

# Friends OF THE POOR<sup>®</sup> WALK

[fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org)



**WALK COORDINATOR PACKET**



**“Let us do our duty well, let us go straight to God, let us work to become very humble, very patient, and very charitable.”**

**– St. Vincent de Paul**



# WELCOME, FRIENDS!

Congratulations on hosting a Friends of the Poor® Walk in your area. Since 2008, more than \$27 million has been raised to help neighbors in need in YOUR community! Conferences and Councils across the country have hosted this event to raise funds and awareness for the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul both nationally and locally.

In this packet you will find everything you need to get started, including the official policies and strategies from the field. If you have any questions, please reach out at [fopwalk@svdpusa.org](mailto:fopwalk@svdpusa.org).

Thank you for your commitment to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and our neighbors in need.

Yours in Christ,  
Alyssa Bergman  
Director of Annual Giving  
National Council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul





# Event Checklist

- Identify your Walk Coordinator.

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- Ask those willing to assist in leadership capacities to assist as the Walk committee (not every event has a committee, but it does ease the load of the Walk Coordinator).

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- Decide if you want to do the Walk on a small scale, or make it a large event with entertainment, walking city streets/park, etc.

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- Select a location and date for the event.

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- If first year, and a smaller event, church grounds or a local high school track will require permission, but is typically easy to obtain, and rarely requires permits.

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- If hosting event on a larger scale that requires streets to be shut down, police escort, etc., then obtain necessary permits.

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- If you are planning to raise funds online or require online registration, select a vendor. Please see "Fundraising Options" document for some vendor recommendations.

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- Check for liability insurance, and make sure you meet necessary minimum requirements.

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- Recruit event day volunteers.

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- Identify event needs (such as table/booths, food, water, walk routes, signage, etc.)

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# Event Checklist

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- Enlist local business involvement for in-kind donations (water, snacks, etc.)

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- Recruit corporate sponsors for the event — it's a great way to bring in additional funds.

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- Promote participation with marketing materials and registration forms, at city events, after church, parish events, nearby churches, schools, youth groups, outside clubs, and community organizations. To advertise your event on the National FOP Walk website, please send link to [fopwalk@svdpusa.org](mailto:fopwalk@svdpusa.org) **at least 4 weeks before** your event.

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- Order t-shirts > visit [www.fopwalk.org](http://www.fopwalk.org)

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- Send a press release for media coverage of your event.

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- Continue promoting walker registrations (flyers, brochures, etc.)

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- Encourage participants to create a team, bring friends, and continue to ask for pledges for the event.

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- Assemble volunteers and confirm their duties for event day.

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- Set-up day of event.

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- Clean-up post-event. (You will want volunteers lined up to assist with this. It's a great way to get youth and young adults involved! Ask the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, high school clubs, etc., to help with this.)

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- Post-event evaluation for next year.

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- Complete final report form using the button on [www.fopwalk.org](http://www.fopwalk.org)

# OFFICIAL PROCEDURES

## OVERVIEW

The Friends of the Poor® Walk was launched in 2008, at which time the original policies and event standards were approved by the National Board of Directors of the National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP USA). This version has been updated with the intent to preserve the national branding of the event and to provide further guidance in running a successful event.

By participating in the Friends of the Poor® Walk, all Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conferences/Councils and FOP® Walk organizers are subject to compliance with these Policies and Event Standards.

This document reflects the OFFICIAL EVENT PROCEDURES. These policies must be followed. Violation of the policies and/or event standards may result in expulsion from participation in the Friends of the Poor® Walk event.

## BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The Friends of the Poor® Walk is a nationwide signature event of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA. This event is coordinated by SVdP USA's Advancement Team, and is meant to raise awareness and funds to support local Conference/Council services to neighbors in need.

SVDP USA will establish a national FOP® Walk date (held each year on the Saturday before St. Vincent de Paul's Feast day September 27). However, if this date does not work for some reason, please find a date that fits best with your Conference or Council!

