



GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

Voice for Trees PAC - 2026

ABSTRACT

A comprehensive fundraising engagement strategy that raises at least \$25,000 in hard dollar donations to the VFT-PAC by the end of Q4.

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Advocacy is about influence. PACs amplify our message

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Background

Raising at least \$25,000 in hard-dollar donations for the Voice for Trees PAC (VFT-PAC) by the end of Q4 2026 will require a multi-channel, member-focused fundraising strategy; one that builds trust, demonstrates impact, and makes giving easy and rewarding.

Our goal is to create a sustainable, mission-driven fundraising program that engages members year-round—not only during election cycles. This means clear messaging, consistent outreach, and a strong culture of recognition for contributors, as PAC funding is critical to our advocacy success.

VFT-PAC enables TCIA to support candidates who understand and champion our industry's priorities. As a 501(c)(6) organization, TCIA follows specific IRS rules on how PAC funds are raised and spent. These contributions are vital; they give our members a collective voice in the political process and help us build relationships with lawmakers who shape the regulatory environment for tree care businesses.

PACs are an essential part of any grassroots advocacy program. They complement member engagement by ensuring we have a seat at the table when decisions are being made.

Advocacy is about influence, and PACs help us amplify our message.

Building Blocks

To achieve these objectives, we will focus on the following building blocks:

Status in November 2025

- To ensure TCIA follows best practices as a 501(c)(6) organization, we have re-established our connection with Chalmers, Adams, Backer & Kaufman, LLC and signed an Engagement Letter.
- All previous Authorizations to Solicit letters have expired. A new version has been drafted and approved, and an online version of this form is now active on our website. VFT-PAC Auction invitees and donors have received the updated forms.

Setting Clear Goals and Messaging Content

- **Define the “Why” and Create a Case for Support:** Successful fundraising begins with clearly communicating what the PAC stands for—such as protecting and

promoting the tree care industry and influencing legislation that advances those goals.

- Before launching the campaign, we will develop a compelling narrative that connects PAC giving to tangible outcomes for member companies.
- Messaging will also include the criteria used to identify candidates and races VFT-PAC will support in November.

Segmenting and Targeting Our Audience

- **Member Tiering:** iMIS has member-tiering capabilities, but they are not yet fully utilized. Segmenting member companies by size, engagement level, and past giving history—as well as by job title—will form the basis for tailored solicitation asks.
- **Top Donor Cultivation:** Campaigns typically identify 25–50 high-capacity member companies for personalized outreach and one-on-one calls. Since many are already involved with the VFT-PAC Auction, we will focus on cultivating top donors who did not participate in the WMC or Auction.

Launching a Multi-Channel Campaign

- As a 501(c)(6) organization, our PAC cannot use broad social media channels or other methods not targeted to the class of donors we are permitted to solicit. This limits the number of channels we can use and how we use them.
- **Email Series:** Targeted email is the most effective way to reach members we are allowed to solicit. At a minimum, we will run a quarterly email campaign featuring stories, donor spotlights, and calls to action for all members in the approved class.

As members donate or opt out of future solicitations, we will refine messaging and segment requests to better align with each member's status.

- **Direct Mail:** Personalized letters from leadership or PAC board members provide a formal approach and work well for members who may not engage via email. A postcard or letter with a return envelope offers messaging and a direct method to contribute. A budget for these items will be included in the plan.
- **Limited Social Media (due to 501(c)(6) rules):** As direction promotion using such wide distribution channels is not allowed, indirect promotion of PAC donations

through LinkedIn and other platforms will focus on advocacy activities with graphics, testimonials, and milestones. Posts will include an “*Interested in helping?*” link directing members to the website to begin the PAC journey.

Events and Recognition

- **Invitations to the Annual DC Fly-In for Regular and Top Donors:** PAC donations reflect an individual’s interest in both the process and the outcome. Inviting top donors to participate in the annual DC Fly-In and state-level events involving elected officials and candidates helps nurture that interest.
- **Recognition Tiers:** We will create donor levels such as “Roots,” “Branches,” and “Canopy”, with benefits such as website shoutouts, event access, and exclusive briefings.

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

- **Board & Advocacy Ambassadors:** For higher-tier donors, a personal request from board members, advocacy leaders, or other influential members can produce strong results. The plan includes empowering these individuals to solicit donations using PAC-prepared materials.
- **Matching Challenges:** VFT-PAC will identify and secure lead donors to match contributions during one campaign period.

Make Giving Easy

- **Online Donation Portal:** The VFT-PAC site will include a link to an online donation portal, ideally hosted on a non-TCIA managed platform such as Quorum. The link address will not be made public and will only be provided in solicitations to qualified class members.
- **Recurring Giving Option:** All solicitations will allow members to set up monthly or quarterly contributions to encourage regular giving.
- **PAC Donation Cards and Return Envelopes:** For in-person and mailed solicitations, we will design and print donation cards or integrated return envelopes to make offline giving simple and convenient.

