

# Fundraising Guide



# Funding Your Atlantis Program

Big price tags can seem daunting. You might be thinking, “how will I ever pay for this?” For our shortest, 3-week program in the summer, the total cost for a trip (including flights, program fee, and spending money) can be \$5,000 or more.

But don’t panic. The Atlantis program is worth every penny and every second of time that you invest in this experience, and we are dedicated to helping you figure out a path to funding your program once you are accepted. This document is our secret formula for doing just that.

Remember that fundraising takes time and effort, and it works best when combined with a focused strategy. But it is possible. We believe that, by taking the time to creatively share your story, you will be able to reach out to a variety of people and networks that will likely be willing to support you and your pre-medical endeavors.

And remember: if you have questions along the way, our team is here to help.

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## STRATEGY ONE

# Write Support Letters

One of the most effective ways to raise money quickly is to write a support-request letter and mail this to friends and family. Send it to anyone and everyone (grandparents, aunts, cousins, parents' co-workers, high-school teachers, your football coach, your orthodontist), including people that are acquaintances.

You'll be surprised by how many people are willing and able to invest in your future! You could send this as an email, but it's always nicer to get something in the mail (handwritten is a plus). Personal touches can make a difference, and a personalized, handwritten letter will garner more support than a generic, typed email.

## CASTING A VISION

Start by sharing your story! Within your letter, it is important for you to articulate the WHY. Why medicine? Why Atlantis? People don't want to support Atlantis in and of itself — they want to support YOU in your dreams and pursuits. The more that you can describe your passion and journey, the more people feel inspired to support your future.

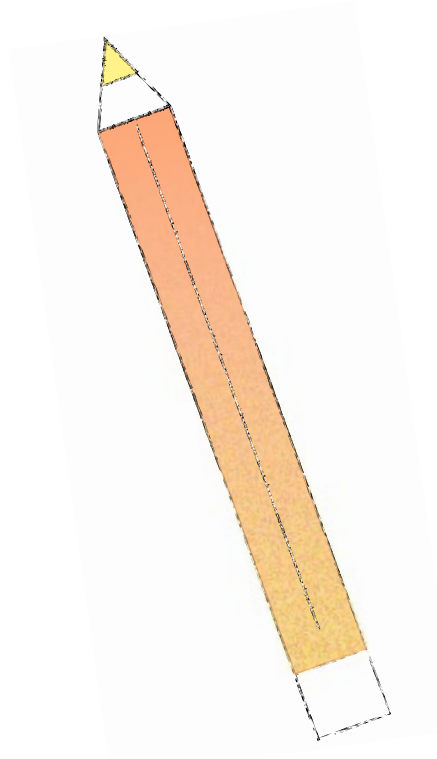
When you communicate your story, donors understand that they are contributing to something greater and worthwhile

## START BY VERBALIZING:

- Why medicine?
- What are you interested in within the medical field? How did you hear about Atlantis or what attracted you to it?
- What is an Atlantis program?
- What do you hope to gain from this experience? How can people help you?

It's always good to explain that you would be glad to speak on the phone or meet in person over coffee for further discussion with people who want more information. A personal phone call or in-person discussion could lead to a great conversation about your need, your upcoming program, and a possible donation.

Take a look at our example letter on the next page.





# Example Letter

Dear Mr. Example,

## **(INTRODUCTION)**

I hope this letter finds you well. It's been a long time since we last saw each other, and I sincerely hope to see you in the near future. I write to you today to talk about an amazing opportunity and to ask for your support as I take the next steps in my pursuit of becoming a family practice physician.

## **(WHY MEDICINE?)**

Since I was three years old, I have had an affinity for medicine. To my mother's horror, I tried to treat my younger sister's fever by pouring cold water on her head to cool her temperature. Despite my ineffective methods as a young aficionado, I have not lost my drive for helping others.

## **(WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WITHIN THE MEDICAL FIELD?)**

I plan on becoming a family practice physician, and while I know my direction could change with further exposure to other medical fields, I know that I want to work with a variety of patients and cases.

## **(HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ATLANTIS?)**

Before starting my sophomore year at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I talked to a friend of mine who participated in an Atlantis program this past summer. I was very inspired by how she described her hospital experience, and I felt motivated to pursue something that would similarly grant me insight into the global medical field.

## **(WHAT IS ATLANTIS?)**

Atlantis is a pre-med abroad program that connects pre-health students with doctors in hospitals across the world. It is designed to help students like me understand their place in the medical field and get first-hand experience shadowing physicians. As you may know, getting serious shadowing experience in the States is both extremely competitive and rigorously regulated. Yet, pre-med students are all but required to have shadowing experiences, along with unique extracurricular pursuits, to get accepted into medical school. An Atlantis program satisfies both needs.

After hearing about my friend's incredible experience, I applied the next day, interviewed the following week, and was thankfully accepted soon afterwards. Through this program, I will get the opportunity to: shadow international physicians, rotate weekly through various specialties, shadow for 20 hours per week, go on group excursions to experience my host country's culture, connect with other pre-med students around the world, grow personally through this international experience, and volunteer to help tutor English to hospital staff. I will be traveling to Lisbon, Portugal for three weeks, and I am so excited to see healthcare from this new cultural perspective!



