

A young man and woman are smiling and looking at a laptop in a library setting. The man is on the left, wearing a dark shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a grey t-shirt with a white logo. The background is a blurred library with bookshelves and other people. The entire image has a red and purple color overlay.

CSUN FUNDER

Crowdfunding for Matadors

CSUN

Need \$\$\$ for a campus project or cause?

– RAISE IT WITH –

CSUN FUNDER

Crowdfunding for Matadors

CSUN Funder is a great new tool designed for students, faculty and staff to raise money. The platform can be used for an eligible campus organization or a project approved by a CSUN faculty group or academic department.

CSUN Funder is easy to use, and all funds raised are dispersed through an official CSUN Foundation account.



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CSUN FUNDER

Crowdfunding for Matadors

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CSUN Funder is a great new tool designed for students, faculty and staff to raise money. The platform can be used for an eligible campus organization or a project approved by a CSUN faculty group or academic department.

Once a CSUN Funder page is created and approved, you will have a compelling way to share your story that also provides an easy conduit for giving to a safe and secure CSUN Foundation account dedicated to your group.

4 EASY STEPS TO RAISE FUNDS

1. **Submit your application:** Share details about your project and fundraising need.
2. **Approval:** CSUN's Office of Annual Giving will respond to your application.
3. **Customize Your Page:** Once approved, you will receive access to a customizable page.
4. **Launch:** Once your page is finalized and approved, your campaign will launch.

CSUN Funder pages allow you to share your story, the impact of the project, add photos and video and make your ask. Your success will depend on your effort to connect with friends, family and other networks interested in supporting your cause.

You will also be able to see who has given to your project in real time. Funds raised through CSUN Funder can be quickly accessed after posting to your associated CSUN Foundation account.

Donors will receive an official receipt and thank you note from the CSUN Foundation, but your additional and warm expressions of gratitude will go a long way toward inspiring more support.

Get started raising funds for your great work today.

csun.edu/crowdfunding
givingprograms@csun.edu
(818) 677-2786

CSUN[®]



CSUN FUNDER

Crowdfunding for Matadors

Maximize Your Fundraising With Ease!

CSUN Funder is the university's official crowdfunding platform designed especially for you — students, faculty and staff — to raise funds for your campus organization or project. Build your CSUN Funder page by adding your story, images and video and promote your project to donors. Get started today!

[Submit Your Application](#)

[Give to a Campaign](#)

4 STEPS TO RAISE FUNDS

1. Submit your application



Share details about your project and fundraising need.

2. Get Approved



A CSUN staff member will respond to your application.

3. Customize Your Page



Tell your story in words and images.

4. Launch Your Project



Once your page is finalized and approved, your campaign will launch.

**CSUN Funder projects have collectively raised over \$700,000!
Make your own success story!**

Get Started Today!

Solicit friends, families, and networks, promote the project and share the page. Funds raised through CSUN Funder will be distributed to project teams by the CSUN Foundation on an ongoing basis throughout the project timeline.

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Alumni
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Phone: (818) 677-1200 / [Contact Us](#)

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\$640,158

AMOUNT RAISED

3,071

GIFTS RECEIVED



CSUN Women's Water Polo

By CSUN Athletics

Support CSUN Women's Water Polo to help fund help fund four new shot clocks for our pool.

\$5,400

154%

Funded

33

Donors

0

days left



Class of 2021 Senior Class Gift

By CSUN

Calling all graduating Matadors! Donate \$20 to get your Class of 2021 t-shirt.

382

152%

Participation

382

Donors

0

days left



CSUN Women's Volleyball

By CSUN Athletics

Support CSUN Women's Volleyball to help fund player nutrition to help our athletes compete at the highest level.

\$5,465

121%

Funded

33

Donors

0

days left



Kites



Animation Student Scholarships



Emergency COVID Relief for Journalism Students



CSUN Funder Crowdfunding Handbook



California State University, Northridge
Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving
University Advancement

CSUN

CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHRIDGE



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INTRODUCTION TO CROWDFUNDING

What is crowdfunding?

Crowdfunding is a useful, web-based channel for fundraising, which brings groups of donors together to fund specific projects during a time-constrained campaign.

