



FREE BUDGET WORKBOOK

Charity Raffle

Budget Planner

Know what your raffle could raise before you launch. Plan for three different scenarios, account for every cost, including the easy-to-miss ones, and use the numbers to make smarter decisions about your campaign.

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How to Use This Workbook

A raffle budget is a simple document that answers one important question: will your raffle actually make funds, and how much?

It is easy to skip. Raffles can be forgiving, and many still turn a profit without much financial planning. But the raffles that disappoint often reveal problems that could have been spotted before launch.

Think of the campaign that raised \$4,000 but cost \$3,200 to run, or the successful raffle that took eighty volunteer hours to generate only a few hundred dollars in net revenue. A simple budget can help you catch those issues early and make better decisions before you commit time and resources.

You can build yours in an evening. Start with expected revenue, work through every cost, then use the worked example to complete your own blank table. Anything in [square brackets] is for you to fill in.

You'll Find

- 1 **An audience and conversion worksheet**
- 2 **The three scenarios, and what each one is for**
- 3 **Every cost line, including the ones people forget**
- 4 **A worked example you can copy**
- 5 **A blank budget to fill in**
- 6 **A variance review for after the draw**

What a Budget Is Actually For

Not record-keeping. A raffle budget exists to make three decisions before you commit to anything:

- ✓ **Go or no-go.** If the conservative scenario barely clears costs, the design needs work before launch, not after.
- ✓ **Where your effort goes.** The gap between target and stretch tells you how much movement is actually available.
- ✓ **What the cap should be.** A cap your stretch scenario can approach creates real scarcity. A fantasy cap creates nothing.

STEP #1

Start on the Revenue Side

Revenue is price times tickets sold, and the honest version of that equation starts with audience, not ambition. Estimate the people who will genuinely see your raffle, then apply a conversion you could defend out loud.

Your warm audience

Email list: []

Event attendance: []

Social reach: []

Sellers' combined networks: []

Total warm audience: []

Conversion you can defend: []% Buyers at target: []

For a community organisation with a decent prize, converting 10 to 20% of a warm audience is solid, and a stretch assumption should still embarrass nobody.

Build Three Scenarios, Not One Number

Scenario	What it assumes	What you use it for
Conservative	The raffle underperforms, and only your reliable core buys	The go or no-go decision
Target	Your honest expectation	Planning and resourcing
Stretch	Promotion lands, sellers deliver, and the cap sells out	Setting the cap, and judging what extra effort is worth

STEP #2

List Every Cost

Including the invisible ones. Unbudgeted small costs are how margins leak.

Cost line	What goes in it	The trap
Prizes	Purchased prizes at full cost. Donated prizes enter at zero	This is the line that decides your economics. Every purchased prize you convert to a donation drops straight through to net
Platform and payment	However your platform charges, plus card processing on each sale	Model it on your target scenario's volume, or the comparison between options is not honest
Permits and licences	Whatever your jurisdiction charges for a raffle of your size	These are due before any revenue exists. Check early, and check locally
Promotion and print	Signage, QR code printing, perhaps a boosted post	Often near zero for a digital-first campaign. Budget it anyway
Float and fiddly bits	Cash float for event sales, prize delivery or postage, thank-you gestures for volunteers	Small lines, real money
Contingency	A percentage of gross revenue. The worked example uses 5%	Without it, one surprise turns a good result into an average one

Two Rules That Keep the Numbers Clean

- ✓ **Donated prizes go in at zero.** Which is why chasing donations is the highest-return hour of the whole project.
- ✓ **Sponsor underwriting is a negative cost, not revenue.** Budget it that way and your "raised for the cause" figure stays clean.

THE EXAMPLE

A Worked Budget

A school raffle: \$5 tickets with a 3-for-\$12 bundle, a warm audience of about 1,200 families, and event attendance of 400.

Line	Conservative	Target	Stretch
Tickets sold	600	1,000	1,500
Average transaction	\$9	\$10	\$11
Gross revenue	\$2,700	\$4,200	\$6,200
Prizes (1 purchased plus donated)	-\$400	-\$400	-\$400
Platform and payment costs	-\$120	-\$190	-\$280
Permit	-\$60	-\$60	-\$60
Print and signage	-\$120	-\$120	-\$120
Contingency (5%)	-\$135	-\$210	-\$310
Net proceeds	\$1,865	\$3,220	\$5,030
Cost ratio	31%	23%	19%

Three Things This Table Teaches

- ✓ **The break-even is trivially low.** A few hundred dollars of sales covers every cost. That is the structural reason raffles are low-risk fundraisers.
- ✓ **The cost ratio falls as sales rise.** Most costs are fixed, so scale is nearly free.
- ✓ **The purchased prize is the line worth attacking.** Convert it to a donation and every scenario's net jumps by its full cost, while the ratio drops several points.

