



STEP FORWARD
to cure TSC®

Step Forward to Cure TSC®

Team Captain Fundraising Toolkit

Together, Every Step Matters.

Welcome, Team Captain!

Thank you for stepping up as a Team Captain for the Step Forward to Cure TSC® Walk! Your leadership fuels awareness, builds community, and drives the fundraising that accelerates research and hope for everyone affected by tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC).

This handbook is your go-to guide—packed with realistic, easy-to-follow steps to help you grow your team, fundraise with confidence, and create a meaningful walk day experience. You are a vital part of this movement, and your commitment truly matters.

As a Team Captain, your efforts help us:

- **Advance Pioneering Research:** Every dollar you raise supports groundbreaking research that brings us closer to better treatments—and ultimately, a cure.
- **Empower Families:** Your impact provides education, resources, and support programs that help families navigate TSC at every stage of the journey.
- **Advocate for Change:** By raising awareness and using your voice, you help ensure improved care, access, and support for individuals living with TSC.

Whether you're walking with a large team or leading the way solo, we're here to support you every step of the way. Join an official Step Forward to Cure TSC® Walk near you—or participate right from your own neighborhood. Together, we can create lasting impact across the TSC community.

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Why We Step Forward

Why We Step Forward

Step Forward to Cure TSC® is a series of nationwide walks supporting the TSC Alliance's mission: improving the quality of life for people affected by tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC) through research, support, and advocacy.

The Challenge

- TSC affects about 1 in 6,000 people, causing tumors in multiple organs and often impacting the brain, heart, kidneys, skin, and lungs.
- It's the leading genetic cause of epilepsy, including infantile spasms, and can cause cognitive, behavioral, and psychiatric challenges.
- 40–50% of individuals with TSC have autism spectrum disorder.

Our Mission

The TSC Alliance:

- **Funds research:** Supporting breakthroughs in treatments and potential cures.
- **Provides support:** Offering resources, education, and programs for families.
- **Advocates for change:** Raising awareness and improving access to care.

How You Can Help

By walking and fundraising, you help:

- Advance TSC research and treatment development.
- Support families and programs affected by TSC.
- Raise awareness and advocate for the TSC community.

Getting Started: Your Path to Fundraising Success

Welcome to the Step Forward to Cure TSC community!

Whether you're walking in person or virtually, these steps will help you build a strong team, share your story, and make the biggest impact possible.

Step 1: Register Early and Set the Foundation

Getting started early gives you the best chance to build momentum and reach (or exceed!) your fundraising goal.

- **Register**

Head to the website, StepForwardtoCureTSC.org, to:

- **Register as an individual:** Perfect if you're walking virtually or prefer to fundraise solo.
- **Start a team:** Create a group for family, friends, or coworkers and become a *Team Captain*.
- **Join an existing team:** Search for your local walk or a loved one's team to be part of their effort.

Once registered, you'll receive an email with a **link to your personal fundraising dashboard** – your main hub for everything walk-related!

 *Pro Tip:* When you register, check the box to receive updates and communications – this ensures you get helpful reminders and success tips leading up to your walk.

- **Set Your Fundraising Goal**

Start by setting a **realistic, achievable goal** based on your network and comfort level – and remember, you can always increase it later!

Examples:

- \$250 = 10 friends donating \$25 each
- \$500 = Your donation of \$50 + 9 friends at \$50 each
- \$1,000 = Recruit 5 friends to join and each raise \$200

 *Virtual walkers often do great with smaller, creative goals* – such as pledging to walk 1 mile for every \$25 raised or dedicating each mile to a donor.

 *Pro Tip:* Use milestones (like \$250, \$500, \$750) to celebrate progress and encourage more donations.

- **Make Your First Donation**

Be the first to give on your page — even a small self-donation (\$25–\$50) sends a powerful message that *you believe in what you're asking others to support*.

- Donors are **2x more likely to give** when they see that you've already contributed.
- It sets the tone for your campaign and shows commitment.

💬 Example message to include on your page:

"I just made the first donation to my Step Forward to Cure TSC Walk page to kick things off! Will you join me in making a difference for families impacted by TSC?"

- **Track Your Progress Using Your Dashboard**

Your **personal fundraising dashboard** helps you:

- Monitor donations and see who's given.
- Customize your fundraising page with your story and photos.
- Send thank-you notes and email updates to supporters.
- Access pre-written emails and social media templates to make outreach easier.

You can log in anytime to update your story, celebrate milestones, and thank your supporters — all in one place.