Benefits of using the official CSUN Funder platform

CSUN's official crowdfunding site has many benefits over third party sites such as Kickstarter or Indiegogo.

- There is no “all or nothing” funding for projects. All money raised will be deposited into the project team's account.
- Project donations are tax deductible (to the extent of the law) and receipted by the CSUN Foundation.
- Gifts are NOT charged an additional platform fee.
(Note: The standard 5% CSUN Foundation administrative fee will still apply to all accounts held with the CSUN Foundation. The fee is deducted *after* the crowdfunding project is closed).
- Unlike other platforms, using the official CSUN Funder platform will not result in tax liability for individual project team members.
- Project teams will have access to support materials and guidance from CSUN's Alumni Relations and Annual Giving staff.

How to launch a project

To launch a project on the CSUN crowdfunding platform, project teams can submit an application by clicking “Submit Application” at <https://csunfunder.csun.edu/> . Applications will be reviewed weekly and project teams will be contacted to set up an initial phone call interview.

Questions?

Please contact the Alumni Relations and Annual Giving team at:

Phone: (818) 677-2786

Email: givingprograms@csun.edu



PRE- LAUNCH: The Basics

Identifying a Project Team

Each project group will need to assemble a team of volunteers and select a **project lead**. The project lead will be the main point of contact and responsible for ensuring all tasks are completed in a timely manner. Each team should also select **at least two additional core collaborators** to help with content creation. The project lead and core collaborators are the driving force of the campaign, so it is imperative these members are committed to the success of the project.

Beyond the core team, each project should have **several ambassadors** - volunteers willing to share content and ask their networks to give, but not necessarily involved in content creation. More ambassadors create a wider reach for the project, resulting in the opportunity for more donations. In addition, projects also require a CSUN **faculty or staff advisor**, who agrees to help coordinate the financial logistics of the project with their respective department or program area.

Setting a Fundraising Goal

Although most individual gifts are small, crowdfunding projects generate a large number of donors and typically raise **between \$1,000 and \$10,000**.

It is important to set a reasonable project goal. We recommend setting your initial goal at 50% of what you believe you can easily raise. In the event the initial goal is met, a stretch goal can be activated. Additionally, smaller goals tend to make donors feel their gift has a bigger impact and are more willing to donate. If a goal is not met, donors are more likely to question the legitimacy of the project, how funds will be used, and be less likely to view the project and university as successful.

The number of previous donors, engaged team members, and interested community members will contribute to determining a reasonable goal. If a team is unsure about a reasonable goal for their project, they should connect with their faculty or staff advisor and the Alumni Relations & Annual Giving staff to discuss.



Selecting a Launch Date and Timeline

The launch date is important to the success of the campaign. All marketing materials need to be completed by this date and team members ready to reach out to their networks. Teams should be mindful of conflicting priorities: finals, holidays, etc. The first day of the campaign should be a day/week that project groups will be able to commit a significant amount of time to the project.

The launch date and timeframe is an element that can only be edited by the Alumni Relations and Annual Giving team. Any changes to the timeframe of the project should also be clearly communicated the team to ensure that the timeframe accurately reflects the timeframe agreed upon by the project team.

Most campaigns will run for between 30-60 days. This model creates a sense of urgency, encourages donors to give immediately and keeps the energy high for any given project.

Projects require advanced planning in order to see success. It is suggested that teams allot **at least four weeks between project approval and launch date**. This provides groups adequate time to gather all content and receive feedback from the Alumni Relations and Annual Giving team.

Managing the Financials

Before a campaign can begin, the project team and their faculty or staff advisor must work with the Director of Finance and Operations for their respective campus area to ensure that an appropriate CSUN Foundation fund is established to accept and direct funds from the crowdfunding campaign. If the project is being held on behalf of an official CSUN Campus Club, then all funds will be designated to the appropriate Associated Students account and flagged for the specific club.

All funds raised during the campaign will be deposited into the corresponding CSUN Foundation fund **within two weeks of the campaign end**. This is standard university procedure, so groups will need to plan their project launch dates accordingly to ensure they can access their funds when needed.



