



COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

# 2026 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING GUIDE

APRIL 1-MAY 31

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# 2026 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING GUIDE

The CGMA Annual Fundraising Campaign begins April 1. This is our main fundraising event every year — the best opportunity we have to spread the word about CGMA and raise funds for the countless programs that aid the Coast Guard community.

This year's theme is The Power of Us — a reflection of CGMA itself. We are 100% funded through donations. Those donations come primarily from members of the Coast Guard community. That's why this campaign is so important.

This Fundraising Guide is just one of the tools that will help you run a successful campaign. It includes fundraising ideas, key messages, tips for using your local network, and reminders for how to make donations.

## About CGMA

The mission of CGMA is to foster a culture of financial stability, ensuring no one in the Coast Guard community navigates challenges alone. Through collaboration, tailored support, and a strong network, we amplify voices, harness strengths, and provide the resources needed to turn financial obstacles into lasting stability.

On an average day, CGMA provides more than \$27,000 in assistance for everything from disaster and emergency relief to education and rental assistance, and even day-to-day support.

CGMA is congressionally recognized as the Official Relief Society of the U.S. Coast Guard. With this designation, Coast Guard employees are permitted to solicit funds for CGMA in their official capacity (see 5 C.F.R. 2635.808(b)).

## About the Annual Fundraising Campaign

**DATES:** April 1–May 31, 2026

**GOALS:** Increase the number of allotments by 3%, increase civilian contributions, connect with 100% of personnel at each unit, increase awareness of available programs and resources for our Coast Guard family, and — most importantly — raise the funds needed to sustain this work for years to come.

## Local Support

### THE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR ROLE

Campaign Coordinators are crucial to the success of the Annual Fundraising Campaign. Your role is to drive fundraising to reach or exceed unit/command goals by raising awareness about CGMA and supporting direct fundraising.

#### Coordinators:

- **Serve** as the primary point of contact for the campaign.
- **Organize** the kickoff event and deliver the CGMA training session during the month of April.
- **Host** fundraisers as necessary to reach the goal of 100% contact with personnel at their unit.
- **Amplify** the message to the Child Development Center (CDC) and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) employees, as well as employees at Coast Guard Exchange Systems (CGES).
- **Recruit** local Key Workers to support them at units with 50 or more members.
- **Report** campaign results to CGMA-HQ.

### COMMAND SUPPORT

Campaigns are most successful when leadership endorses their value and champions participation, setting an example that inspires others to get involved and contribute. COs/OICs/XOs/Supervisors and individuals may all use their official title, position, and authority to speak, write, and encourage other members of the Coast Guard to donate to CGMA.

- ✓ **Partner** with your CO/OIC/XO to build momentum, demonstrate commitment, and encourage participation throughout the campaign.
- ✓ **Connect** with your CO/OIC/XO to find out when they've scheduled the CGMA campaign All-Hands and provide updates as the Campaign progresses.

### LOCAL KEY WORKERS

At larger units, Key Workers can augment the efforts of Coordinators to help reach 100% of the unit. It is important that Key Workers are motivated, knowledgeable, and trustworthy. Whenever possible, they should be individuals who have volunteered to serve in that capacity and are familiar with CGMA.



“CGMA provides financial support when no one else can. I’ve sat with so many young men and women with families who couldn’t afford basic living needs. Being able to look them in the eye and say you’re going to be OK – CGMA has your back – is an extremely comforting feeling.”

CWO2 SHANE E.  
WETTERSTROM, SECTOR  
CORPUS CHRISTI

## Key Messages

### YOUR DONATIONS ARE CRITICAL TO CGMA FUNDING

- Since CGMA is 100% funded by and reliant on donations, enrolling in or increasing an allotment, or making a one-time donation to CGMA, is the best way to help support your fellow Coasties!
- The primary source of those donations is the Coast Guard community.
- The Power of Us reflects the incredible impact we can make when we come together as a community. Every contribution, no matter the size, combines with others to create a lifeline for those in need.
- One person's donation might help in a small way, but together, our collective giving ensures that CGMA can provide critical support to members of the Coast Guard community when they need it most.
- While the need for support continues to increase, donations have dramatically declined through the years. Over the last decade, allotments have decreased by an average of 877 allotments each year, which is equivalent to \$49,000 per year.
- Without your donations, we cannot continue to provide the support you deserve and have come to rely on.