💡 *Pro Tip:* Check your dashboard at least once a week. Regular updates keep your page active and visible on the site!

- **Timeline Tip:**

Try to register **6–8 weeks before your walk date** to give yourself enough time to:

- Personalize your page
- Invite friends and family to join
- Build excitement on social media
- Reach your first fundraising milestone before walk week

Even if you're walking virtually, an early start gives you time to plan your route, share updates, and engage donors over time instead of rushing in the final days.

Step 2: Personalize Your Fundraising Page

Personalized pages raise **5x more funds** than generic ones — because people give to people, not just causes.

Your fundraising page is where your story comes to life. It's the heart of your campaign and helps friends, family, and supporters understand *why this matters to you*.

- **Share Your Story — Your “Why”**

Think of your story as your invitation for others to join you. You don't need to be a professional writer — just speak from the heart.

Here are a few ways to get started:

- **Share your connection to TSC.** Are you walking for yourself, your child, a family member, or a friend?
- **Explain what TSC is** in a simple sentence or two. Many donors may not know about it yet!
- **Describe why fundraising matters to you.** Talk about hope, progress, and community.
- **End with an ask.** Tell people exactly how they can help — “Please join my team or donate today!”

 *Example:*

“We're walking for Logan, who was diagnosed with TSC at his first birthday. Every dollar raised helps fund research, provide family support, and bring us closer to a cure.”

 *Pro Tip:* Write your story as if you're talking to a friend. Short, sincere messages connect more than long or overly formal ones.

- **Add a Photo or Short Video**

Visuals make your page *real and relatable*.

- Choose a bright, clear photo of you or your team — smiling faces go a long way!
- Add 2–3 images that capture why you walk: a family moment, a team photo, or even a walk sign you've made.
- If possible, upload a short video (30–60 seconds) sharing your “why.” Seeing and hearing you makes it personal.

 *Video Tips:*

- Keep it short – 1 minute or less.
- Use your phone – authenticity matters more than production quality.
- Start with: “Hi, I’m [Name], and I’m walking in the Step Forward to Cure TSC Walk because...”
- End with: “Please support me or my team by donating today – every dollar brings us closer to a cure!”

 *Fun Idea for Virtual Walkers:*

Record yourself walking or training in your neighborhood and thank donors by name along the way. Post those clips on your fundraising page or social media!

• **Keep It Authentic**

Supporters connect with genuine emotion, not perfection.

- Use your own words – you don’t have to make it “fancy.”
- Talk about your hopes, challenges, or gratitude for the TSC community.
- Don’t be afraid to show emotion – that’s what moves people to act.

 *Example variations:*

- “I’m walking in honor of my son, who inspires me every day.”
- “As a parent of a child with TSC, this walk gives me hope.”
- “I may be walking virtually this year, but my heart is with every TSC family across the country.”

• **Update Your Page Regularly**

Don’t let your page go quiet after your first post!

- Add updates as you reach milestones (“We just hit 50% of our goal!”).
- Share photos from training walks or virtual meetups.
- Post thank-you notes and tag donors by name (with permission).

 *Pro Tip:* Regular updates push your page higher on the leaderboard and keep donors engaged.

 **Timeline Tip:**

Try to **complete and personalize your page within your first week** after registering. This ensures that when you start inviting others to join or donate, they’ll land on a page that tells your story and inspires them to give right away.

Step 3: Invite Friends and Family

Your personal network is your strongest fundraising tool – and inviting them to join you is easier than you think!

Once your fundraising page is personalized, it's time to reach out. The more people who know about your walk and your mission, the more likely you are to hit your goal.

- **Start With Your Inner Circle**

Your first supporters are usually people who know you best:

- Family
- Close friends
- Colleagues
- Neighbors

 *Tip:* Don't worry about who can attend in person – virtual walkers can raise money from anywhere! Even a small donation helps and sharing your page spreads awareness.

- **Make Your Ask Simple**

Provide a **direct link to your page** and a short, personal message. People are more likely to give when it's easy for them to act.

 *Sample Message:*

"Hi [Name]! I just signed up for the Step Forward to Cure TSC Walk. I'm walking for [loved one's name or 'the TSC community'] and would love your support. You can join virtually or donate to my team here: [your fundraising link]. Every dollar counts!"

- **Use the "Four Plus One" Technique**

This simple method increases your chances of receiving a donation:

1. **State the Need:** Explain what TSC is and why it matters.
2. **Explain the Importance:** Share why research and support are critical.
3. **Describe Your Solution:** Mention your participation and fundraising efforts.
4. **Make the Ask:** Ask directly for a donation or for them to join your team.