YOUR TURN

Your Budget

Same rows, your numbers. Work left to right: conservative first, because that is the column that decides whether you run this raffle at all.

Line	Conservative	Target	Stretch
Tickets sold	[]	[]	[]
Average transaction	[]	[]	[]
Gross revenue	[]	[]	[]
Prizes	[]	[]	[]
Platform and payment costs	[]	[]	[]
Permits and licences	[]	[]	[]
Promotion and print	[]	[]	[]
Float and fiddly bits	[]	[]	[]
Contingency	[]	[]	[]
Net proceeds	[]	[]	[]
Cost ratio	[]	[]	[]

Cost ratio is total costs divided by gross revenue. Break-even is the point where gross revenue covers your fixed lines, and for most raffles it arrives early.

DECIDE

Use the Budget as a Decision Tool

You did not write this to file it. Each of the three columns is answering a different question.

The decision	What the budget tells you	What to do if the answer is bad
Go or no-go	Whether the conservative scenario clears your costs	Redesign before launch: better prizes, a bigger audience, a different price, or a sponsor underwriting the costs
Where effort goes	The size of the gap between target and stretch	Work out which levers close it, usually an earlier launch, seller mobilisation and the countdown push, then decide whether they are worth it
What the cap should be	Whether your stretch scenario could actually approach the cap	Lower it. A cap stretch can approach creates real scarcity. A fantasy cap creates nothing

If the Conservative Column Is Thin

These are the four levers, roughly in order of how much they move:

- ✓ **Convert a purchased prize to a donation.** The single biggest move available in most raffle budgets.
- ✓ **Find a sponsor to underwrite the costs.** Budgeted as a negative cost, it lifts every scenario at once.
- ✓ **Widen the audience before you launch.** Sellers' networks are the cheapest audience you are not yet using.
- ✓ **Revisit the price and the bundle.** Average transaction is the quietest lever on the whole sheet.

AFTER THE DRAW

Track Actuals Against It

Drop the real numbers into the same rows. It takes about fifteen minutes with your platform's payments and summary reports, and the variances are next campaign's education.

Line	Budgeted (target)	Actual	Variance
Tickets sold	[]	[]	[]
Average transaction	[]	[]	[]
Gross revenue	[]	[]	[]
Prizes	[]	[]	[]
Platform and payment costs	[]	[]	[]
Permits and licences	[]	[]	[]
Promotion and print	[]	[]	[]
Float and fiddly bits	[]	[]	[]
Net proceeds	[]	[]	[]
Cost ratio	[]	[]	[]

What Each Variance Is Telling You

- ✓ **Sales against scenario.** Grades your audience assumptions. Were you optimistic, or was the reach really there?
- ✓ **Average transaction against budget.** Grades your bundle design. This is the number your pricing decisions show up in.
- ✓ **Any cost line that surprised you.** Gets a better estimate next time. Write the real figure in now, while you remember why.

PRO TIPS

Tips for a Budget That Holds

- ✓ **Start with audience, not ambition.** Work forwards from who will actually see it.
- ✓ **Use a conversion you could defend out loud.** 10 to 20% of a warm audience is solid.
- ✓ **Put donated prizes in at zero, then chase more.** It is the highest-return hour of the project.
- ✓ **Treat underwriting as a negative cost.** Not as revenue. It keeps your raised-for-the-cause figure honest.
- ✓ **Model platform costs on target volume.** Not on stretch, or the comparison flatters you.
- ✓ **Budget the small stuff.** Unbudgeted small costs are how margins leak.
- ✓ **Write it in an evening.** A budget nobody wrote is why disappointing raffles disappoint.

Keep the Costs Where You Can See Them

A digital raffle concentrates the cost side into visible, predictable lines. No ticket printing runs, no manual reconciliation hours, and the reports produce your actuals for you:

- ✓ Digital tickets delivered instantly via email or SMS, so there is nothing to print
- ✓ Flexible pricing: single tickets, bundle deals and early-bird offers
- ✓ Winners notified instantly via email or SMS, by a secure random draw system
- ✓ No app download needed for your supporters
- ✓ Funds go straight to your own account. GalaBid never touches them

Real fundraising experts, not chatbots. Trusted by fundraisers since 2011.

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