

Guidance for Virtual Service and Philanthropy Events

This resource is divided into four sections. The first two sections provide recommendations for hosting virtual service or philanthropy events and what to do should an event the chapter or colony was planning need to be canceled or postponed. The last two sections provide a list of virtual event ideas and additional resources and support available to assist in planning and executing a successful virtual service or philanthropy event.

Recommendations for Virtual Service and Philanthropy Activities

1. **Assess Community Need.** Regardless of whether your events are virtual or in-person, the first step in planning a service or philanthropy activity is to seek to understand the unique needs of your community and how your members can meet them. If your institution has an office that coordinates service and philanthropy activities for the campus, it is a great idea to check in with the office to see if there are any local causes or organizations that have requested assistance. Your institution, or the local organization, can likely also provide recommendations on how the work that needs to be completed or funds raised can be done virtually. You also should consider arranging an organization representative to meet virtually with your members prior to the event to discuss the cause and the importance of your support.
2. **Plan and Execute Your Event.** Once you have identified the cause or organization you will support, the next step is to create and execute your plan. Included in your plan should be an understanding of the work to be done, plan for delegation, an overview of the event budget, and engagement plan for virtual participants and supporters.

Health and safety must also be a part of your plan. You should check in with the organization you are supporting to see if they require any additional health and safety requirements (e.g. care package assembly and food preparation). Refer to state and local policy and [guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) on whether any parts of your event could be done in-person.

3. **Host a Reflection, Post-Event.** Finally, after your event has concluded, host a reflection meeting to process and learn from the event. A [Reflections on Service and Philanthropy Guide](#) is available to assist officers in facilitating this process.

Postponing or Canceling an Event

In the unfortunate event that your planned service or philanthropy activity must be canceled, consider the following options:

1. **Postpone Your Event.** Inform donors, supporters, event attendees, and volunteers that the event is being postponed until further notice. The chapter or colony should provide information on the plan for communicating event updates assuring everyone involved that they will be notified as soon as a new date is able to be confirmed.
2. **For Philanthropy Events, Consider Pivoting the Campaign or Event.** Inform donors and prospective attendees that although the in-person event is canceled, the chapter or colony still intends to fundraise for the charity. Thinking creatively, consider how aspects of the original event could be moved virtual (e.g. a 5K race could become a virtual 5k where participants ask for sponsors to support their completion of 5K that they complete on their own). Communication is key. Make sure to keep participants informed of your event changes and allow them the option of a refund if and when the details of the event change.
3. **Canceling the Event.** Worst case scenario, the chapter or colony must cancel the scheduled community service and philanthropy events. For philanthropy events, we recommend sending an email to your donors/supporters asking if they would be willing to allow their donations/ticket sales/apparel purchases/etc. to remain with the chapter and be donated directly to the charity. Sometimes a simple ask goes a long way and many donors may be willing to allow their purchases to act as a donation to the charity. For community service events, notify the organization you intended to support right away and discuss a potential alternative date in the future.

Virtual Service and Philanthropy Ideas

Virtual 5K or Run/Walk Challenge – Participants coordinate with sponsors to support their completion of a virtual 5K or challenge. Funds could be raised based on a set distance or for each mile run over a set period.

Letter Writing Campaign – Participants ask friends and family for support in raising funds for a cause or organization. Letters should include information on the cause and how to donate.

Grow a Mustache/Beard, Shave Your Head – Organizations like the [Movember Foundation](#) and the [St. Baldrick's Foundation](#) have created the inspiration for this type of event. Participants pledge to grow a beard or mustache over a set length of time or shave their head on a specified date while raising funds along the way. The event can also be used to raise awareness and solidarity for those benefited by the event.

Trivia Night – Chapter or colony coordinates a trivia night for participants using an online meeting platform. Funds can be raised through an entry fee or sponsorships. Small prizes can be given away for the winner(s).

Assembling Care Packages and/or Food Preparation – Some organizations have turned to volunteers to assist with the assembly and preparation of food and care packages that are given to homeless and other vulnerable populations. Volunteers should work closely with coordinating organizations to ensure that they are meeting healthy and safety requirements.

Video Game Tournament – Chapter or colony coordinates a tournament for a popular video game. Funds can be raised through an entry fee or sponsorships. Small prizes can be given away for the winner(s).

Master Class – Chapter or colony can work with an alumnus or friend of the chapter to host a “master class” on a topic of interest over a video conferencing platform. The class could be on any topic, such as crafting, cooking, developing a skill, etc. Funds could be raised through a participant registration fee or through sponsorships.

Contactless Activities – Some chapters and colonies may encounter a situation where restrictions still permit small gatherings. When appropriate, you might consider hosting contactless service and philanthropy activities. For example, a car wash could be held where customers pay using a mobile payment service, so they never have to leave their car. Chapters and colonies should always follow local and state guidance regarding the size of any gathering and the use of personal protective equipment.

Additional Resources and Support

For additional support, consider using the Fraternity’s [CrowdChange](#) service. CrowdChange is a fundraising platform to assist chapters and colonies with their philanthropy efforts. The platform provides access to helpful features such as fundraising pages, ticketing features, apparel and sponsorship sales, and leader boards.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance with your community service and philanthropy efforts, please contact your chapter or colony’s [Leadership Consultant](#).