Fighting Blindness has raised more than $954 million for retinal disease research since it was founded in 1971. Foundation-funded scientists are innovative leaders in the development of highly promising genetic, pharmaceutical, cell-based, and nutritional therapies for blindness.

VISIONWALK FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS

Welcome Letter and Fundraiser Checklist

Thank you for joining us as a VisionWalk Fundraiser! This packet includes the tools you need to make your team's experience fun and successful.

YOU are a powerful force in the fight against blindness. If you are a Team Captain, your job is to motivate and encourage others to join and promote VisionWalk! Think your colleagues, friends or family. The Team Captain is the key liaison between their team and the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Forming a team is a fun way to raise money for VisionWalk. And, it's easy to do!

1. **Register your team online.** Go to www.VisionWalk.org. Find the walk you want to join, choose a name for your team and register!
2. **Fundraising Tips.** The best way to make an ask is to understand why this cause **matters to YOU**. Why are you involved? What are you hopeful to accomplish through this event? Why does our mission of funding sight-saving research resonate with you? Cast a wide net and give everyone in your network the opportunity to support you!
3. **Set a personal fundraising goal.** Lead by example and encourage your team to join you in the fight for signt. We encourage each walker to set a fundraising goal of at least $250.
4. **Recruit Team Members.** Recruit your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to join in the fun. When you secure a new team member, ask them to invite their family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, too.
5. **Attend the Kickoff Event and invite your teammates to join you!** You'll get all the inspiration and materials you need to have your best VisionWalk yet.
6. **FUNdraise!** Have fun and raise money!
7. **Create your team identity**. Create a team T-shirt, buttons, or hats for your team to wear on Walk Day. We love to see your team spirit!
8. **Stay in touch with Foundation staff.** The FFB team is here as a resource for you. Let us know your fundraising challenges and successes. We can provide ideas and send you materials.
9. **Attend VisionWalk**. Walk with us! You and your team are making a difference in the fight against blindness and we are so very grateful for your support!

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Use this checklist to ensure that you have completed all of the steps necessary to have a successful VisionWalk team this year!

- ✓ Register as Team Captain online on our www.VisionWalk.org
- ✓ Set a Fundraising Goal.
- ✓ Sponsor yourself!
- ✓ Ensure that all team members have registered themselves online.
- ✓ Conduct a letter-writing or email campaign and set up your personal fundraising page on www.VisionWalk.org.
- ✓ Ask, ask and ask again! Remember you are asking for much needed funds for the Foundation Fighting Blindness.
- ✓ Involve your company/employer.
- ✓ Put a VisionWalk message on your voicemail, email and Facebook page.
- ✓ "Rally your team!" Conduct an internal kickoff with friends and family.
- ✓ Encourage all team members to be active fundraisers for VisionWalk.
- ✓ Contact team members to let them know the details of Walk Day.
- ✓ Create team t-shirts, buttons, or a banner to increase your team visibility.
- ✓ Collect pledges/matching gift forms to bring to the Walk.
- ✓ Attend VisionWalk! (Or fundraise/walk remotely if you cannot attend)

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Registration

You can register for VisionWalk online or by mail.

To register online:

1. Go to www.VisionWalk.org

2. You can register in one of 3 ways:
    a. Create a Team
        - If you will be the Team Captain of a new team, choose this option. Name your team and start recruiting walkers!
    b. Join a Team
        - If you've been invited to join a team, choose this option. You'll need to know the name of your team to sign up with your teammates.
    c. Participate as an Individual
        - If you'll be walking by yourself, choose this option.

To register by mail:

1. Fill out this registration form (on the next page) and send it to your local Foundation Fighting Blindness event team.

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Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____State: _____ Zip Code: _____

_____ I will be a Team Captain _____ I will be a Team Member

Our team name will be: _____

Our team goals are:
# of Walkers: _____ Dollars: _____ (ex. Number of walkers x $100)

Please list the name of the family, business, organization, service provider or affiliate your team will be representing in the Walk: _____

If you would like to support the VisionWalk in other ways, please complete below.

_____ Join the VisionWalk Committee.

_____ Help to get other people and businesses that I know or have connections with involved.

_____ Help to promote the Walk by scheduling a presentation by a Foundation Fighting Blindness staff member at my workplace/organization.

_____ Help to recruit companies or businesses in the community to sponsor the Walk by making a cash donation or donating goods or services in support of the event.

_____ Volunteer to work the day of the Walk.

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Fundraising 101 – Taking Steps to Success

Not sure where to start when it comes to fundraising? Here are a few tips to join the thousands of VisionWalkers across the country who are successfully raising money to fight blindness.