## INSURANCE & SAFETY

Participant safety is a major priority, especially in the staging area, walk/run course, and start/finish area. In case of an emergency, event hosts must have access to Police, Ambulance, and Fire Department.

All participants and volunteers must sign the Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form provided on the [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) website.

Event general liability insurance is required by each event host (\$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million in the aggregate, recommendation is that SVDP USA is named as the additional insured.)

## BRANDING

The Friends of the Poor® Walk is a trademarked brand, and must be respected as such. Please remember to use the official name as “Friends of the Poor® Walk”, or if abbreviated, “FOP® Walk.” The trademark symbol “®” should always be used after the word “Poor” (or after the letter “P” in “FOP”) within the title.

Because this event is branded as the Friends of the Poor® Walk, please use this as the official title, not any “spinoff” titles, including “Walk for the Poor.”

The FOP® Walk is a national sub-brand of the National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul. All events must adhere to the established graphic standards. This includes (but is not limited to) brochures, posters, banners, signs, website and social media sites. It is also important to follow these branding requirements, including the official FOP® Walk logo, when creating brochures, banners, social media sites (including, but not limited to, Facebook and Twitter), all walk day materials, etc.

## MERCHANDISE

Each Walk Coordinator is responsible for ordering and purchasing their event's t-shirts. You may find a bulk t-shirt order option, and a custom order apparel option, available on [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org). These options are provided by a pre-determined vendor that SVDP USA recommends.

The Walk Coordinator may choose to use their own t-shirt design vendor (for example, if shirts can be attained as an in-kind donation or at a further discounted price, which is encouraged). However, the design chosen by SVDP USA must be placed on the front of the shirt. If you choose to have shirts made locally, please contact SVDP USA for the FOP® logo.



# OFFICIAL PROCEDURES CONT.



## WEBSITE

The official website for the Friends of the Poor® Walk is maintained by SVdP USA ([www.fopwalk.org](http://www.fopwalk.org)). This website contains the following downloadable event resources: planning, media, sponsor, and administrative/organizational material including marketing graphics.

*Disclaimer: SVDP USA works to ensure that the information provided on the website is accurate, timely, and useful. SVDP USA, its affiliates, or agents, and any other parties involved in the preparation or publication of this event/website are not responsible for errors or omissions in information provided on the site, or actions resulting from the use of such information.*

Walk Coordinators are encouraged to promote their event on their local Conference, Council, or parish website. If you would like to create your own Friends of the Poor® Walk website with donation link, you are welcome to do so. If you would like your event listed on [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) with your website/donation link, please send the information **4 weeks in advance of your event** to [fopwalk@svdpsusa.org](mailto:fopwalk@svdpsusa.org).





## **ETHICS**

All events must be planned in accordance to the Mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: Inspired by Gospel Values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic Lay organization. Leading women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service, to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and Patron, St. Vincent de Paul. Lastly, the Society collaborates with other people of goodwill in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served because, in them, Vincentians See the Face of Christ.

Ethics also includes employing sound event planning; keeping the fundraising costs and event expenses as low as possible. (Sponsorships can play an important role in offsetting expenses.) Suppliers/sponsors of the event should not receive any special treatment in return for their support, beyond the typical recognition for their donation. Beware of any conflict of interest with your Board and/or planning committee members.

## **EVENT PLANNING**

The event can be organized and implemented individually by any SVdP Conference or Council, and/or by banding together to form larger, more lucrative events.

Each event should have a planning committee and participation by local SVDP Board of Directors and/or executive management.

Event management materials (planning, media, fundraising, logistics, etc.) will be provided on the [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) website. Councils and Conferences are encouraged to reach out to local media and businesses to develop local exposure and cultivate sponsorships/donations.

All participants must sign the Accident Waiver and Release of Liability form. This can be set up online with your online registration/donation platform or done in person the day of the event.

