Fill the Boot Guidebook
### Thank You

We are so grateful to have supporters like you who are willing to go above and beyond to help kids and adults with muscular dystrophy, ALS and related life-threatening diseases.

The 65-year tradition of the Fill the Boot program is a collaboration between the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). In its first year in 1953, fire fighters in Boston raised $5,000 for MDA. Last year, more than $20 million was raised by fire fighters at more than 1,900 Fill the Boot events.

This document was created to help you be as successful as possible as we work together to accelerate more progress and more breakthroughs for families who are counting on us. MDA’s dedicated professional staff take the lead managing the myriad event details you’ve needed to help recruit members, liaison with fire service administration and carry out the noble effort of filling the boot.

Funds raised through Fill the Boot drives help the MDA save lives and lift those up in need, by providing the MDA with vital resources and support, including state-of-the-art support groups and Care Centers.

The IAFF and MDA are collaborating on a campaign to encourage states to expand newborn screening programs by adding tests for specific neuromuscular disorders so that all newborns with these conditions can have the best possible chance at receiving the care and support services they need as early as possible.

We are grateful that for more than six decades, IAFF members have stood by MDA, striving to make a difference in the lives of those affected by muscular dystrophy and related diseases.

**Thanks for continuing to make this long-standing tradition so special. We’re counting on you!**

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#### Your Muscular Dystrophy Association

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#### Top 10 Fill the Boot Events in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>L2068 Fairfax County, VA</td>
<td>$603,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>L0341 Houston, TX</td>
<td>$399,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>L0058 Dallas, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>L2881 CalFire, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>L2149 Plano, TX</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>L0624 San Antonio, TX</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>L2665 Eastern Missouri, MO</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>L1826 SW Florida, FL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>L0157 Oklahoma City, OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>L0493 Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>$143,715</td>
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</table>

#### Top 10 Fill the Boot Events Per Member in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>L1869 Newark, NJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>L0598 Austin, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>L0226 Marinette, WI</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>L3464 Ontario, OR</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>L4626 Middleton, ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>L0287 Long Beach, NY</td>
<td>$1,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>L4099 Tahlequah, OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>L4855 Larkspur, CO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>L3429 Lewiston, MT</td>
<td>$1,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>L4571 Gowen Field, ID</td>
<td>$1,222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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About MDA

MDA is committed to transforming the lives of people affected by muscular dystrophy, ALS and related neuromuscular diseases. We do this through innovations in science and innovations in care. As the largest source of funding for neuromuscular disease research outside of the federal government, MDA has committed more than $1 billion since our inception to accelerate the discovery of therapies and cures. Research we have supported is directly linked to approved, life-changing therapies across multiple neuromuscular diseases.

We support the largest network of multidisciplinary clinics providing best-in-class care at more than 150 of the nation’s top medical institutions, and each year thousands of children and young adults learn vital life skills and gain independence at MDA Summer Camp and through recreational programs. For more information visit mda.org.

Our Team is Here for You

With nearly 65 offices, MDA has staff dedicated to the IAFF and the Fill the Boot program in every community. A national team and an IAFF national coordinator provide additional support to ensure the success of local events and strong relationships and connections to this meaningful and long-standing tradition.

Tracy Denton
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Vice President
tdenton@mdausa.org

Roger Lopez
Assistant to the General President
IAFF-MDA National Coordinator
rlopez@iaff.org

Jenny Hanie
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Director
jhanie@mdausa.org

(Video link below)
MDA Ambassador Natalie Olson
2018 IAFF Convention

For 65 years, our members have been working hard for MDA, filling the boot on behalf of this great charity. They know that what they do truly makes a difference in the lives of so many kids and adults. Until there is a cure, we plan to continue the partnership.

— IAFF General President
Harold A. Schaitberger
About the Fill the Boot Program

How to Get Started

New to MDA?
1. Visit firefighters.mda.org and sign up online.
2. Choose a Fill the Boot coordinator from your local to work with MDA staff to customize a program that works for your local and get the approvals needed to move forward.
3. Set the dates and secure the locations for your event.
4. Set a fundraising goal.
5. Work with MDA staff to get all the materials and plan your marketing and promotional support to generate publicity and awareness in your community.
6. Enjoy your event with your fellow brothers and sisters—be safe, have fun and welcome to the tradition!

Already Involved with MDA?
Schedule a meeting with your MDA representative to start planning your next Fill the Boot event. Not sure who to reach out to? Just email members of our team (see page 4).