Plus 1: Pause and let them respond – don't fill the silence!

 *Example Ask:*

"TSC is a rare disease affecting 1 in 6,000 people. I'm walking to help fund research and support families impacted by TSC. Would you consider donating \$25 to my fundraising page today?"

- **Use Multiple Channels**

Reach your friends and family in a variety of ways:

- **Email:** Personalized, heartfelt messages work best.
- **Text or Messaging Apps:** Short and friendly links to your page.
- **Social media:** Post your story, milestone updates, or short videos.
- **Phone Calls:** Sometimes hearing your voice makes all the difference – especially for major donors!

 *Tip for Virtual Walkers:* Share your journey online – photos of your training walks, your at-home route, or a short video explaining why you walk. Tag supporters when you thank them to keep them engaged.

- **Keep Track of Responses**

Use your fundraising dashboard to:

- Track who has donated
- Send thank-you notes promptly
- Follow up with those who haven't responded

 *Tip:* People often need reminders – don't be shy to send one or two follow-ups.

Persistence works!

 **Timeline Tip:**

- **Within 2 weeks of registering:** Reach out to your first 10 friends or family members.
- **Weekly leading up to the walk:** Post updates, milestone progress, and reminders to keep momentum going.

Step 4: Fundraise Effectively & Harness Social Media

Once your page is live and your friends/family are invited, it's time to amplify your impact. Using both online and offline tools maximizes your fundraising potential – especially for virtual walkers!

- **Use Your Fundraising Dashboard**

Your fundraising dashboard is your command center – make it your best friend:

- **Send personalized emails:** Reach out directly to friends, family, and coworkers. Templates are available in your dashboard.
- **Track donations:** See who's given and who you might follow up with.
- **Post updates:** Share milestones, photos, or videos from training walks.
- **Send thank-you notes:** A personal "thank you" keeps donors engaged and may inspire additional contributions.

 *Tip:* Check your dashboard at least once a week to stay on top of progress and celebrate milestones with your supporters.

- **Share Milestones & Progress**

People love to give when they see momentum!

- Celebrate every 25%, 50%, 75% of your goal.
- Post screenshots, fun graphics, or short updates thanking supporters.

 *Example:*

"We just hit 50% of our fundraising goal — thank you so much to everyone who's donated so far! Help us reach 100% by donating here: [link]"

- **Harness Social Media**

Social media is one of the easiest ways to expand your reach, particularly for virtual participants:

- **Connect Your Fundraising Page:**

- Link your page to Facebook or Instagram for one-click donations.
- Encourage your supporters to share your page with their networks.

- **Post Regular Updates:**

- Frequency: 1–2 times per week leading up to the walk.
- Content ideas:

- Training walks, virtual participation, or team prep photos
- Milestone achievements
- Donor shout-outs or thank-you messages

- **Use Short Videos:**

- Videos grab attention more than text.
- Keep it 30–60 seconds: introduce yourself, explain why you walk, and ask for support.

 *Virtual Walker Tip:* Film yourself walking in your neighborhood, on a treadmill, or even around your living room. Share a milestone or thank donors as you go!

- **Sample Social Media Posts**

Kickoff Post:

"I'm walking (virtually!) in the Step Forward to Cure TSC Walk to support everyone impacted by tuberous sclerosis complex. Every step counts — every dollar makes a difference! ❤️ Donate here: [link] #StepForwardToCureTSC #EveryStepMatters"

Progress Post:

"Thanks to our amazing supporters, we've raised \$[amount] so far! Help us reach our goal to fund TSC research and support families: [link]"

Virtual Participation Post:

"Even though I can't be there in person, I'm walking for the TSC community from my neighborhood trail! Join me virtually or donate here: [link] 🌟
#StepForwardToCureTSC"

Thank You Post (After Walk):

"We did it! Our team raised \$[amount] for the TSC Alliance! Thank you to every donor and teammate – your support brings us closer to a cure. ❤️ #EveryStepMatters"

- **Combine Online & Offline Fundraising**

Virtual walkers can still leverage offline methods to boost donations:

- **Handwritten letters:** Personal letters to family, friends, or coworkers.
- **Phone calls:** Reach out to major supporters.
- **Neighborhood or community outreach:** Ask local businesses for small donations, matching gifts, or gift-in-kind contributions.

 *Tip:* Combining online and offline strategies can increase total fundraising by 2–3x compared to only online efforts.