PRE- LAUNCH: The Marketing Plan

Develop a Marketing Plan

The success of projects rely on exposure, so communicating with a variety of audiences is critical. To ensure timely completion, a marketing plan should be created **before** the project launches.

The Annual Giving team has a sample checklist prepared which outlined tasks that should be accomplished during each phase of the campaign to ensure best results. (See Appendix)

Identify your Audiences

Crowdfunding projects **rely on personal networks to inspire donations**. When planning communications, it is important to think about who the message will be sent to and how it should be tailored to the audience. Before projects are launched, teams should think about who will be included in these fundraising appeals and compile their contact information. Consider the following affiliations when creating your master list: *friends and family, previous participants, previous donors, followers on social media*. The Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving cannot share contact information or provide alumni/donor email lists for targeted solicitations.



Content

All marketing, design, copy content, social media messaging and official CSUN logo use must conform to the CSUN Identity Platform: <https://www.csun.edu/identity>.

The marketing plan should be a roadmap for communications. The following items should be included in your outreach schedule to ensure ease of execution:

- Date/Time
- General Message
- Intended Audience(s)
- Vehicle (social media post, email, phone call, etc.)
- Actual content due dates
- Additional materials (photos, quotes, etc.)
- Who is responsible for creating content/sending out?

All content on project pages will be reviewed and approved by University Advancement prior to launch. CSUN has the right to edit, or require project content edits, at any point in the project duration.

Outreach Frequency

Emails should be sent weekly and social media content should be posted every other day. To make execution easier, **teams should create a template email and social media posts** so collaborators and ambassadors can easily customize it for their network.



PRE- LAUNCH: The Video

Producing a Video

The video is one of the most important aspects of the campaign and allows your team to put a face to your fundraising project. Videos are not required but best practices show that projects with video tend to do better than those without. Videos do not need to be produced by a professional, but should include a few key elements.

Necessities

- Videos should be no longer than two minutes. Users tend to have short attention spans and begin to lose interest around 90 seconds into a video.
- Keep it short and direct. Answer the following questions: Who are you? What problem are you trying to solve? Why is it important (who are you trying to help)? What do you want viewers to do?
- Include a **direct ask**. This is a clear statement of what you want the person watching the video to do next. *Example: Make a gift today to help the soccer team to attend the winter competition.*
- All project videos must be properly captioned per CSUN Universal Design Center captioning standards <https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center/captioning> to ensure compliance with campus ADA policy. It is the project team's sole responsibility to ensure that their video is properly captioned. The Alumni Relations and Annual Giving team can assist you in locating resources if needed.

Tips

- It is suggested that videos have a script and a storyboard before filming. The Annual Giving team can review these elements and provide feedback to ensure your video is as effective as possible.
- Have a face! People relate to people, so each video should include someone speaking about the project.
- Include B Roll: Video that can be used while someone is speaking in the background.
- Add background music to move the video along. All videos will be reviewed pre-launch to ensure the appropriate copyright credentials have been purchased/secured. YouTube offers a catalogue of free music that does not breach copyright laws.



PRE- LAUNCH: Setting Up Your Campaign on CSUN Funder

Once projects are approved, project team leaders will be added as a collaborator for the project, and will receive an email invitation to set up a CSUN Funder account. This access allows the team leader to enter content and add other users as collaborators as well. To log in, click the menu button at the top right of the <https://csunfunder.csun.edu/> page and select “Log In”. Once a collaborator logs in, a menu will appear on the left side of the webpage with options for the project.

Content Tab

Below are descriptions of each sub tab under the main Content tab. This is where you’ll upload and enter your page content to customize your page.

“Media”: This section gives visual interest to projects. A small image will be needed to display in the project’s info tile on the CSUN Funder main page. A larger image can be used to display on the main project page if a video is unavailable. It is highly recommended that project teams produce videos to display on their main page. For teams using a video, they will input the appropriate YouTube or Vimeo share link here.

To upload all media content, click the “Content” tab located on the left sidebar, followed by the “Media” sub-tab.