See overview of all resources available on page 9.

MDA/IAFF
The partnership between the IAFF and MDA began in 1954 when the organization committed by proclamation to support MDA until a cure is found, and the organization’s unwavering commitment to MDA has remained strong to this day.

As MDA’s largest national partner, they have raised more than $650 million for the MDA to date. Today the IAFF/MDA partnership is finding new ways to save lives by working to expand newborn screenings in the U.S. with Pompe disease or Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), so that they can be immediately eligible for lifesaving and life changing therapies.
Fill the Boot Coordinator

The Role of MDA Fill the Boot Coordinator

The role of the Fill the Boot coordinator is very important to ensuring success in your local MDA Fill the Boot drives. We encourage you to select someone that embodies these characteristics:

• Inspires commitment to the partnership and tradition between MDA and fire fighters;
• Has leadership skills and works well with colleagues and management;
• Makes a two- to three-year commitment to the job;
• Able to recruit strong leaders to help with the drive;
• Enthusiastic and wants to be involved;
• Has an interest in learning about MDA and its local programs and services;
• Receives satisfaction from being part of a noble past and a bright future;
• An active union member interested in further developing leadership skills; and
• Desires to make an impact in the local community.

Planning the Fill the Boot Event

Your MDA office is here to provide information, support and guidance to help you with every aspect of your role as a fire fighter coordinator and with planning a successful event.

They’ll help you plan the best event for your local, including:

• Building a safety plan. Choosing the right locations with intersections that have medians, sidewalks and a place for apparatus.
• Leveraging your leadership role by forming a boot drive committee to help you plan all aspects of your event.
• Double-checking with each station and shift to make sure they have everything they need — and is excited about the event — before going out to collect.
• Choosing the right time of day for the highest volume. Consider contacting your city or county engineering department to find out the best time to set up at high-volume intersections.
• Deciding ahead of time on alternate dates. Be flexible in case of a scheduling issues or bad weather.
• Setting a fundraising goal for your local.
• Creating a media kickoff event to engage your community.
• Meeting local families to see the impact you’re making firsthand.
Building a Safety Plan

The Importance of Safety:

• Wear orange/yellow vests or reflective material on clothing.
• Intersections should be well-marked with cones.
• Post MDA banners/Caution and Toll signs well ahead of your location so that oncoming traffic is aware of the event.
• Make sure traffic knows you are there.
• Parked apparatus should be highly visible. If allowable, keep emergency lights on.
• Initiate all collections from roadside or median.
• Never stop traffic, and only approach stopped vehicles.
• Always maintain a professional attitude.
• All active and retired fire fighters, cadets, fire fighters in training and EMTs working for fire departments are covered per MDA insurance while collecting on behalf of MDA. Ask your local MDA staff for a copy of the insurance policy.
• Your safety is our top priority, and MDA has sample safety plans available for your reference.
• Stay hydrated!

Setting Fundraising Goals

Keys to Goal-Setting:

• Call on key members to be part of the goal-setting process.
• Analyze last year’s results by battalion, station, shift and individual contributions.
• Create collection goals that are relatively challenging, but also realistic and attainable.
• Successful boot drives strive for 100 percent participation.
• Get 100 percent agreement on goals and strategy.
• It’s absolutely vital that everyone from the chief down be aware of the goals.

Consider setting other goals, including:

• Challenge another local
• Fire fighter families helping
• Chief endorsement
• MDA training for new fire fighters
• Event occurring on multiple days
• Event occurring in multiple intersections

MDA has very specific cash handling procedures. Please discuss with your MDA representative on how you can create a safe and solid plan for the funds raised and review the cash handling guidelines and best practices document together.
Fill the Boot Suggested Planning Timeline

**Six to Nine Months Before Your Fill the Boot Event:**

- Business planning meetings among MDA and departments.
- Determine a plan for fire fighter motivation (e.g., MDA family station visits, pizza party at the station for MDA kids)
- Recruit members for your boot drive committee. Try to have a representative at the battalion level, station level, shift level, etc.
- Work with your MDA staff person to schedule family station visits before your boot drive begins.
- Ask fire chief/union president to write endorsement letters (MDA can provide draft copy).
- Contact MDA if you need help with insurance, permits, etc. MDA automatically includes fire fighters on certificates of insurance.
- Determine logistics of drive (e.g., which days/intersections, internal incentives, money handling).

