



Stoneham Housing Residents Union Fundraising Strategy Packet

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Stoneham Housing Residents Union (SHRU)

Fundraising Strategy Overview

SHRU is a resident-led, community-based organization. Our fundraising approach is built around transparency, relationships, specific community needs, and long-term sustainability. Our strongest support consistently comes from residents, local businesses, and community partners. We have found that local businesses are often quicker to respond and more willing to invest directly in the people and neighborhoods they know.

How Our Fundraising Model Works

- Start with a clear need. We fundraise around a specific project, event, or resident need rather than making a general request for money.
- Make the ask transparent. Supporters should know exactly what we are raising funds for, how they can help, and what the expected result will be.
- Lead with the community. We reach out to residents, local businesses, existing supporters, and community partners before relying on larger corporate fundraising.
- Make participation easy. People can give money, sponsor an item or activity, donate supplies or services, host a collection, or connect us with another resource.
- Follow up and build relationships. We treat every contribution as the beginning of a relationship, not the end of a transaction.
- Show the result and recognize support. We communicate what was accomplished and publicly thank donors and partners whenever appropriate.

Building Longer-Term Sustainability

Alongside community fundraising, SHRU is pursuing larger grants to support more consistent programming throughout the year. Grant funding is competitive, and we have experienced both wins and losses. We treat grant development as a long-term process: keep applying, learn from each result, and build stronger applications over time.

- Shared responsibility. Three board members will each aim to pursue approximately three grant opportunities per year.
- Long-term goal. Reduce dependence on one-time fundraising while creating more stable resources for resident programs and activities.

Our guiding principle:

*Be clear about the need, transparent about the purpose, intentional about relationships,
and persistent about finding multiple ways to fund the work.*

SHRU Fundraising in Practice

Back-to-School & Holiday Fundraising Case Studies

Back-to-School: Same Strategy, Different Year

Our Back-to-School model is simple: each child has an individualized backpack and school-supply wish list, and a community member or business can sponsor that need directly. Supporters know exactly what they are funding and what the result will be.

- 2025: about 70 sponsors were lined up within roughly one hour.
- 2026: the same basic outreach took about three days to secure 34 sponsors.
- What changed: local economic pressure affected giving. The strategy itself had not necessarily stopped working; the environment around it was different.
- How we adapted: we kept reaching out. The Trooper Tamar Bucci Memorial Foundation then stepped in and helped cover the remaining sponsorship need.

Holiday Fundraising: Learning, Then Evolving the Model

In our first year, SHRU ran two separate raffles at the same time. One raffle featured donated Bruins tickets with excellent seats and the winner could choose any game that season. The other was a wine basket filled with wine and gift cards.

- What happened: the Bruins ticket raffle generated about \$1,500, while the wine basket received much less attention.
- What we did: we paused the wine-basket raffle, kept every existing entry valid, and relaunched it separately in November. It then raised approximately another \$500.
- What came next: after that experience, we developed the three-basket model we now use for Halloween and St. Patrick's Day. Supporters have several prize options, and buying multiple spots gives them multiple chances to win.
- What we are testing in 2026: one larger 'No Tricks, All Treats' prize package instead of our usual three-basket format. We want to see whether one strong combined prize can be as successful as the model we already know works.

What These Examples Teach Us

- Fundraising is not completely predictable. The same strategy can perform differently depending on timing, the economy, the prize, and what is happening around you.
- Know your community calendar. Stay involved and pay attention to other local fundraisers before you launch. If another organization is already running a similar raffle, drive, or appeal, consider changing your timing or format instead of competing for the same limited dollars. Supporters may also feel a personal connection to another mission or cause, and that can affect where they choose to give.
- Track results and be willing to adjust. Pausing, separating, relaunching, or changing the format of a fundraiser does not mean it failed. It means you are using what you learned.
- Keep the ask specific and transparent. People should understand what they are supporting, how they can participate, and what the money will accomplish.
- Build relationships before you need them. Residents, local businesses, community organizations, and past supporters may become the people who step in when circumstances change.

Creativity gets attention. Clarity gets donations.

Sample Fundraising Flyers

Two Different Fundraisers, One Clear Approach



Stoneham Housing Residents Union

BACK TO SCHOOL

BACKPACK AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES WISH LIST SPONSORS NEEDED!

-  \$40 max limit per backpack.
-  Child has individualized school lists.
-  Every backpack and wish list you sponsor helps a local kid start off the school year with confidence.
-  Sponsor a child's backpack and school supply list, and you'll receive two giveaway entries.