## **FINAL REPORT**

Each Walk Coordinator is responsible for completing a final report after your event concludes. Please go to [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) and click the button labeled "Final Report Form," then follow prompts to submit your feedback.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **How are Walks coordinated between Conferences and Councils?**

Walks can be organized and implemented by Conferences or Councils. Conferences may host a local event by themselves, or in conjunction with other Conferences. Additionally, some Councils choose to host an event, thus providing logistical support to ensure a potentially larger and more lucrative event. Regardless of where the participant actually walks, pledges will be credited to the Conference or Council of their choice, designated by the participant.

## **Can we pick another date for our event?**

If the national date for the Friends of the Poor® Walk (held each year on the Saturday before St. Vincent de Paul's Feast day September 27) is in conflict with another community event, you may pick another date, before or after, from the official national date. Whatever works best for your Conference or Council!

## **Is there a registration fee for a walker?**

You are not required to have a walk registration fee, but you can. Some events have a low registration fee and offer free t-shirts! Others do not have a registration fee and focus on asking walkers to donate. It's up to you!

## **What are the details on the Walk t-shirts?**

SVdP USA partners with a vendor to produce and distribute youth and adult Walk t-shirts at a very reasonable price. You can still have your local corporate sponsors printed on the back if you wish, although pricing will vary by size. Shirts may be ordered on [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org).

## **How do we get people to participate?**

The easiest way to get a base of participants is to enlist the support of your Conference members. Ask each member to attend with at least five friends or family members. That will be your core group.

Since many people enjoy competition, you might issue a challenge between multiple service clubs, schools, or other organizations to see who can get the highest percentage of participation. Send a press release to local news media (see sample local press release on the website). Use your personal and work email to invite friends, family, and coworkers. Send a short message inviting them to walk with you or make a financial contribution. Also, ask your email contacts to bring friends or pass along the word about your event. Invite prominent community leaders to talk about the Walk at meetings and events. Also ask for their participation and mention them in the press release.

## How can we increase the chances of greater media attention?

The website offers tools to achieve the best success in garnering and growing local media attraction for your event. If you have questions, please contact the SVdP USA Communications Team:

Jill Pioter • (314) 576-3993 x203 • [jpioter@svdpusa.org](mailto:jpioter@svdpusa.org)

Kristen Blacksher • (314) 576-3993 x219 • [kblacksher@svdpusa.org](mailto:kblacksher@svdpusa.org)

## Can I raise money from local sponsors to help underwrite local costs?

Yes! You can also seek sponsorships for products used at your event. Check [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) for sample sponsorship levels and communications to get started.

## Do we need to keep records?

Conferences and Councils are strongly encouraged to maintain complete and accurate contact information for all participants and donors. In addition, accurate receipts of offline monies received should be provided in a timely manner to the donors.

It is strongly recommended by SVdP USA that event organizers do not store donor information. If you are using an online registration/donation platform, please offer an option for donors to be anonymous.

It is required that your Conference/Council submit a final report form at the conclusion of your event to SVdP USA. Please go to [fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org) and click the button labeled "Final Report Form," then follow prompts to submit your feedback.



The image features a blue background on the left with the logo for "Friends of the Poor Walk". The logo consists of the word "Friends" in a white, cursive script, followed by "OF THE POOR" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, and "WALK" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. A white arrow points upwards from the "F" in "Friends". Below the logo, the text "\$27 million RAISED!" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. On the right side of the image, there is a photograph of four people (three women and one man) smiling and posing for a photo. They are wearing blue caps and jackets. They are holding a white banner that reads "WE TOOK A STEP TO END POVERTY!" in blue capital letters. There is a small logo on the banner that matches the "Friends of the Poor" logo.

# PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The following list was compiled by Conferences/Councils that have graciously shared their successful ideas on hosting a FOP Walk, with the hopes others will find similar success.

