Small Business Fundraiser Compliance Checklist

Action Checklist — ClearLegalTips.com (2026)

Work through these steps before, during, and after your campaign to keep it legal and stress-free.

Before You Launch

- [ ] Decided whether each dollar is a gift, a reward/sale, a loan, or an investment
- [ ] Chose a platform and read its rules on business fundraising and fees
- [ ] Wrote down exactly how the funds will be used
- [ ] Confirmed you are NOT offering equity or profit-sharing (or lined up securities counsel if you are) Get the Language Right
- [ ] Stated clearly that you are a for-profit business, not a charity
- [ ] Removed any claim that contributions are tax-deductible
- [ ] Did not promise a tax receipt or imply nonprofit status
- [ ] Disclosed how supporters' money will be used Taxes & Money
- [ ] Set aside a share of what you raise for income tax
- [ ] Planned to report the money as business income
- [ ] Checked whether any rewards trigger sales tax
- [ ] Started a contribution log and will keep records for three years If It Is More Than a Gift
- [ ] Used a written promissory note for any money you must repay
- [ ] Treated rewards and pre-sales as taxable sales revenue
- [ ] For a charity-tie promotion, checked state commercial co-venturer rules Keep It Alive
- [ ] Posted regular updates on how funds are used
- [ ] Thanked supporters honestly, without calling gifts charitable donations
- [ ] Reconciled the contribution log at the end of the campaign

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This checklist is general information, not legal or tax advice. When equity, large sums, employee-relief funds, or charity partnerships are involved, talk to a licensed attorney or tax professional in your state.