Every backpack and/or school-supply wish list you support, you will be entered into a giveaway of a **\$50** gift card of your choice from one of our Big Dawg Supporters: Christine's Sweet Shoppe & More, **Pizza Mia Stoneham**, or **Rapid Liquors**.





 Any questions? Reach our general inbox: shru.community@gmail.com

Back-to-School Sponsorship

- Specific ask: \$40 maximum per backpack and individualized school-supply wish lists.
- Easy participation: supporters know exactly what they are sponsoring and how to help.

Both examples use the same core principle: make the purpose, cost, participation method, and outcome easy to understand.



Stoneham Housing Residents Union's

NO TRICKS, ALL TREATS BASKET

BLACKHOLLOW

TWO TICKETS for Saturday, November 7th, 2026
7:00 PM performance

Graciously donated by
Greater Boston Stage Company



\$100 The Stones gift card



\$50 Rapid Liquors gift card

DRAWING:
Sunday, November 1, 2026

Winner will be contacted by phone or email.

TICKETS: \$10 per spot or 4 for \$30

All proceeds to benefit the
SHRU Mickey Marracco 2026 Family Christmas Party

ONE WINNER GETS ALL PRIZES!

Venmo @Brianna-SHRU

Phone number and/or email in Venmo message.

Any questions? shru.community@gmail.com

No Tricks, All Treats Fundraiser

- Clear prize package: exact prizes, ticket cost, drawing date, and payment method are listed.
- Transparent purpose: supporters can immediately see what the proceeds will benefit.

Sample Sponsorship Request

Northern Bank Community Enrichment Partnership - January 2026

STONEHAM HOUSING RESIDENTS UNION

Local Tenant Organization · Community-Led · 100% Volunteer Driven
Stoneham, Massachusetts

January 2, 2026

Dear Northern Bank Community Outreach Team,

I am writing on behalf of the Stoneham Housing Residents Union to introduce our organization and to invite Northern Bank to consider becoming a Community Enrichment Partner supporting residents of the Stoneham Housing Authority.

The Stoneham Housing Residents Union is the local tenant organization representing families, seniors, and residents living within Stoneham Housing Authority communities. We are a volunteer-led organization made up of residents focused on strengthening community connections, improving quality of life, and ensuring access to meaningful programs and support.

Over the past three years, SHRU has coordinated resident-driven programming that meets real and immediate needs. During the holiday season, we fulfill nearly seventy Christmas wishlists for children and senior residents, helping families experience a dignified and joyful holiday. Our Back-to-School Backpack Drive provides more than seventy students with backpacks and school supplies selected to meet their individual needs, helping children begin the school year prepared and confident.

In addition, we host regular senior and community programming, including bingo and game nights paired with resident meals. These events help reduce isolation, strengthen social connection, and foster a sense of belonging, particularly for seniors living in public housing.

All of our work is carried out by tenant volunteers and funded through community fundraising, raffles, and local sponsorships. As participation continues to grow, we are seeking more stable support that will allow us to sustain these programs responsibly throughout the year.

With this in mind, we respectfully invite Northern Bank to consider becoming a Community Enrichment Partner through an annual \$1,000 donation to support SHRU's ongoing work.

The Stoneham Housing Residents Union has applied for federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and is currently awaiting IRS determination. Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be happy to provide any additional information at your convenience.

With appreciation,

Dani Connolly
President
Stoneham Housing Residents Union

What Happened

- January 2: the request was submitted to Northern Bank for charitable funding.
- January 20: Northern Bank Charitable Foundation approved the request for the full \$1,000.
- Why this is useful: the request introduced the organization, showed specific community impact, explained how SHRU is funded, made one clear dollar ask, and connected the donation directly to ongoing resident programming.

A sponsorship request does not need to be complicated. Introduce who you are, show what you already do, explain the need, and make a clear ask.

After the Ask

Recognition & Relationship-Building

Getting the donation is not the end of the fundraising process. Recognition builds trust, strengthens relationships, and shows supporters that their contribution mattered.

What We Do After a Sponsor Says Yes

- Thank them promptly. A sincere thank-you matters before any public recognition happens.
- Make their support visible. Name the business or organization and connect the support to resident programs or community needs.
- Keep the relationship going. A supporter who feels appreciated may become a long-term community partner rather than a one-time donor.