- **Matching Gifts**

Many employers match donations made by their employees – this is essentially *free money* for your fundraising!

- Check if your employer has a matching program.
- Encourage donors to do the same with their employers.

 *Pro Tip:* Highlight matching gifts in your social media posts to encourage donors to double their impact.

Timeline Tip:

- **Weekly Leading Up to the Walk:** Post updates, milestones, and donor shout-outs.
- **2 Weeks Before the Walk:** Increase posting frequency and create urgency – share a "final push" post.
- **After the Walk:** Thank everyone, highlight results, and celebrate your team's achievements!

 *Remember:* Fundraising is about momentum and connection. Every message, post, and thank-you builds support and gets you closer to your goal.

Step 6: Engage Local Sponsors & Team Challenges

Involving local businesses and creating team challenges is a fun and effective way to boost fundraising, build momentum, and engage your community.

- **Why Local Sponsors Matter**

Local businesses love supporting causes that impact their community. Even virtual walkers can benefit! Sponsorships and in-kind donations help:

- Increase fundraising totals
- Offer prizes or perks for your team
- Highlight community support and goodwill

 *Tip:* Many businesses are willing to sponsor at multiple levels — you just need to ask.

- **How to Ask Local Sponsors**

- ***Step 1: Identify Potential Sponsors***

- Restaurants, coffee shops, gyms, or fitness studios
- Banks, insurance agencies, or small businesses
- Service clubs or community organizations
- Your employer or coworkers' companies

- ***Step 2: Craft a Simple Pitch***

- Keep it short, clear, and friendly.
- Offer recognition: social media shout-outs, team page mention, or virtual/physical signage.

Sample Email/Message:

"Hi [Business Name],

I'm participating in the Step Forward to Cure TSC Walk to raise funds for the TSC Alliance, which supports research and families affected by TSC. Would you consider sponsoring my virtual team or donating an item for our raffle?

We'll proudly recognize your business on social media and our team page. Thank you for supporting our community!"

- ***Step 3: Offer Multiple Levels***

- \$100 — Logo on team page and social media mention
- \$250 — Logo + shout-out post

- \$500 – Logo, social media, and featured recognition during virtual or in-person event
- **Step 4: Follow Up & Thank Sponsors**
 - Publicly thank them on social media
 - Include their logo in post-walk highlights
 - Send a personalized email or card

 *Tip:* Virtual participants can still highlight sponsors on social media, in newsletters, or during live streams of their walk.

- **Team Challenges**

Friendly competitions keep participants engaged and energized:

- **Mini Fundraising Challenges**
 - “First to 5 donors wins a gift card”
 - “Who can get the most social media shares?”
 - Step or mile challenges: Encourage donors to pledge per mile walked virtually
- **Weekly Check-Ins**
 - Set small weekly goals to motivate team members
 - Share updates via group chat, Facebook group, or email
- **Celebrate Wins**
 - Highlight top fundraisers and milestones
 - Post shout-outs on social media
 - Reward participation with small prizes (gift cards, fun recognition items)

 *Virtual Walker Tip:* Host a Zoom “team kickoff” or check-in to build camaraderie, celebrate milestones, and share fundraising tips.

- **Combining Sponsors & Team Challenges**

- Sponsors can provide prizes for top fundraisers or challenge winners.
- Businesses may match fundraising totals for your team challenge.
- Highlight sponsors in team challenge updates to motivate both your donors and participants.

 **Timeline Tip:**

- **6–8 Weeks Before Walk:** Identify potential sponsors and reach out.

- **4–6 Weeks Before Walk:** Confirm sponsorships and share recognition plans.
- **2–3 Weeks Before Walk:** Launch team challenges and announce prizes.
- **Walk Week:** Celebrate winners, thank sponsors, and share team achievements online.

 **Remember:** Even small sponsorships or mini challenges can significantly boost engagement and fundraising. Virtual walkers can creatively highlight sponsors and celebrate milestones online to maximize impact.

Thank You & Next Steps

Thank you for registering for the **Step Forward to Cure TSC® Walk!**

Your participation fuels progress — funding research, supporting families, and driving us closer to a cure.

Every step matters. Whether you're walking for a newly diagnosed child, a loved one living with TSC, or in memory of someone special, your impact is real and lasting.

Stay involved year-round by:

- Joining TSC Alliance events and volunteer opportunities.
- Sharing updates about your fundraising impact.
- Inspiring others to Step Forward next year!

For support or resources, contact:

 *[Insert Walk Support Email or Carly Kaye's Contact]*

 www.stepforwardtocuretsc.org