Project Tile Image – This image will be shown on your project tile on the CSUN Funder main page. **Dimensions: 300px wide and 170px high**

Project Main Image – In the absence of a video, this image will display at the top of the main project page. **Dimensions: 606px wide and 343px wide**

YouTube or Vimeo Share Link – Project teams using a video should post the link here. Videos must be hosted on YouTube or Vimeo. Copy and paste the link to your video hosted by YouTube or Vimeo.

Enable Video on Project Page? – To enable the video on the project page, toggle the on/off button to where the blue section is showing.



“Description”: The description section is where the main content of the project will live. This section gives teams the opportunity to fully explain who they are, what they are working on, and where the funding will go (budget breakdown). The description should always include a direct ask—a call to action telling viewers what you want them to do. For example, “make a gift today to allow our team to attend the championship game.” Adding photos in this area enhances the case and request for support.

To upload the description content, click the “Content” tab located on the left sidebar, followed by the “Description” sub-tab.

In this section, you will describe your project for your potential donors. You can use the formatting functionality in the toolbar to customize your text, as well as add in photos. Pay special attention to how much information you use and its formatting. Text should be easy to read, free from typos and grammatical errors, and formatted in a visually appealing way (using spacing, bullet points, etc.).

To upload a photo to your Description, click on the photo button in the top navigation. Upon clicking the button, the Image Properties box will pop up. You’ll notice two ways to add photos into the description, via a photo-hosting site, or a direct upload. If you would like to directly upload a photo to the editor, click on the third tab, marked “Upload”. Press “Choose File” and choose the proper image from your computer files. Once the file is chosen, press “Upload Image” and when it is successfully added, you will see a “File Uploaded Successfully” Message. Press the green “OK” button and your image will show up in your description. If you want to edit the image at all, click on the image in the description, then press the Photo button in the top navigation. The Image Properties box will pop up again for you, and you can edit width, height, etc.

“Bios”: The project owner bios make the project more personal and inform donors about the team behind the project. This space allows for a photo and description of the project owner(s) to be shared with all who visit the project page.

To upload content to a bio, click the “Content” tab located on the left sidebar, followed by the “Bios” sub-tab. To add a new bio, click the green “+New Project Bio” button and enter the person’s full name and title.



“Levels”: Levels are a feature of the CSUN Funder platform that allow project teams to set specific giving levels that reflect the impact of a donation amount. For example, a soccer team might set a \$50 level to represent the cost of one new soccer jersey, a \$100 level to represent the cost of a new portable soccer goal, and a \$500 level to represent the cost of team travel to a soccer tournament.

To add a level, click on the sub-header that says “+Create New Level”. To make the level active on the project page, toggle the on/off button to where the blue section is showing. You will need to enter the following information: Name, Short Description, and Minimum Donation. Once the level is saved, you can edit the level by clicking on the level listing.

“Project Thank You Page”: After a donor successfully makes donation to a project, they will be routed to a Thank You Page. The Thank You Page provides the project team with the option to add a personalized image or a video link to their page. This will allow the project team to customize their share message. Including a custom image or video within this feature will provide a more personalized thank you to donors, and will help to meaningfully convey the impact that their giving has made on your project.

To upload a Project Thank You Page Image, click the “Content” tab located on the left sidebar, followed by the “Thank You Page” sub-tab. To add a Thank You Page Image, click the “Choose Image (Maximum 4MB)” button and upload your selected image.

Dimensions: 606px wide and 343px wide

To upload a Project Thank You Page Video, the video must be hosted on YouTube or Vimeo. Copy and paste the link to the video hosted by YouTube or Vimeo. Next, post the link to the video in the space labeled “YouTube or Vimeo Video Link.”

Enable Video on Thank You Page – To enable the video on the Thank You Page, toggle the “Enable Video on Thank You Page” option until the blue section is showing.



LIFT OFF: Campaign Launch

Day of Launch

The first day of the campaign should generate a lot of excitement. It is ideal to get as much revenue in the door on the first day as possible, as it shows there is interest and commitment to the cause. This momentum creates more buzz and momentum.

