



# Student-Led Fundraising Guide



## Student-Led Fundraising

Fundraising may sound intimidating, but in reality, it's one of the quickest and most successful ways students have financed their Atlantis experience. We've seen time and time again that pre-health students often underestimate how much support they can raise when they share their story authentically.

Whether you're launching a GoFundMe campaign or sending personalized support letters, the key is connecting your community to your goals. When people see how Atlantis fits into your journey toward becoming a physician or PA, they want to support you.

In fact, based on our observations and student-reported outcomes, those who follow our fundraising guidance typically raise over \$2,000, with many covering the entire cost of the program. Plus, you can consider using the story of your fundraising efforts in your med school applications and interviews, since it directly highlights AAMC competency #8, Resilience & Adaptability. Don't let money keep you from participating in a professional experience that's truly life-changing.



## STRATEGY ONE

# Write Support Letters

One of the most effective ways to raise money quickly is to write a support-request letter and mail this to friends and family. Send it to anyone and everyone (grandparents, aunts, cousins, parents' co-workers, high-school teachers, your football coach, your orthodontist), including people that are acquaintances.

You'll be surprised by how many people are willing and able to invest in your future! You could send this as an email, but it's always nicer to get something in the mail (handwritten is a plus). Personal touches can make a difference, and a personalized, handwritten letter will garner more support than a generic, typed email.

### CASTING A VISION

Start by sharing your story! Within your letter, it is important for you to articulate the WHY. Why medicine? Why Atlantis? People don't want to support Atlantis in and of itself – they want to support YOU in your dreams and pursuits. The more that you can describe your passion and journey, the more people feel inspired to support your future.

When you communicate your story, donors understand that they are contributing to something greater and worthwhile.

### START BY VERBALIZING:

- Why medicine?
- What are you interested in within the medical field?
- How did you hear about Atlantis or what attracted you to it?
- What is an Atlantis program?
- What do you hope to gain from this experience? How can people help you?

It's always good to explain that you would be glad to speak on the phone or meet in person over coffee for further discussion with people who want more information. A personal phone call or in-person discussion could lead to a great conversation about your need, your upcoming program, and a possible donation.

Take a look at our example letter on the next page.

# Example Letter

Dear Mr. Example,

## (INTRODUCTION)

I hope this letter finds you well. It's been a long time since we last saw each other, and I sincerely hope to see you in the near future. I write to you today to talk about an amazing opportunity and to ask for your support as I take the next steps in my pursuit of becoming a family practice physician.

## (WHY MEDICINE?)

Since I was three years old, I have had an affinity for medicine. To my mother's horror, I tried to treat my younger sister's fever by pouring cold water on her head to cool her temperature. Despite my ineffective methods as a young aficionado, I have not lost my drive for helping others.

## (WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WITHIN THE MEDICAL FIELD?)

I plan on becoming a family practice physician, and while I know my direction could change with further exposure to other medical fields, I know that I want to work with a variety of patients and cases.

## (HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ATLANTIS)

Before starting my sophomore year at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I talked to a friend of mine who participated in an Atlantis program this past summer. I was very inspired by how she described her hospital experience, and I felt motivated to pursue something that would similarly grant me insight into the global medical field.

## (WHAT IS ATLANTIS?)

Atlantis is a pre-med abroad program that connects pre-health students with doctors in hospitals across the world. It is designed to help students like me understand their place in the medical field and get first-hand experience shadowing physicians. As you may know, getting serious shadowing experience in the States is both extremely competitive and rigorously regulated. Yet, pre-med students are all but required to have shadowing experiences, along with unique extracurricular pursuits, to get accepted into medical school. An Atlantis program satisfies both needs.

After hearing about my friend's incredible experience, I applied the next day, interviewed the following week, and was thankfully accepted soon afterwards. Through this program, I will get the opportunity to: shadow international physicians, rotate weekly through various specialties, shadow for 20 hours per week, go on group excursions to experience my host country's culture, connect with other pre-med students around the world, grow personally through this international experience, and volunteer to help tutor English to hospital staff. I will be traveling to Lisbon, Portugal for three weeks, and I am so excited to see healthcare from this new cultural perspective!



# Example Letter (continued)

(WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?)

I am excited to see a variety of departments, and I hope to be either affirmed in my pursuit of family practice or steered in a new direction. I am also excited to discover new local cuisine, swim in beautiful waters, and discover Portuguese culture in Lisbon and other nearby cities!

(HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP YOU?)

I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to read this letter and learning about my summer plans. The total cost for the program is \$5,000, but I am aiming to raise \$6,000 to afford flights, additional food, and any extra expenses. This is where I need your help – if you are willing and able to partner with me in my medical pursuits, I would greatly appreciate a monetary contribution of any amount. No gift is too small, so whether you give \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, or \$500, I would appreciate any support. If you decide that you want to partner with me in this endeavor, you can send a check to my home address, and I would love to keep you updated on my journey and the things that I learn from it.

I will be sending a letter after my program to everyone who partners with me so that I can share how I learned and grew from the experience. Thank you again for considering my future medical career, and I would love to speak in person or over the phone if you have any additional questions!

Most sincerely,

Insert Name

Insert home address to receive checks in the mail

Insert payment link or other service option

## STRATEGY TWO

# Create a Profile On a Crowdfunding Website

Another good option to use in conjunction with a physical letter, especially for getting donations from people that you reach through Facebook or social media (and for people who prefer to donate using credit card), is to use GoFundMe.com or a similar service (FundmyTravel, Razoo, etc). Your message on this platform is still the same: communicate why you want to go on a program and how donating to your program fee will help you get into medical school one day. You never know who might view your page!

**Check out these Atlantis alumni who raised thousands of dollars each to fund their once-in-a-lifetime shadowing experience:**



Miles Warren raised \$4,828 to shadow in Athens.



Elechi Egwuekwe raised \$2,700 to shadow in Genoa.



Caleb James Lopez raised \$5,400 to shadow in Madrid.



Claire Hembree raised \$3,720 to shadow in Italy.



Ariyan Cox raised \$3,540 to shadow in Terceira Island.



Reagan Knightstep raised \$3,760 to shadow in Lisbon.



Lexi Hardeman raised \$1,871 to shadow in Ferrol.



Sheridan Waldrop raised \$4,000 to shadow in Portugal.



Jeremy Nelson raised \$2,803 to shadow in Lisbon.



We help build a world where healthcare professionals love their jobs and their patients can sense that. We do this via programs that (a) help put the right people in healthcare and (b) help these people thrive in their field.

**atlantis**

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