### EMPHASIZE CONVENIENCE

- If you're not in a position to make a donation today, a payroll allotment is a great way to make a donation. Even \$5 each paycheck can make an impact over time.
- Already enrolled in payroll allotments? Consider increasing it this year.
- It's easy to enroll on the CGMA website or by using the Pledge Form.
- You can also make donations online via credit card (includes a 4% transaction fee), check, or money order — once or as often as you'd like.



# Spread the Word

## HOST A CAMPAIGN ALL-HANDS MEETING

The campaign kicks off April 1, so early April (before April 15) is the best time to hold your Campaign All-Hands meeting. Hosting your kickoff event during an All-Hands meeting is an excellent way to reach your entire team, maximize awareness, and make sure everyone hears the same message at the same time. It's a great forum to introduce the campaign, share CGMA's story and explain how everyone can participate.

To make it easy for you, we've provided a [Campaign All-Hands PowerPoint Presentation](#). This resource serves as a guide for explaining who CGMA is, outlining the Campaign goals, and showcasing the impact donations have on supporting fellow Coasties. Make sure to save time to share the CGMA 5-minute Annual Fundraising Campaign video, to answer common questions and share powerful stories or testimonials to connect with your audience. The presentation will be reviewed and discussed during the Campaign Coordinator prep calls hosted in mid-March. Use the All-Hands to set the tone for the campaign, build enthusiasm, and remind your colleagues that every contribution counts.

You can also invite a CGMA Ambassador to assist in your All-Hands presentation. Ambassadors are volunteers who serve as an extension of CGMA staff. [Click here](#) if you'd like to submit an Ambassador invitation (optional)

### Steps to consider:

- 1 **Arrange** for location, refreshments, decorations, etc.

*NOTE: CGMA can provide funds to cover the cost of refreshments, banners, balloons, and other items for the kickoff. Refer to the [Campaign Coordinator Instruction](#) for instructions on how to request these funds.*

- 2 **Ask** your CO/OIC/XO to kick off the meeting or line up a keynote speaker. It's also powerful to hear from someone who has received help from CGMA.

- 3 **Announce** the All-Hands well ahead of time in the Plan of the Week, calendar invitation (email), and/or other local communication medium.

- 4 **Work** with Public Affairs (PAO) to get campaign news featured in regular newsletters and shared on unit social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) pages.

- 5 **Develop** a program for the event. For example:

- Welcome and Opening Remarks (Campaign Coordinator with CGMA Representative, if possible, CO/OIC/XO)
- CGMA Annual Fundraising Campaign Video
- About CGMA — Who We Are and What We Do
- Keynote Speaker/Testimonial (if applicable)
- Campaign Goals and Ways to Participate
- Q&A
- Closing and Call to Action (Include QR Code to the Campaign donation page)  
*Questions? Contact [Campaign Coordinator Name and Email/Phone]*

- 6 **Extend** invitations to spouses, Auxiliary members, area Retirees, and Reserve units, if appropriate.



## RAISE AWARENESS

Publicity plays a major role in the campaign's success! CGMA provides resources to give your unit plenty of exposure to campaign details. A box of posters, pledge forms, and flyers has been sent to your unit to help you get the word out. All of these are also available online at the campaign website: [mycgma.org/annual-campaign](https://mycgma.org/annual-campaign)

### Tips to help you spread the word:

- ✓ **Hang** posters publicizing the campaign in high-traffic common areas, such as restrooms, break rooms, and entrance hallways.
- ✓ **Share** the CGMA 5-minute Annual Fundraising Campaign video in your meeting, via email, on your local intranet, unit newsletter, or any other appropriate internal communications.
- ✓ **Hand** every member at the kickoff meeting a flyer and Pledge Form (CGMA Form 33).
- ✓ **Keep** pledge forms and QR code handy so you can give them directly to members.
- ✓ **Use** social media to announce the campaign and keep it top of mind. Leverage the social media kit found on the [Campaign Coordinator page](#), for weekly posts and ideas to broaden your outreach.
- ✓ **Publicize** the campaign through Plan of the Day, email, local intranet, or other internal communications.

## Making the Ask — Encouraging Others to Donate

Fundraising can feel a bit uncomfortable at first — you're not alone in that! Talking about money can feel personal, and asking someone to donate may seem intrusive. But it doesn't have to be.

