Contract Event Planner – 2027 Zebra Run for Rare Disease
United MSD Foundation

Type: Independent Contractor (Project-Based / Part-Time)

Time Period: August 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027

Compensation: $5,000 flat fee, paid in 4 installments

Location: Work from home, but must reside in the Ocean Springs/Biloxi region

Position Overview

The United MSD Foundation is seeking an experienced, high-energy Contract Event Planner to lead the planning, execution, and wrap-up of our signature fundraiser, **Zebra Run for Rare Disease,** in Ocean Springs, MS, scheduled for March 13, 2027. Working in close collaboration with the Executive Director, this individual will own the event logistics from inception to race day, serving as the primary project manager and community liaison to ensure a successful, high-impact event.

Key Responsibilities

Project Management & Administration

- **Monitor and manage** the dedicated Zebra Run email inbox, responding to inquiries from participants, volunteers, and partners in a timely manner.
- **Maintain the event timeline**, continuously updating milestones and tracking deadlines to ensure all deliverables stay on schedule.
- **Draft committee meeting agendas**, distribute comprehensive meeting notes, and keep all relevant spreadsheets meticulously updated (including sponsor trackers, sponsor benefits, Zebra Run stats, tracking states, etc.).

Event Logistics & Execution

- Serve as the main point of contact for all event logistics leading up to the race and act as the on-site director on the day of the event.
- Manage permits, route logistics, vendor contracts, timing company, equipment rentals, and event signage.
- Oversee event setup, teardown, and volunteer deployment on race day.

Committee & Volunteer Management

- Lead and manage the local volunteer event committee, keeping members motivated, organized, and on task.
- Delegate volunteer assignments for pre-event preparation and race-day logistics.

Sponsorship & In-Kind Donations

- **Issue sponsor pledges and invoices** in an accurate and timely manner.
- Actively solicit local businesses and corporate sponsors for monetary sponsorships and in-kind donations (e.g., water, snacks, prizes).
- Manage sponsor benefits fulfillment (ensuring logos are on shirts, signs, and media).
- Lead post-event sponsor stewardship, including sending impact reports and thank-you notes.

Marketing & Promotion Collaboration

- Partner closely with the foundation's marketing staff member to drive race registration and peer-to-peer fundraising promotions.
- Assist in coordinating local media outreach, distribution of promotional materials, and community calendar listings.

Qualifications

- **Must be local to the Ocean Springs/Biloxi region** for meetings and full on-site availability on event weekend.
- Proven experience in event planning, management, or race coordination (nonprofit walk/run experience is a major plus).
- Strong sales or fundraising acumen with comfort in cold-calling or meeting with potential local business sponsors.
- Exceptional leadership and interpersonal skills; ability to manage a diverse committee of volunteers.
- Highly organized self-starter capable of managing multiple moving parts, timelines, and budgets.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

To Apply

Send cover letter and resume to Sarah Cortell Vandersypen, Executive Director, at svandersypen@curemsd.org with "**Contract Event Planner – 2027 Zebra Run for Rare Disease"** as Subject Line.