



How To Conduct a Silent Auction

What is a silent auction?

- Donated goods or services are displayed for participants to browse, bid and purchase for the highest offer.
- DOES NOT require a lottery license.
- May be hosted via Federated Health Charities' (FHC) auction platform. Please contact federated.health.charities@ontario.ca for more details.

How to conduct a silent auction:

Step 1: Plan the logistics

Format: Determine whether you will host an online or in-person auction. While virtual auctions are most common, in person auctions may work well when occurring with other events such as Divisional Days or Town Halls.

Venue: This can refer to the physical location of an in-person auction or the online bidding platform you use for a virtual auction.

For online auctions, choose an online platform. Popular options include:

- Zeffy (Federated Health Charities' Platform): Your FHC team can help you by hosting your auction on Zeffy. For details of this process, please email federated.health.charities@ontario.ca.
- www.32auctions.com: Offers a free and easy-to-use option, guiding you through the setup process.
- www.GalaBid.com: Allows you to create a customizable online auction site with its own link and QR code.
- www.Auctria.com: Streamlined auction platform that is available for free up to \$10,000 raised.

Date and time. Give yourself plenty of time to plan and consider coordinating your auction with another event that will allow for built in advertisement and improved attendance.

Budget. Outline any costs that you will incur while planning and running your auction, such as packaging and delivery. Then, determine how any costs will be covered.



Step 2: Procure and catalog items

- The items are the center of your event. Focus on sourcing high-quality and unique items that will attract bidders. Vacation days, work from home days and lunch with your Director/ADM/DM are popular options.
- Source other items strategically: Reach out to local businesses, sponsors, and individual donors. Highlight the tax write-off potential for their donations.
- Create appealing item listings:
 - Write a detailed description, including any restrictions or limitations.
 - Take high-quality photos from multiple angles to showcase the item.
 - For travel packages or vouchers, specify the availability and restrictions.
- Set fair pricing:
 - Establish a minimum bid and bid increments for each item, guided by the fair market value.

Step 3: Set up your auction site

- Once you have your items and platform, build your auction "venue."
- Design your site: Choose a layout, add your logo, and add the high-resolution images of your items.
- Configure settings: Set the exact start and end times for your auction. The end time creates urgency and encourages last-minute bidding.
- Streamline registration: Use your auction software to allow guests to pre-register and save payment details to speed up the checkout process, if possible.

Step 4: Promote and market your event

- Create a multi-channel marketing plan to build excitement and drive registration.
- Utilize your network: Send direct invitations to your email list of volunteers, past donors, and supporters.
- Share teasers of high-ticket or unique items to build hype.
- Include a clear call-to-action for registration and a link to your auction site.

Step 5: Engage bidders and manage the auction

- During the active bidding period, keep participants engaged



and informed.

- Use automated notifications: Alert bidders when they have been outbid to encourage them to re-engage.
- Respond to questions: Have a team member available to answer any questions or troubleshoot technical issues.

Step 6: Close the auction and collect payments

- Automate winner notifications: Your auction platform should automatically notify the winning bidders once the auction closes.
- Implement your payment collection plan (unless you use Zeffy, in which case it's automatic).

Step 7: Deliver items and follow up

- The event isn't over until the items are delivered and you have thanked everyone involved.
- Arrange delivery: Have a clear plan for packaging and shipping items to winners. If you need to, use a reliable delivery service.
- Thank your supporters: Send out thank-you notes to donors, sponsors, and participants, sharing the event's success and impact.