Generating Excitement

In order to create a buzz around the project, **teams will need to tap into their networks through all channels.** The heaviest marketing push will come on this day, so emails should be sent, social media content posted, and phone calls made. Banners on Facebook pages and project webpages should be changed, as well as any affiliated blogs or newsletters sent out. The goal is to make all community members aware of the project during the first week.

Communications

Once the campaign has launched, communications should be consistent. Everything scheduled in the marketing plan should be put into action, making the preparatory work critical. Remember that all members of the team will be actively reaching out to their networks during the campaign and **making personal asks.**

Historical data shows that 80% of total dollars raised comes from a direct link/email, while social media contributes about 15%. Social media posts will certainly raise awareness for projects, but will not drive campaigns to success. A text message, Facebook message, email, or other outreach to a personal connection with a direct ask from a team member will be most effective for bringing dollars to the campaign.



DURING THE CAMPAIGN

Updates

An important aspect of the campaign is **staying in touch with donors and keeping them up to date** on the status of the project.

Updates allow project teams to inform constituents about recent developments and exciting news during and after their campaign. It is also a way to further engage donors and put personality into the effort.

Updates should be posted **at least once every week**, highlighting exciting milestones. The update function is maximized when teams use visuals to show progress. Photos of team members working on a project, thank you videos from group members, behind-the-scenes tour of the lab, and impact statements from students are all great ways to supplement updates.

In addition to adding content about the team, the following is a list of suggested milestones that can be tracked to communicate with supporters of the project. More updates show the community that groups are engaged and actively working to reach their goal.

- ✓ Progress at the end of the first day
- ✓ 1/3 of the way to the goal
- ✓ 50% of goal
- ✓ 75% of goal
- ✓ One week remaining
- ✓ One day remaining
- ✓ Matching funds opportunity
- ✓ Events, features in articles, media attention around the project

Using the Updates Tab

The update function has two options: visible to everyone or visible to donors only. An email with the update content will be sent to all donors either way, but the private update option lends to an air of exclusivity and can encourage more donations.

Your updates will be displayed in a chronological order, the newest ones at the top.

To post updates, click the “Updates” tab located on the left sidebar, followed by the “Project Updates” sub-tab.



In this tab, you can give updates about your project to your followers and donors.

To create an update, click the “+ Create New Update” button.

Again, basic formatting options apply to aid in your design of the update. You can also upload a video to the post by pasting the link from YouTube or Vimeo into the open text field at the bottom that says “Embed video” or upload up to three images through the “+Add Image” button. You also have the option to display the update to the public on the project page or to only allow the update to show to donors of the project.

Once you have entered the desired information you wish to include in your update, select the “Submit” button. At this point, your update has not been published. To officially publish your update and e-mail your donors, click the green “Publish” button. You can refer to the colored circle on the update bar to determine if the update has been published, as seen in the below figure.





POST-CAMPAIGN Donor Follow Up

Stewardship

A major component of a successful crowdfunding campaign is how the project leaders plan to thank donors after the campaign has ended.

Thank you emails, social media shout outs, and a thank you update should be sent to all donors and posted to all accounts that actively promoted the CSUN Funder project. Make sure that donors understand how close your project got to the funding goal, and the impact that their support will have on your project. The more specific you can get in explaining donors' impact, the better!

Updates

One of the benefits of using a crowdfunding platform is the opportunity to show donors the impact they are making. Unlike traditional donation channels, teams are able to keep their supporters informed and engaged in their progress.

While the funds are being used, teams should be documenting the project's process and posting updates on the platform. In addition to strengthening the relationship between the organization and their community, post-project updates aid in future support and donations. Including your supporters in the whole process by showing donors that their gift had a tangible impact and was used for the intended purpose, there is an increased chance they will support you again.

CSUN views donors as important members of the community and believes that transparency is critical for maintaining positive relationships. Project groups/leaders are highly encouraged to post at least two post-project updates throughout and after their campaign.



APPENDIX

Campaign Checklist

This checklist tool has been developed to help crowdfunding project teams organize the deliverables of a project through the quiet, active, and post-campaign phases. Since most of the work for the project will be done in the quiet phase, a week by week timeline is presented below. The active phase and post-campaign phase tabs outline responsibilities for both time frames.