Thank you to our Local Sponsors!

The Stoneham Housing Residents Union (SHRU) could not do anything without the support of our Stoneham community. We are deeply grateful to our neighbors and local businesses whose generosity helps us build community, support residents, and bring our events to life!



Real-world note: This sponsor-recognition flyer was created in Microsoft Word. We are still learning and improving as we go. Canva has since become one of our most useful design tools. You do not need perfect software - you need clear, consistent recognition.

Recognition should be genuine, specific, and connected to impact.

Practical Tools & Community Partnerships

Use What You Have. Build Relationships. Keep Learning.

SHRU did not begin with professional fundraising software or a perfect system. We have learned by doing - using accessible tools, building community relationships, and improving from one fundraiser to the next.

Tools We Actually Use

- Microsoft Word and Canva. Word works well for letters, handouts, sponsor lists, and simple materials. Canva has become our go-to for many flyers and social-media graphics because it offers templates, graphics, editing tools, and AI-assisted features while still letting us control the final design.
- ChatGPT and Claude. We use them to help draft professional language, organize ideas, answer questions, and work through sponsorship letters and other written materials.
- Always double-check AI. AI still makes mistakes. Verify names, dates, dollar amounts, grant requirements, legal information, and anything else you plan to present as fact. Use AI as a tool - not as the final authority.

Local Businesses: Our Strongest Community Partners

In SHRU's experience, our most consistent support has come from local businesses rather than large corporations. Small businesses and mom-and-pop shops know the community and are often quicker to step up when residents need support.

- Support the businesses that support your residents. Fundraising should be a relationship, not a one-way request.
- Make their support visible. Include sponsor names or approved logos in newsletters, flyers, and event materials. Thank them on your LTO pages, local town or city community pages, Instagram, personal social-media pages, and other appropriate platforms so residents know who is showing up for their community.
- Keep the relationship going. A business that feels appreciated and connected to the impact may become a long-term partner rather than a one-time donor.

Housing Authority Support

SHRU's fundraising, programming, and decisions remain resident-led and LTO-led. The Stoneham Housing Authority has also supported our efforts in practical ways. Housing staff or leadership may donate personally, provide a safe place for a donation box or collected items, and support the cause. That cooperation is valuable, while the work itself remains led by residents.

What We're Still Improving

We are still building a more consistent follow-up system for sponsorship requests, and we continue developing our grant strategy. Grants are competitive, so we are sharing the workload among board members and learning from both wins and losses.

Our advice: Start with what you have. Use technology to help, verify what it tells you, stay connected to your community, and never underestimate the value of the local relationships you build.

SHRU Fundraising Checklist

Before You Launch, While It Runs & After It Ends

There is no single perfect fundraiser. The goal is to have a clear purpose, a realistic plan, strong community relationships, and enough flexibility to adjust when something does not go exactly as expected.

Before You Launch

- Define the need. What exactly are you raising money for, and what will the money accomplish?
- Make the ask specific. Decide what you are asking people to give, sponsor, purchase, or donate.
- Check the community calendar. Know what other fundraisers are happening so you are not unnecessarily competing with a similar event or appeal.
- Start with relationships. Reach out to residents, local businesses, past supporters, community partners, and other people who already know your work.
- Keep the flyer clear. Someone should be able to quickly understand what it is, what it costs, when it happens, what it supports, and how to participate.

While It Is Running

- Keep donations, entries, and commitments organized. Make sure money, raffle entries, donated items, and sponsorship promises can be tracked accurately.
- Watch the response. If something is not working, look at timing, competition, the economy, the prize or ask, and the audience before deciding the fundraiser has failed.
- Adjust when needed. Change the timing, separate prizes, extend outreach, or bring in another partner if that gives the fundraiser a better chance to succeed.
- Communicate clearly. Share reminders and updates without overwhelming people or cluttering the message.

After It Ends

- Follow through on what you promised. Complete the project, distribute the support, hold the drawing, or deliver the benefit exactly as advertised.
- Thank people well. Recognize sponsors, donors, volunteers, businesses, and community partners privately and publicly when appropriate.
- Show the result. Let supporters see what their contribution helped accomplish.
- Write down what you learned. Track what worked, what did not, and what you would change before the next fundraiser.
- Keep the relationship. The end of one fundraiser should be the beginning of the next conversation with people who believe in your work.

Fundraising is not just asking for money. It is building trust, showing impact, and giving people a clear way to invest in their community.