Keep in mind, the heart of the Campaign lies in meaningful, face-to-face conversations with Active Duty personnel, civilian employees, and team members across CDC/MWR/CGES. These personal connections are where real impact begins.

**THINK OF IT THIS WAY:** CGMA provides about \$27,000 in assistance every single day, directly supporting those who need it most. When you ask someone to consider making a gift to CGMA, you're not just asking for money — you're giving them the chance to support this important mission and make a real difference.

### ALLOTMENT AND PLEDGE FORM INFORMATION

- Campaign Coordinators should collect and process completed Pledge Forms from each donor. Refer to the [Campaign Coordinator Instruction](#) for detailed instructions on how to process Pledge Forms.
- Encourage personnel to complete the Pledge Form on the spot — it's easier than remembering to do it later. In All-Hands settings, participation increases when everyone submits a form together.
- A Pledge Form (physical or online) is necessary if a donor wants to start or increase an allotment contribution.
- Those who wish to continue their allotments/payroll deductions at the current amount do not need to submit a Pledge Form.
- On-going contributions will be included in the tally for each unit.

## TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONVERSATION

- ✓ **Explain** the CGMA assistance concept, The Power of Us (refer to [Key Messages](#)).
- ✓ **Give** a brief overview of the programs and resources CGMA offers.
- ✓ **Please ask** those who currently have an allotment to increase it. An increase of even \$1 adds up and allows CGMA to help more people.\*
- ✓ **When** you get to the question, “**Would you like to give this year?**” please offer the three methods to give in this order:
  - Monthly allotment/bi-weekly payroll deduction [or increase in allotment]
  - Recurring credit card donation
  - One-time donation via credit card, check, or cash

*\*If anyone has questions about their allotment donation, they can email [donations@mycgma.org](mailto:donations@mycgma.org) or call CGMA-HQ: (800) 881-2462*

## ONE-ON-ONE DONATION CONVERSATION GUIDE

Here’s a sample script to help guide your conversations with potential donors. You don’t need to memorize it — use it to get a feel for how to approach and engage with other Coasties about donating:

**Campaign Coordinator:** Hi [CG Member’s Name], I want to take a moment to talk about this year’s Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Annual Fundraising Campaign. CGMA is an incredible organization that directly benefits Coasties like us, providing critical support when we need it most.

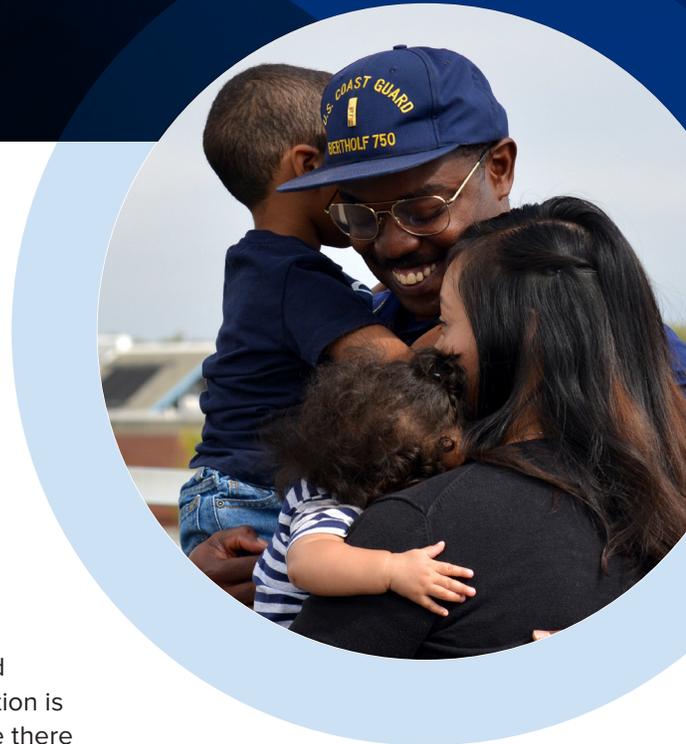
CGMA is 100% funded by donations, and while the need for assistance has grown significantly in recent years, donations and allotments have dropped dramatically. That’s why your participation is so important — it helps ensure this vital resource continues to be there for everyone.