# Example Letter

## (WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?)

I am excited to see a variety of departments, and I hope to be either affirmed in my pursuit of family practice or steered in a new direction. I am also excited to discover new local cuisine, swim in beautiful waters, and discover Portuguese culture in Lisbon and other nearby cities!

## (HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP YOU?)

I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to read this letter and learning about my summer plans. The total cost for the program is \$5,000, but I am aiming to raise \$6,000 to afford flights, additional food, and any extra expenses. This is where I need your help — if you are willing and able to partner with me in my medical pursuits, I would greatly appreciate a monetary contribution of any amount. No gift is too small, so whether you give \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, or \$500, I would appreciate any support. If you decide that you want to partner with me in this endeavor, you can send a check to my home address, and I would love to keep you updated on my journey and the things that I learn from it.

I will be sending a letter after my program to everyone who partners with me so that I can share how I learned and grew from the experience. Thank you again for considering my future medical career, and I would love to speak in person or over the phone if you have any additional questions!

Most sincerely,

Insert Name

Insert home address to receive checks in the mail

Insert payment link or other service option

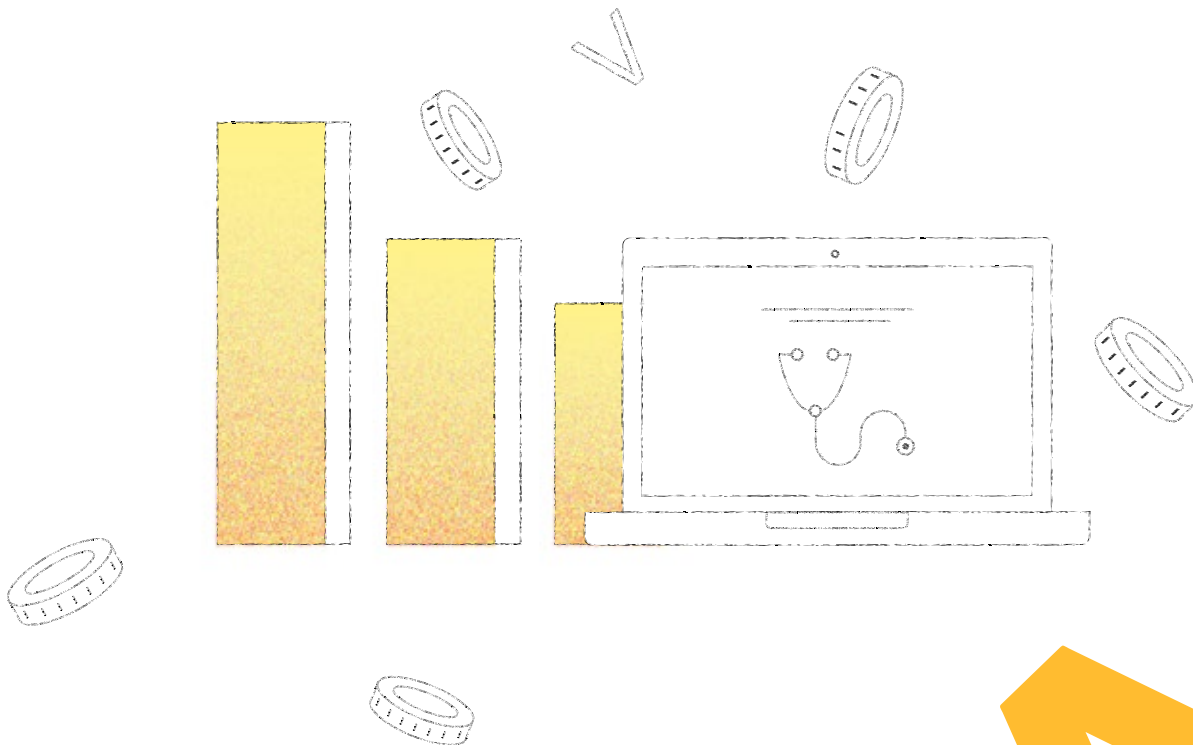


## STRATEGY TWO

# Create a Profile On a Crowdfunding Website

Another good option to use in conjunction with a physical letter, especially for getting donations from people that you reach through Facebook or social media (and for people who prefer to donate using credit card), is to use GoFundMe.com or a similar service (FundmyTravel, Razoo, etc). Your message on this platform is still the same: communicate why you want to go on a program and how donating to your program fee will help you get into medical school one day. You never know who might view your page! For an example of how to use GoFundMe effectively, check out how Heather, a 2015 Atlantis Fellow, used GoFundMe to raise \$700:

<https://www.gofundme.com/pqknt8>.





### STRATEGY THREE

## Plan a Campaign — Think Local

Partner with a neighborhood restaurant (maybe whose cuisine is native to the country in which your program will take place) and see if they will host a fundraising night for you. Ask if they will donate a percentage of one night's profit to your upcoming trip. You can advertise to various friends and family, and their attendance will not only provide revenue for your trip, but it will also increase the restaurant's business.