**Three Months Before Your Fill the Boot Event:**

- Collaborate with the fire chief/union president on setting a goal for your department and break it down to each station, shift and person. Make sure everyone, including administrative and office personnel, is aware of the goal. Be creative. You need a road map to get to your destination.
- Get on the agenda for battalion chiefs meeting and get support for your goal.
- Ask for their help in getting every station, every shift and every fire fighter involved for a minimum number of hours each collection day.
- Assist MDA in getting on agendas for City/County Fire Fighter Appreciation Week Proclamations.
- Work with MDA staff to promote the event (media and PIO contacts).
- Do you know a local celebrity to help you kick off your drive? This will surely attract the media and build community awareness for your efforts.

**Two Months Before Your Fill the Boot Event:**

- Attend any scheduled proclamation presentations.
- Establish a method of keeping track of all money that comes in.
- Work with MDA to implement publicity strategy.
- Share a countdown to your Boot Drive with all of your stations — make sure everyone knows the date.
- Order boot drive supplies from MDA.

**One Month Before Your Fill the Boot Event:**

- Distribute supplies to stations with detailed information on how collections and money pickup will be handled.
- Begin implementing your social media campaign.
- Set up your Virtual Fill the Boot team (Online Donor Drive) at filltheboot.donordrive.com.
- Establish a method of communicating daily collections to each station every day of the drive. This will promote competition (call every station every day of the drive to remind them to go out).
- Attend proclamation presentations.

**After the Event:**

- Post a report that contains the amount collected by every shift/unit. Keep records from year to year.
- Announce the winners of any internal incentives.
- Thank your fellow fire fighters in newsletters, websites and on social media.
- Plan a camp activity and recruit your fellow fire fighters to attend an MDA Summer Camp near you. It’s a great opportunity to meet the children who benefit from the money collected during your annual boot drive.
- Do a wrap-up meeting with your committee members and set goals for the next year.
Resources and MDA Support

- Event Flyer (available in multiple sizes)
- Banners (truck-sized)
- Posters (available in two sizes)
- Stickers for Donations
- Toll Poster
- Boot Stickers
- Caution Sign

Media Outreach Tools and Templates Available:
- Messaging Guide and Talking Points
- Fill the Boot Publicity Timeline
- Fill the Boot Press Release
- Fill the Boot Media Alert
- Media Relations & Publicity Overview Guide
- Fill the Boot Proclamation Media Alert
- Fill the Boot Proclamation
- Fill the Boot Radio Scripts
- Fill the Boot Media Interview Tip Sheet
- Post-Event Fill the Boot Press Release

Media Kickoff Event Resources Available:
- Strategic Overview for Media Kickoff Event
- Kickoff Event Press Release
- Kickoff Event Media Alert
- Kickoff Event Tip Sheet for Media
- Media Kickoff Agenda
- Media Kickoff Event Script

Social Media Resources Available:
- Tips and Sample Messages
- Facebook Profile Image
- Social Media Graphics

Video Resources:
- 15-second and 30-second Public Service Announcements
- B-Roll Package for Media Outlets
- Fill the Boot Recruitment Video
- MDA Summer Camp Thank You Video
- Fill the Boot Motivational Video

Outdoor and Digital Advertising Resources Available:
- Save the Date Outdoor Billboard Artwork (available in multiple sizes)
- Thank You Outdoor Billboard Artwork (available in multiple sizes)
- Thank You Web Banner for Your Website

Additional Ways to Get Involved
- Sign up to run a marathon or half marathon with MDA Team Momentum.
- Form a team for an MDA Muscle Walk event.
- Consider volunteering as an MDA Summer camp counselor.
- Visit MDA Summer Camp for a sponsor day and/or fire fighter day.

There are many opportunities to get involved and meet MDA families in your community — ask your local MDA staff for more information on the events near you.
Making Progress Toward Lifesaving Results

International Association of Fire Fighters
iaff.org
☎ 202.824.9312
✉ rlopez@iaff.org
facebook.com/IAFFonline
@IAFFNewsDesk

Muscular Dystrophy Association
mda.org
☎ 800.572.1717
✉ mda@mdausa.org
facebook.com/MDAnational
@MDAnews

Designated a “Top-Rated Charity” by the American Institute of Philanthropy, MDA is the first nonprofit to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Medical Association for “significant and lasting contributions to the health and welfare of humanity.”