



MDA end-of-year wrap-up

NALC and MDA can't say this enough: "Thank you for all your hard work!"

With 2025 over and 2026 here, many branches have either completed or at least started working on their budgeting process for 2026. A budget is simply a strategic plan for the way you will spend your money over the next year.

This article is tailored toward asking branch members to use the same type of planning that they do for their branch budget, but applying that structure to community service. Specifically, how can we be successful in raising money for our national charity, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)?

So, what are the steps in a strategic plan? What factors do branch leaders need to pay attention to while planning for the coming year(s)? A good planning process answers the following questions:

- How do we know where we are going?
- How do we evaluate our progress?
- How do we know if we succeed?

Of course, the beginning point is to have branch officers get together with the branch MDA coordinator and committee members who are responsible for MDA in your branch.

The planning process starts with reviewing the purpose of NALC involvement with community service in the first place. The next step is to determine branch goals for the next year. Has your branch set goals for MDA fundraising? Goals for strategic planning should be smart and not outrageous. You do not want to discourage your MDA coordinator, committee or branch members.

Your goals should be specific, achievable and relevant—and you must have a timetable. The strategies you develop will be based on the needs, information and goals identified by the group. Choose the strategies that will:

- Accomplish the objective.
- Be handled by your committee in a reasonable amount of time.
- Involve most of the people on your committee, plus other members and activists.
- Contribute to achieving your overall goal and purpose.

The next step is to figure out what the branch wants to do to raise money. Here is a list of easy ways to raise money for MDA:

- Raffles
- Car washes
- Yard sales
- Satchel drives
- Local credit union partnerships

- Bowling tournaments
- Pool and dart tournaments
- Comedy/karaoke nights
- Charity golf tournaments
- Corn hole and bean bag tournaments
- Bake sales
- Casual days
- Bingo nights
- Branch member donation drives
- Pancake breakfasts or spaghetti dinners
- Muscle walks
- Texas hold'em tournaments (follow state laws)
- 5K Tough Mudders
- Trivia tournaments

Once you have figured that out, you'll want to develop an action plan. An action plan is a written outline that pulls all the pieces of your planning together. It includes specific tasks, times and assignments to each person about what needs to happen and when. The committee should periodically check the progress related to the tasks. The committee should ask themselves the following questions:

- Are we on schedule?
- Are our plans still feasible?
- Did we leave anything out?
- Have things come up that we did not anticipate?
- How did we handle them?
- Does new information suggest that changes in strategy are needed?

Finally, review your objectives and strategy with the aim of adjusting and improving if necessary. Depending on what the evaluation shows, celebrate your branch's accomplishments, make corrections and keep moving forward toward the goal. Then, next year about this time, repeat the whole process over again. If we can keep moving our strategic plan along, we will help get MDA ever closer to finding a cure, and we will provide the help and hope that the MDA families need.

NALC branches have been successful in raising money for MDA in past years because of branch leadership and coordinators. MDA is grateful for everything that you do.

"Again, I want to thank all those who have worked so hard to raise money for MDA," MDA Coordinator Christina Vela Davidson said. "Remember, you never know when it might be you or someone you love who may need help."

Locally raised funds must be sent to the national MDA office in Chicago: Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc., Attn: NALC; P.O. Box 7410354; Chicago, IL 60674-0354.