Track Progress and Celebrate

- Tracking progress toward the goal and celebrating milestones will help build and maintain campaign momentum.
- **Progress Thermometers/Graphics:** Visual updates will show progress toward the \$25,000 goal, number of donors, and average donation size.
- **Donor Spotlights:** The VFT-PAC page will feature donor spotlights with permission.
- **End-of-Year Impact Report:** Each year, VFT-PAC will share how PAC funds were used, what was achieved, and plans for the upcoming year.

Ensuring Compliance and Transparency

- VFT-PAC will ensure all fundraising complies with FEC regulations for 501(c)(6) PACs. Engaging Chalmers, Adams, Backer & Kaufman, LLC for guidance before PAC actions will help maintain compliance.
- VFT-PAC will provide clear disclosures and maintain accurate records of contributions.

Core Strategy Components

Fundraising Goal Framework

- **Total Goal:** \$25,000 by October 31, 2026
- **Targeted Breakdown:**
 - **Canopy Level Donors (10–15 donors @ \$500–\$1,000)** = \$7,500–\$15,000
 - **Branches Level Donors (25–50 donors @ \$100–\$250)** = \$2,500–\$10,000
 - **Roots Level (100+ donors @ \$25–\$100)** = \$2,500–\$5,000

Engagement Channels

- **Direct Outreach:** Personalized emails from board and PAC committee members.
- **Events:** EXPO, DC Fly-In, regional events, workshops, and webinars
- **Digital Campaigns:** Email series, and website donation portal
- **Peer-to-Peer:** Member leaders encouraging colleagues to give
- **PAC Journey:** The plan focuses on reaching out to members in the qualified class or donors, but

Donor Experience & Recognition

- **Donor Tiers:** Create named levels with benefits (“Roots” \$25-100, “Branches” \$100-250, “Canopy” \$250-1,000)
- **Recognition:**
 - Website and newsletter shoutouts
 - Special ribbons or badges at events
 - Annual “PAC Champion” award
- **Impact Reporting:** Share how PAC funds were used and what policy wins were achieved

Overall Campaign Calendar (Detail Attached)

- **Q1 (DEC-FEB):**
 - Collect Authorization to Solicit forms
 - Develop Messaging
 - Segment Membership
 - Identify Top Donors
 - Open web donation portal
 - Design and print Donation/Return card
 - Launch Email campaign with first mailing
- **Q2 (MAR-MAY):**
 - Receive matching donation pledge
 - Continue email campaign with second, third and matching donation challenge emails
 - Start direct mail campaign with first, second and matching donation challenge mailing
 - Begin progress reports and donor spotlights
- **Q3 (JUN-AUG):**
 - Year-end giving push to meet goal in both email and direct mail campaigns.
 - Maintain momentum with quarterly updates, events, and donor spotlights
 - Send out Fly-in invitation recognitions
- **Q4 (SEP-NOV)**
 - Maintain momentum with quarterly updates, events, and donor spotlights
 - Issue Final Report

Project items are detailed in attached Gantt chart.

Tools & Infrastructure

- **Online Donation Platform:** Easy-to-use, mobile-friendly, secure. Newly integrated Quorum platform has the capability to host PAC donations.
- **CRM or Tracking Spreadsheet:** Monitor donor activity and follow-ups
- **PAC Compliance Support:** Ensure all fundraising is FEC-compliant

Messaging Themes

Core Principles for the Messaging

- **Nonpartisan Focus**
Emphasizes shared values: professionalism, safety, and economic stability—not political ideology.
- **Industry Protection**
Frames donations as an investment in maintaining high standards and fair competition.
- **Future-Oriented**
Positions the PAC as a tool for securing the industry’s long-term health and growth.
- **Personal Impact**
Show how contributions directly benefit members’ businesses and communities.

Sample Messaging Ideas

- **Headline/Hook**
 - *“Your Voice Matters: Help Us Protect Professional Tree Care”*
 - *“Invest in the Future of Our Industry—Join Voice for Trees PAC”*
- **Body Copy**
 - *“Every day, decisions are made that affect your ability to run a safe, professional, and competitive business. Voice for Trees PAC ensures our industry has a seat at the table—advocating for policies that protect professional standards and keep non-qualified operators from undercutting your work.”*

- *“Sometimes the path to our success runs through statehouses and the Capital. When it does, we need to be there protecting livelihoods, promoting safety, and advancing the tree care profession. Your contribution helps us speak with one strong, united voice.”*

Call to Action

- *“Stand with us. Support Voice for Trees PAC today and help shape a stronger, safer future for our industry.”*

Grassroots Fundraising Plan Timeline

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