Would you consider contributing this year? You can donate by credit card, cash, check, or through an allotment. Most people choose allotments because they’re simple and ensure 100% of your gift goes directly to CGMA, without processing fees. Plus, it’s easy to adjust or stop at any time.

If you’re already giving through an allotment, thank you so much for your support! Would you consider increasing your contribution this year? Even a small increase can make a big difference.

*[PAUSE TO LET THEM RESPOND OR ASK QUESTIONS.]*

**Campaign Coordinator:** Thank you for considering it! If you have any questions or need help getting started, I’m here to assist.



### □ If they say yes...

**Potential Contributor:** Ok, I can do \$5 a month.

**Campaign Coordinator:** That's great – thank you so much! I really appreciate your generosity and support! When we all contribute, it really adds up and makes a big difference. I have a QR code here that makes it easy to start or increase your allotment or to donate online. Or, you can fill out this Pledge Form.

You'll receive a gift acknowledgement directly from CGMA for your tax records.

*[LET THEM COMPLETE THE FORM.]*

Thank you! When all of us contribute we have the power to make a big difference.

### □ If they have an allotment but it hasn't changed in awhile...

**Potential Contributor:** I already have an allotment.

**Campaign Coordinator:** That's amazing — thank you for being a part of this! Your contributions help keep CGMA going strong.

If it's been a while since you've looked at your allotment, would you consider increasing it this year? Even a small increase can make a big difference, especially with how much the need has grown recently. The number of people relying on CGMA's support keeps going up, but donations have declined.

If you're in a position to give more, it's a great way to help ensure even more Coasties in a tough spot get the assistance they need.

*[PAUSE TO LET THEM RESPOND.]*

**Campaign Coordinator:** If you'd like to adjust your allotment, it's a quick process. Here's the QR code you can easily use to adjust your allotment on the site — or you can fill out this Pledge Form. Either way, thank you again for what you're already doing. It truly makes a difference!

### □ If they say no...

**Potential Contributor:** No, I don't want anything else coming out of my paycheck.

**Campaign Coordinator:** I understand. We also accept donations by credit card, check, or cash, so there are flexible options if you're more comfortable with that. Even a small, one-time donation, like \$10, can make a big difference when combined with everyone else's support.

**Potential Contributor:** I can do a one-time donation.

**Campaign Coordinator:** That's great — thank you so much! Would you like to donate online or do you prefer cash or check? I have a QR code for online donations, or if you'd prefer, I can give you a Pledge Form to fill out.

### □ If they do not wish to give...

**Potential Contributor:** No, I don't want to give this year OR I'm not in a position to give right now.

**Campaign Coordinator:** That's okay. Thank you for taking the time to hear me out. Even sharing information about the Campaign with others can help make a difference. If you'd like more information about CGMA or ways to get involved in the future, just let me know. Thank you!

*[TRY TO END THE CONVERSATION ON A POSITIVE NOTE, ENSURING THE PERSON DOESN'T FEEL PRESSURED OR UNCOMFORTABLE.]*

# Ways to Give

## 1 ALLOTMENT OR PAYROLL DEDUCTION (PREFERRED)

Donating by allotment is the best and easiest way to give. It allows you to contribute a set amount directly from your paycheck, ensuring 100% of your donation goes to support CGMA's mission.

Allotments may be started or changed by using the form on the CGMA website: [mycgma.org/give-help/allotment-payroll-deduction/](https://mycgma.org/give-help/allotment-payroll-deduction/)

*NOTE: The minimum allotment donation amount is \$5.00. An employee ID number is required to complete the allotment form.*

## 2 CREDIT CARD

Donate securely online at [mycgma.org/donate/](https://mycgma.org/donate/)

## 3 CHECK

Checks or money orders made payable to Coast Guard Mutual Assistance

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Credit card donations come with a 4% transaction fee, but allotment donations have no extra fees** – ensuring 100% of your gift directly supports CGMA's mission and programs. If you're able, consider an allotment – it ensures your full donation reaches the cause.

## Fundraising Events

Local fundraising events inspire giving, boost morale, and build unit cohesion. Held later in the Campaign, they maintain momentum and raise additional contributions.

Explore the event ideas in the following pages or create your own — no one knows your unit better than you!