Step 1: Be Prepared
First, think about why you are here. A strong ask includes information about you and why you are supporting VisionWalk, information about the Foundation Fighting Blindness, and a specific request for support.

It can be helpful to prepare an "elevator pitch" before making solicitations. This should be a brief introduction to you and the Foundation that can draw someone in within 60 seconds. Our local events team can help you prepare your personalized elevator speech and talking points.

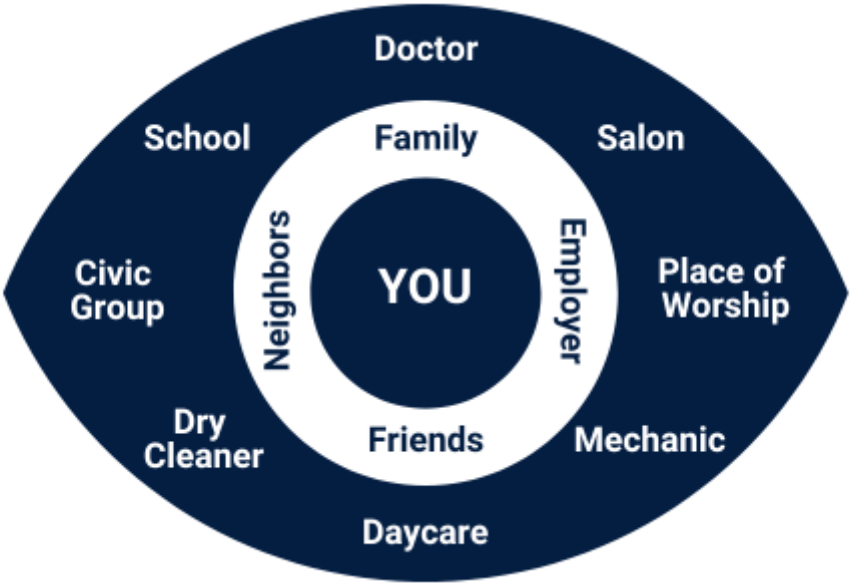
Step 2: Practice Makes Perfect
Once you have prepared your talking points, it's time to practice making the ask. Try out your pitch with our team or with a close friend or family member. The more practice you have sharing why you'd like others to support this cause that's important to you, the more comfortable your asks will become.

Step 3: Cast a Wide Net
To build awareness and advance our mission with a broad base of supporters, we always aim to cast a wide net. Be sure you and your team ask as many people as possible to support VisionWalk. If you don't invite someone to support, you've said "no" on their behalf. Give everyone the opportunity to support you!

Step 4: Create your "Eye of Influence"
First, identify individuals you see or interact with every day – think, your friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors. Next, think about the groups or individuals you have less frequent, but still important, interactions with – your school, your doctor, your local civic group, etc.

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These individuals and groups are your go-to's for making your team and fundraising strong. Reach out via email, hand-written letters, phone calls, and in-person visits to jump-start your fundraising efforts:



Who will you reach out to this year?

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Email & Letter Template for VisionWalk Support

Dear _____,

I hope you and your family are doing well!

I am excited to share that I will be participating in the X VisionWalk to support the Foundation Fighting Blindness. The mission of the Foundation is close to my heart, as they continue to drive groundbreaking research to provide preventions, treatments, and cures for blinding retinal diseases.

For the past X years, I have participated in the Foundation's Annual X VisionWalk. I am so excited that this year's VisionWalk will be on DATE at LOCATION. I am looking forward to bringing TEAM NAME together to celebrate.

While we have seen many changes over the past few years, the Foundation's mission remained consistent. They focused on research – on finding treatments and cures – and on supporting the blind and low-vision community. If you are able, I would appreciate your support for the millions that are impacted by vision loss, including PERSON AFFECTED & RELATION.

There are many ways you can help.

- Register to join my VisionWalk team to show your support (insert link) and challenge your family and friends to join you.
- Donate to my VisionWalk page (insert link) and help me reach my goal.
- Like our local (insert Link) and national (insert link) Facebook pages to spread awareness of retinal diseases and the VisionWalk.
- Follow my personal social media page to learn why I am fighting blindness. (Insert link)

I hope you will join be for the X VisionWalk! You can make a huge difference in our success, and I cannot wait to celebrate with you.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support!

Sincerely,

NAME

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Fundraising 101 – Taking Steps to Success

Step 5: Go Beyond Your Eye of Influence
Engage your broader community by trying the items our checklist – or add your own! You'll spread the word about VisionWalk, boost your team's fundraising, and maybe even recruit new teams and sponsors to the VisionWalk!