Quiet Phase (Week 1)

Recommended Tasks:

1. Meet with Platform Manager

Set up weekly check-ins throughout the quiet, active, and post-campaign phases.

2. Identify your Project Team

Project Leader(s)	Project Ambassadors

Manage Ambassadors – This function allows project leaders and collaborators to invite project ambassadors, who can share the project page via personalized, trackable links.

3. Create your outreach email lists

We suggest that the project team compile a list of between 50-100 email contacts for which to personally share about the CSUN Funder project and solicit for donations.

Quiet Phase (Week 2)

Recommended Tasks:

1. Determine monetary goals for your CSUN Funder project.

- a. **Initial Goal** – Your initial goal is the first goal amount that will be displayed on your CSUN Funder project page. Initial goals should be between 50% and 75% of what your team believes can be easily raised during the course of the campaign.
- b. **Main Goal** – Your main goal is the primary funding amount that your team aims to raise through your CSUN Funder Page. As the “Initial Goal” is hit, the Platform Manager will update your page’s goal to reflect the



main goal. This will help convey success and progress during the campaign and encourage new donors to close the gap to your main goal.

- c. **Stretch Goal** – In the event you hit your project’s main goal before the close of your campaign, it is important to establish a stretch goal. This goal should be slightly higher than your Main Goal, and dependent on your network capacity and the remaining duration of your campaign.
2. Create Media Content:
 - a. Film video for project page
 - b. Identify/create images for project tile, and description body
 3. Write Project Leader Bios: Tell your donors who you are and how you’re involved in this project!

Quiet Phase (Week 3)

Recommended Tasks:

1. Write your project description (to be displayed in body of the page).
2. Identify and add project giving levels/amounts to your page
 - a. Examples: \$5 to represent the five years your club has been active; \$40 to cover the cost of one soccer jersey etc.
3. Identify any affinity organizations (local non-profits, blogs, social media, other student groups, etc.) to share your project with during the active phase.
4. Finalize your marketing plan:
 - a. Write your initial email outreach, follow-up and thank you templates
 - b. Set a schedule for providing fundraising updates on your project page
 - c. Prepare a thank you message and optional image or video to thank donors once they’ve given to your campaign
5. **Touch base with platform manager**
 - a. When your project team has completed your preliminary content creation and outreach plan, and all content has been loaded onto your project page – the Platform Manager must review and sign off on the content before the page can “go live”. At this point, the Platform Manager may request minor edits or changes to the page content before approving to move forward.



6. Start outreach- Don't start at day 1 with \$0. Prior to entering the active phase, try to get a few committed donors who will give to your page on launch day.

**Projects tend to have a higher likelihood of success with roughly 30% raised within the first week of going live.*

Active Phase

Recommended Tasks:

Launch Day

1. ALL project team members send out an email to networks announcing the launch of the campaign.
2. Post about the project on social media accounts, and SHARE.

Weekly tasks to complete through the end of the campaign:

1. Follow up with friends and acquaintances who haven't given yet.
2. Send another email to the network asking them to share about your project.
3. Post an update on your page to check in with donors about your fundraising progress



End of Campaign

1. Send a Thank You email to all donors within one week of the close of the campaign.

Example:

Dear Chelsea,

Thank you for your generous gift to the Institute's Orange Grove Revitalization Fundraiser. We are thrilled and honored to have your support on this project.

With your donation, we will replace older trees with new seedlings, restore the grounds with rich organic soil, and install new irrigation systems— all to strengthen and preserve the Orange Grove so that it can continue to provide for the community for years to come.

Your support also helps to further our mission in alleviating hunger and food insecurity, facilitating research opportunities, and conserving one of the last citrus groves in the San Fernando Valley.

To receive updates on the Institute and CSUN's sustainability programs, subscribe to our newsletter at bit.ly/FootprintNews, and follow us on social media @sustainCSUN. If you have questions about our fundraiser, please contact Sarah Johnson at sarah.johnson@csun.edu.

*With deepest gratitude,
Institute for Sustainability*

2. Post an update on your project page announcing your project end. Include a picture or a video describing the impact that the funds will have on your project.