To help amplify your message and for additional support, connect with your ombudsmen, local spouses' club, Auxiliary, and retiree councils. Many of these groups have Facebook pages and can help with planning and sharing the message.

### FUNDRAISING IDEAS



**Penny War:** Provide each shop with a jug or jar in a central location like a breakroom. Throughout the Campaign, shops compete against one another by adding points to their jar or subtracting points from other shops'. The shop with the most points at the end wins! Coordinate with morale and command to determine prizes. Examples might be a day of special liberty for 1<sup>st</sup> place winners and a pizza party for 2<sup>nd</sup>.



**“Show Your Spirit Day”:** Members donate to CGMA in order to wear their favorite shirt/sweatshirt representing their favorite sports team, Coast Guard unit, or alma mater.



**Pie-in-the-Face Fundraiser:** Participants donate a suggested amount (e.g., \$5) for the chance to "pie" a staff member. Create a leaderboard to track pledges, with the top three staff members receiving pies. The top three donors get to throw them!

You can offer an option to "buy out" on a sliding scale. For example:

- E-6 and below: **\$10**
- E7-O4 and GS Employees: **\$20**
- O5 and above: **\$40**

*NOTE: No one may be required to participate, strictly on a volunteer basis.*



**Car Wash:** Car Washes are particularly effective when the CO, OIC, XO, or senior enlisted participate in the washing. Car washes are also great ways to involve other members of the Coast Guard family, such as family members, Auxiliary members, Retirees, and Reservists.



**Food Sales:** Host a chili cook-off, ice cream social, bake sale, hot dog sale, or taco sale. Other popular events have included Chick-fil-A lunches or bagel breakfasts after weigh-ins.



**Tournaments:** Ultimate frisbee, video games, board games, basketball, soccer, volleyball, or softball — anywhere there is competition there’s an opportunity to fundraise. Participants can pledge a recommended donation as an entry fee. Award prizes and bragging rights to your winners!



**Trivia:** Invite your unit to grab their lunch and test their knowledge with a themed quiz. Participants make a suggested donation to play. Choose a quiz theme and host weekly quizzes throughout the Campaign. Offer prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.



**Mile for Donations (Row/Run/Bike):** Set a physical challenge (e.g., running a mile, rowing 500 meters, biking for 5 miles). For every \$10 donated, participants commit to complete a set amount of the challenge (e.g., someone donates \$50 so the participant runs 5 miles (1 mile for every \$10)



**“Plank for Donations” Challenge:** Challenge participants to hold a plank for as long as possible while being filmed. For every donation made, the person planking adds an additional second or minute to their plank time. Nominate others to join and spread the challenge.



**“Unlock the Prize” Challenge:** Place a desirable item (e.g., extra leave day, lunch with leadership) in a locked box. Participants donate to guess the combination, with each donation earning them a chance to guess.



## FUNDRAISING DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO'S

**Try to meet with every unit within your AOR in person.** Face-to-face interactions are highly effective in encouraging donations and driving campaign success.

**Encourage supervisors to support and motivate** everyone to participate in the campaign in ways that work for them.

**Provide supervisors with a summary of contributions activity** for their unit, department, or team.

### DON'TS

**Don't set personal dollar goals, quotas, or require 100% participation** — these practices are prohibited.

**Don't have supervisors or those in the chain of command** directly solicit members.

**Don't give supervisors details** about individual contributions.



## Celebrate

**Congratulate your unit on its campaign efforts and celebrate the collective impact you've made!** Together, we embody **The Power of Us**, showing what's possible when everyone contributes. Share updates on the total dollars raised from events, pledges, and donations to highlight your team's success.

Capture the moment — take photos of fundraising events and share them on your social media (tag @MyCGMA), in the Plan of the Week, or at All-Hands meetings. Email your photos to [campaign@mycgma.org](mailto:campaign@mycgma.org) so we can celebrate with you!

CGMA's motto, **Helping Our Own**, reflects who we are and what we stand for. Your generosity and teamwork bring it to life, proving that **The Power of Us** can make a meaningful difference.



**"CGMA provides real, practical support when it matters most, whether it's easing the cost of a PCS move, providing education or tuition assistance, or stepping in to help with unexpected expenses. These moments remind us that CGMA is an integral part of who we are."**



MCPOCG PHILLIP N. WALDRON