

2024
B Z C S i t - a - t h o n



BROOKLYN
ZEN CENTER

Fundraising Guide

GENERAL

- Fundraising is most likely a new endeavor for a lot of us. Asking for money can, of course, feel uncomfortable.
- **Use this guide for tips** on how to set up your Sit-a-thon fundraising page and reach out to family and friends.
- Feel free to **pull language directly** from this presentation if it is helpful.

Why are we fundraising?

Our annual Sit-a-thon is an opportunity for the full community to join in on fundraising and feel the sangha-wide vitality that can emerge from this effort. We paused this annual tradition during the pandemic, then saw how crucial it was in meeting the needs of our growing community this year. Without an annual community-wide fundraiser like this, we would have to restructure our budget in a fundamental way.

To give one example: **so far in 2024 we've offered over \$5,000 in class and retreat scholarships, almost all to BIPOC practitioners** (at this rate, that means \$20,000 for the year, which doesn't fully account for the cost of the programs themselves). Funds from the Sit-a-thon will go directly toward our scholarship fund and making our programs equitable and accessible.

Making a Fundraising Goal

*As you **reflect on your fundraising goal**, we invite you to...*

- consider the socioeconomic makeup of your network
- feel into the edge of your comfort zone
- consider the needs of our temples and this wide-lens stat:
If 80 Sit-a-thon participants raise \$500 each, we will reach our goal.

Reaching Out to Family & Friends

*While this can be the most uncomfortable part of this whole thing, we encourage you to bring a **playful heart** to it...*

- **Be Bold:** Consider reaching out to some distant family and friends, perhaps some who don't even know you frequent a Zen temple.
- **Speak From the Heart:** Often, a pithy, straightforward, heartfelt message goes furthest in fundraising. Consider a structure for your message that answers these questions:
 - How has BZC enhanced your life?
 - How do you feel BZC is changing your community, neighborhood, city, or society?
 - What would this support mean to you?
- **Be Straightforward:** Let people know about your personal fundraising goal and about BZC's overall \$40,000 goal. We find that people respond well to a monetary aim when they are giving money.
- **Give Context:** Feel free to let people know that this money will go toward providing scholarships that make our programming accessible and equitable. This money will have a tangible outcome within our community.

REFERENCES

*As you write your messages to family and friends, it may be **helpful to reference**:*

- [BZC's mission](#)
- the [2024 Sit-a-thon FAQ page](#)
- an [Engaged Practice Group](#) dear to your heart

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Bianca, BZC's Development & Membership Manager at bianca@brooklynzen.org