## Increasing the Number of Walkers

- Set a goal to increase number of walkers by 30 – 40% from previous year.
- For first-year Walks, set a goal to have at least 100 participants
- Invite neighbors in need who have benefited from SVdP services to participate.
- Invite Board of Directors, leadership, and parish leaders to participate, walk, and create a team; set a goal for each team to have 8 – 10 walkers.
- Invite a key community leader to be the master of ceremonies.
- Use the Online Reports to contact past year's walkers to join again.
- Set up booth at local Farmer's Market asking for donated and/or for participant signup.
- Involve school groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, National Honor Society, sports groups, Key Club (in one walk location, the National Honor Society alone brought in over \$2,700).
- Sponsor a booth after Mass, at parish picnic, and other parish events (one Walk location put chalk on the bottom of a boot, and made footprints in church that led to their booth for the Walk).
- Create business cards with the Walk website and your event information; hand them out to everyone! This includes the cashier at the grocery store, the waiter at the restaurant, family, friends, neighbors, etc. (Vista Print offers free business cards if you pay the shipping/handling.)
- Have a Vincentian or priest briefly talk about the upcoming Walk after every Mass for the month before the event.
- Have everyone you know take a Walk flyer to their workplace.

## Food

- Provide potluck meal after the Walk.
- Raise additional funds for a Walk being held in the morning with a pancake breakfast.
- Check whether local businesses can donate lunch box meals.
- Sponsor a cookout after the Walk.

## Media

- Make a noontime television appearance on local news station.
- Put announcement on the online calendar of local media outlets.
- One Conference asked a local news anchor to host the event, but instead got a 5-minute spot on the FOP Walk.

## Involving Schools/Youth

- Involve local high school students, groups/classes, and those needing community service hours.
- Ask whether the school's principal will send email blast to the parents of students.
- See if your school principal will send a letter about the FOP Walk offering a dress down day at \$1/student; money goes to the FOP Walk, and parents are now aware of the event as well.
- Ask your school to sponsor an essay contest among for students with the topic "Being a Good Samaritan in Today's World," then announce the winner at the event.
- Invite the local choir to sing "God Bless America" at the beginning of the event to incorporate students and their families.
- Invite Confirmation groups and the church youth groups to join as a service project.

## Involving Your Priest and Church

- Send an email blast to head of ministries within the church.
- Ask your parish priest to send an email blast to the parishioners.
- Ask whether the Mass held the week before Walk can be dedicated to the FOP Walk.
- Find out if the Church website can include registration forms and a link to FOP Walk website.

## Fundraising

- Have a "Sponsor a Walker Weekend" at church. Put envelopes labeled Friends of the Poor Walk. One small Walk location raised \$1,108 just using this fundraising method.
- Create a "100 for 100 Campaign" asking your entire parish after every Mass to support your efforts, by having 100 parishioners donate/pledge \$100 each to the Walk.
- Come up with prizes for top fundraisers, both personally and as a team.
- Involve Catholic Financial Life as a Walk team and potential sponsor.
- Have walkers utilize social media such as Facebook to make a personal fundraising ask.
- Ask for donations to your walker page instead of a birthday present (also mention this on Facebook).
- Start early by periodically reminding participants about the upcoming Walk and gently encourage them to raise money (reports online will provide their email addresses, then just send one email to all walkers through the blind carbon copy function on your email provider).
- Collect money for the Walk by asking businesses and/or schools to sponsor a "dress down day" or Casual Friday for \$1 – \$5/person per day.
- Offer a raffle with donated goods.
- Offer a 50/50 raffle.





**Friends**  
**OF THE POOR**®  
**WALK**  
[fopwalk.org](http://fopwalk.org)

**Questions Regarding the Friends of the Poor® Walk, Contact:**

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**(314) 576-3993 ext. 218**  
**[abergman@svdpusa.org](mailto:abergman@svdpusa.org)**

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