- ☐ **Personalize** your VisionWalk page. When you direct someone to your page, they'll know why VisionWalk is important to you and why it should be important to them.
- ☐ **Write** a letter to the editor about VisionWalk, the Foundation Fighting Blindness, and why people in your community should join you in the fight against blindness.
- ☐ **Contact** your local government officials for proclamations of support. Don't forget to invite them to join us at the VisionWalk!
- ☐ **Contact** your local Lions Club or other civic group and offer to give them a presentation on the Foundation Fighting Blindness and VisionWalk.
- ☐ **Contact** your eye doctor or retinal specialist and ask them to spread the word about VisionWalk.
- ☐ **Empower** your kids to build their own community through school and outside activities. The kids can even form their own teams and challenge each other.
- ☐ **Plan** a fundraising event that will engage your network. Popular choices are at home Dining in the Dark, yard sales, poker tournaments, sports activities and tournaments, cook offs, bar nights, concerts, bake sales, and dine-to-donate nights.
- ☐ **Ask** everyone on your team to recruit at least one new team member and challenge everyone on your team to not have a blank thermometer.

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Step 6: Put Your Plan in to Action

Now that you have a plan, it's time to take action! We encourage each VisionWalker to raise at least $250, but the sky is the limit! The more support you offer VisionWalk, the faster we can find treatments and cures for retinal degenerative diseases!

Sample 10 Step Plan to Raise $250

Step 1	Sponsor yourself for $25	Total: $25
Step 2	Ask a friend for $25	Total: $50
Step 3	Ask your supervisor for $25	Total: $75
Step 4	Ask your spouse or partner for $25	Total: $100
Step 5	Ask your neighbor for $25	Total: $125
Step 6	Ask your coworker for $25	Total: $150
Step 7	As a family member for $25	Total: $175
Step 8	Ask a local store owner for $25	Total: $200
Step 9	Ask a civic group for $25	Total: $225
Step 10	Ask your coworkers to give their coffee money for a day $25	Total: $250

Step 7: Think Outside the Wallet

Looking for additional ways you can help support VisionWalk? Here are some ideas -

- ☐ Put together a list of contacts that our events team can ask for support.
- ☐ Help us secure in-kind item donations, like refreshments for the event.
- ☐ Invite individuals or groups to volunteer for day-of support.
- ☐ Solicit media coverage for the event.

Remember, regardless of which route you choose in supporting VisionWalk, your contribution makes a difference! Our events team will help you every step of the way as you make plans, set goals, and reach (and exceed!) them.

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Put the FUN in FUNdraising!

Ask, ask, and ask again! Remember, you are asking for their support of the Foundation Fighting Blindness! People will donate to you because of your enthusiasm for the VisionWalk! **Make fundraising fun for you and your team!**

- **Start a letter-writing or email campaign.** Send your message to family, friends, coworkers, and everyone you know to say why the VisionWalk is important to you!
- **Lead by example** and be your own first sponsor. Then, **ask at least one person a day** to sponsor you in the VisionWalk!
- Ask your friends to support VisionWalk by donating **instead of purchasing a gift** for your birthday, anniversary, or any occasion!
- **Sell POP Eyes.** Have a local store sell them at the register or sell them in your office.
- **Encourage Virtual Walkers** – ask someone who cannot walk with you to help you collect donations.
- **Take advantage of all the ways you can reach people.** Post about VisionWalk on social media, add a link to your email signature, or hang flyers in your building's elevators.
- Find out if your company **matches gifts**. Matching gifts can double your money!
- **Suggest friendly competition between team members.** Give your teammates a weekly challenge – first to $100, first to recruit two new Walkers, etc. – and be sure to recognize the winners!
- **Hold a personal fundraising event.** Host a bake sale, car wash, yard sale, chili cook off, sports tournament, or an at home Dining in the Dark to support your team's fundraising.
- **Get your employer involved!** Bring Casual for a Cause to your workplace. Other options? Have coworkers donate vacation or sick days or auction off the boss's parking spot – just check with them first!
- **Give up a luxury for the VisionWalk.** Take the money that you would spend on a movie, manicure, coffee, or going out to dinner and make it a donation.
- **Get your kids involved!** Have your kids do a penny drive at school or run a cookie or lemonade stand.

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Let's Get SOCIAL!

By sharing your VisionWalk link on social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram you can help raise awareness AND reach your fundraising goal? Here are some sample post to get started:

Invitation to your Facebook friends:
I signed up for the Foundation Fighting Blindness VisionWalk to raise awareness and funds toward treatments and cures for retinal diseases! Not only will I be participating, but I'll also be supporting the Foundation Fighting Blindness' mission to save sight by raising money. Please help me reach my goal of $____, every little bit helps! #VisionWalkStrong [link to team page]

Calendar Day Fundraising
Find a fun picture of a calendar online to post on your Facebook page. Ask your friends to pick a day (or two!) that will represent the amount they will contribute to your fundraising page. After they pick, you can update the calendar using a fun emoji and reshare with your friends as the days fill up. Pick a month – or more – to fundraise and you could raise serious money toward your goal!

