

# Holding a Bowling Tournament

## Fundamentals

- Pick a date and location.  
**Tip:** Make sure the venue know you are fundraising for a non-profit so you can get discounted rates and/or lanes donated. ALSF can provide a letter with their tax ID number.
- Determine if you need the entire bowling alley or just a few lanes.
- Determine the event format.
  - Is the event a true bowling tournament or a bowling party?
  - Share the rules with all invitees/attendees.
- Ask the venue if they allow BYOB.
  - Ask if you can use the venue's Alcohol Beverage Control license.
  - If not, secure a one-day ABC license from the Department of Alcohol Beverage Control.
- Set a goal for how much you would like to raise. This will help you determine your entry fee.
- Set SMART goals. Your goals need to be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timely to help guide your efforts. Examples of good SMART goals for your tournament are:
  - Certain number of registrants.
  - Certain amount of money raised.
  - Number of sponsors secured.
- Assemble a planning committee to help with PR & marketing, recruiting, hospitality, volunteers, etc..
  - Rotate members of the committee through the years so that people don't burn out and others can bring fresh ideas to the event.
  - MP support is the lynchpin, they need to be onboard to get others onboard.
- Choose a theme and tournament name, such as Striking Out Childhood Cancer.
- Build a budget. Set a budget and keep careful track of it so you know what the tournament is costing you as planning progresses. The last thing you want to do is get to post-tournament stage and learn

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that the bowling tournament has cost your nonprofit money.

- Obtain sponsors for snacks, beverages, prizes, and entertainment.
  - Update the Northwestern Mutual Sponsorship Package template to fit your event.
- Map out and practice welcoming guests to ensure the check-in process, check-out process, food, and service are not confusing or disappointing.

## Promote Your Event

- Put tournament details on your ALSF fundraising page.
- Use Northwestern Mutual's EventBrite account to create registration for tournament participants. Contact Jodi Nolte at [jodinolte@northwesternmutual.com](mailto:jodinolte@northwesternmutual.com) to request access.
- Promote your tournament via social media using Hearsay and use the Northwestern Mutual email template to invite participants.

## Additional Fundraising Opportunities

- Have give-aways that people can purchase tickets for chances to win.
- Give prizes for:
  - Best team name.
  - Best team t-shirt.
  - Highest score.
  - Lowest score.
- Create and sell t-shirts.
- Tournament rules. Use official rules for the type of game you are playing at the tournament.

## Start tournament

- Explain the rules.
- No delays. Make sure that at any time somebody is playing.

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- Award the winner. When the tournament ends, announce the winners and award prizes.

### Post-event

- Thank participants and send out surveys. During the week after the tournament, email all of your participants thanking them for taking part in your event, inviting them back next year, and letting them know when registration will be open. You should also include a link to a post-run survey to get feedback about what they liked, disliked, and what they'd like to see done differently. This feedback is crucial, especially for a new tournament!