Will You Buy Me a Cup of Coffee?
Will you buy me a cup of coffee? If you answered yes when you read this question, please consider taking the $5 you would have spent on that coffee and make a donation toward my VisionWalk fundraising! Thank you! #VisionWalkStrong [link to team page]

Fundraising Updates:
Thank you to my amazing friends and family for supporting my participation in the VisionWalk by helping me raise $_____ for the Foundation Fighting Blindness so far! There's still time to donate: [link to team page] #VisionWalkStrong Please help me reach my goal!

Fundraising Goal Met: We did it! Thank you to everyone who helped me reach my fundraising goal for the Foundation Fighting Blindness! I can't wait to walk toward a cure by at the VisionWalk on _____[date] at _____[park]. If you haven't had a chance to donate, there's still time. [link to team page] Thank you to my friends and family for all your support!

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Team Spirit Makes the Team!

Here are a few easy recruiting ideas!

- **Ask everyone you know to join your team** including friends, family, co-workers and neighbors. Ask your team members to invite their network, too. Keep building your team until Walk Day!
- Leave **event fliers** at your doctor's office, community boards, and more.
- Host a **team kickoff party** at either a family gathering or a lunch session during working hours to sign up team members.

As you build your team…

- **Distribute** sample fundraising letters and emails for your team members to send. Email is a fast and easy way to get the word out and raise money!
- **Send weekly updates** with the latest VisionWalk information, fundraising ideas, and any success stories from your team members.

More than anything else, Team Spirit unites a group of walkers as a TEAM the day of the Walk. Here are some tips to keep in mind regarding Team Spirit …

- **Team t-shirts, banners, hats, signs, and accessories** are a great way to show your team spirit! Design and print your own t-shirts or simply encourage everyone on your team to wear the same color on Walk Day.

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VisionWalk Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Q: Who should be my group's team captain?
A: The team captain should be the person willing and able to dedicate the most time to the project.

Q: Can a team have more than one team captain?
A: While you are welcome to divide up the work of a Team Captain in the physical world, only one person's name can be listed as captain on the event platform. Please designate one person to be listed as your Team Captain and ask them to relay important information to the rest of your group.

Q: What kind of support and instruction will a team captain receive from the Foundation?
A: Our Events Team will provide all the support you need for your team to be successful! Team captains will receive a series of pre-Walk progress reports that include team building and fundraising tips and important information about the Walk. Please relay key details to your teammates along the way.

Q: Does a team have to have a minimum number of walkers?
A: There is no minimum size for a team. Some teams are as small as 2 or 3 walkers, and others as large as 300 walkers.

Q: How does this raise money?
A: **There is no mandatory registration fee to walk**, but we recommend each walker set a fundraising goal of at least $250. Online fundraising is our fastest and most effective method of raising money for research.

Q: Can I walk if I don't form a team or not walk at all?
A: All are welcome, whether you attend individually or with a crew. Attendees are not required to walk the route. VisionWalk a free event and everyone is welcome to join in our festivities whether they walk or donate. Typically, our routes are about 3 miles. Feel free to do all, part, or none of the walk.

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Q: Can a friend or I volunteer for the Walk?
A: Absolutely! We rely on volunteers to make each VisionWalk a success. We typically need assistance in areas such as Check-In/Registration, Refreshments, T-Shirt Tent, Walk Route Assistance, Kids' Zone Activities, and more. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, please contact your local event manager.

Q: Is there any way to support the Walk besides fundraising?
A: Yes! We have an extensive Wish List of items that we still need for Walk Day. Most pressing are snacks, bagels, and fruit for the Refreshment Area, paper goods like cups, napkins, paper towels, and gift certificates from your local grocers.

Q: How can I double my donation?
A: Take advantage of your company's Matching Gift Program! Simply pick up this form from your company, fill it out, and submit it to the Foundation.

Q: What happens if it rains?
A: VisionWalk is rain or shine. If dangerous conditions arise, we will reach out to registered attendees by email and post an update to the event landing page by 6am local time the day of the event to let you know of alternate plans. Generally, we are able to either postpone the walk or host a t-shirt pickup and donation turn-in opportunity. We will do our best to host the event so long as it is safe to do so!

Q: My friend is afraid to register because he's worried about getting on mailing lists.
A: The Foundation does not sell our mailing list. During the registration process, you may opt in or out of Foundation emails and postal mailings. Additionally, each email sent out through our system contains an "unsubscribe" link at the bottom where you can customize your communication preferences.