Get creative and host a fundraiser! Have local businesses volunteer their products or their food to donors that come to your event, where all of the proceeds go to your program fee. Another option would be to plan and host a 5k, where every participant pays an entrance fee of \$30-\$50. Find a fun area for your course and map out 3.1 miles. You can affordably print and make the supplies needed for a race, and you can even purchase prizes and souvenirs for the various winners.

Trust us, there are people who would love to invest in your journey as a developing leader in healthcare. However, they may end up not giving if they feel like their contribution won't do much to help you reach your goal. A newer alternative to GoFundMe, AdoptABox.co, breaks down seemingly daunting figures into very manageable amounts in a visually appealing way to encourage anyone to contribute, even with just \$1 — literally.

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### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

If you take the numbers one through one hundred and add them all together, they add up to 5050. Every number gets a box, and that's how much it takes to adopt the box (e.g., Box 1 costs \$1, Box 59 costs \$59). A box can be adopted by only one person, but one person can adopt multiple boxes.

The most that anyone would have to contribute to adopt a box is \$100, which is less daunting than thousands of dollars! But if they want to give more, they can also do that.

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You will be surprised to see how readily people in your social and professional networks are willing to participate and offer help for fundraising options, like the above. Spread the word to members of your book club, your church, your parent's jobs... you could even consider asking the local media to run a press release or story about your upcoming experience abroad!



#### STRATEGY FOUR

## Get Coffee or Lunch With Health Professionals

We recommend creating a second version of your support-request letter that is targeted toward health professionals in your hometown and in the city where you go to school. Plan on sending this letter to 50-100 doctors, surgeons, dentists, orthodontists, etc., preferably to their home address if you can find it (although a second option is directly to their office address).

The key of this letter is to briefly explain in two or three sentences who you are and then say something like, “I have the opportunity to spend part of my (choose winter/summer) break in (insert country) shadowing doctors in an international healthcare program. I would love to sit down over a quick coffee or lunch to tell you more about myself and to see if you might be willing to support my future career as a healthcare professional through this program.”

The goal is NOT for these health professionals to send you a check immediately. You are encouraging them to reach out to you (include your phone number and email) and to schedule a time to meet for coffee or lunch to discuss the opportunity further. Be sure to prepare for your meeting with these professionals by thinking deeply about your own interest in healthcare and reading up on Atlantis program details on our website and Handbook.

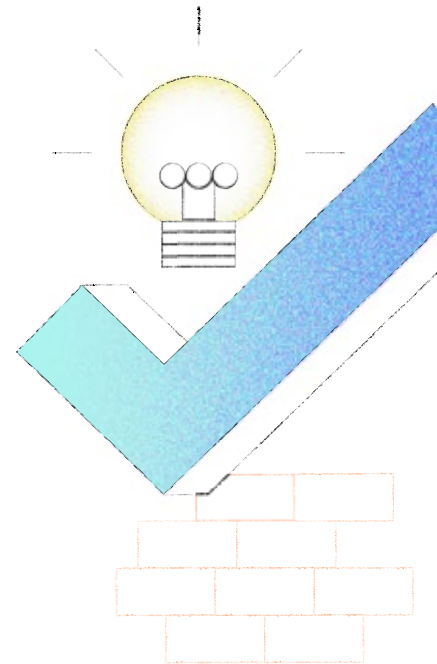




## STRATEGY FIVE

# Apply to University Scholarships / Grants

A fifth avenue for raising support is to spend an hour or two researching winter and summer-break scholarships, travel grants, and research fellowships or scholarships offered through your university or for university students. Many schools offer grants and stipends to students who are doing an international education experience, like the Atlantis program. Search online and talk to your school's study abroad office or general student scholarships office to see what is available. Make sure to apply early for any opportunities, as many of these grant and fellowship programs are selected on a rolling basis.



## STRATEGY SIX

# Consider Atlantis Scholarships

It's entirely possible for you to raise \$3,000 or more just using the avenues above (letterwriting, coffee/lunch with health professionals, local-networking approaches). But a sixth option is to apply for Atlantis Scholarships through the Atlantis Pre-med Leadership Scholars Program. We only offer scholarships to a select few students (~1%), so they are very competitive. If you would like to be considered for an Atlantis Scholarship, you can apply after enrolling in an Atlantis program (please note that you must be enrolled in a program to be eligible). Typical Atlantis Scholars are undergraduate juniors or seniors that have an established vocation for medicine, extensive clinical/research experience, remarkable leadership skills, 3.5 GPA or higher, and demonstrated financial need.



## STRATEGY SEVEN

# Investigate General / Travel Research Grants

As you diligently pursue all the above six options for raising funds, there may be a few final options. First, look into general travel and research grant programs outside of your university. Start early on these applications because the decision process may take a while and some may have a deadline to apply. Some places to start include “Grants.gov” and the following list: <https://www.gooverseas.com/scholarships>.

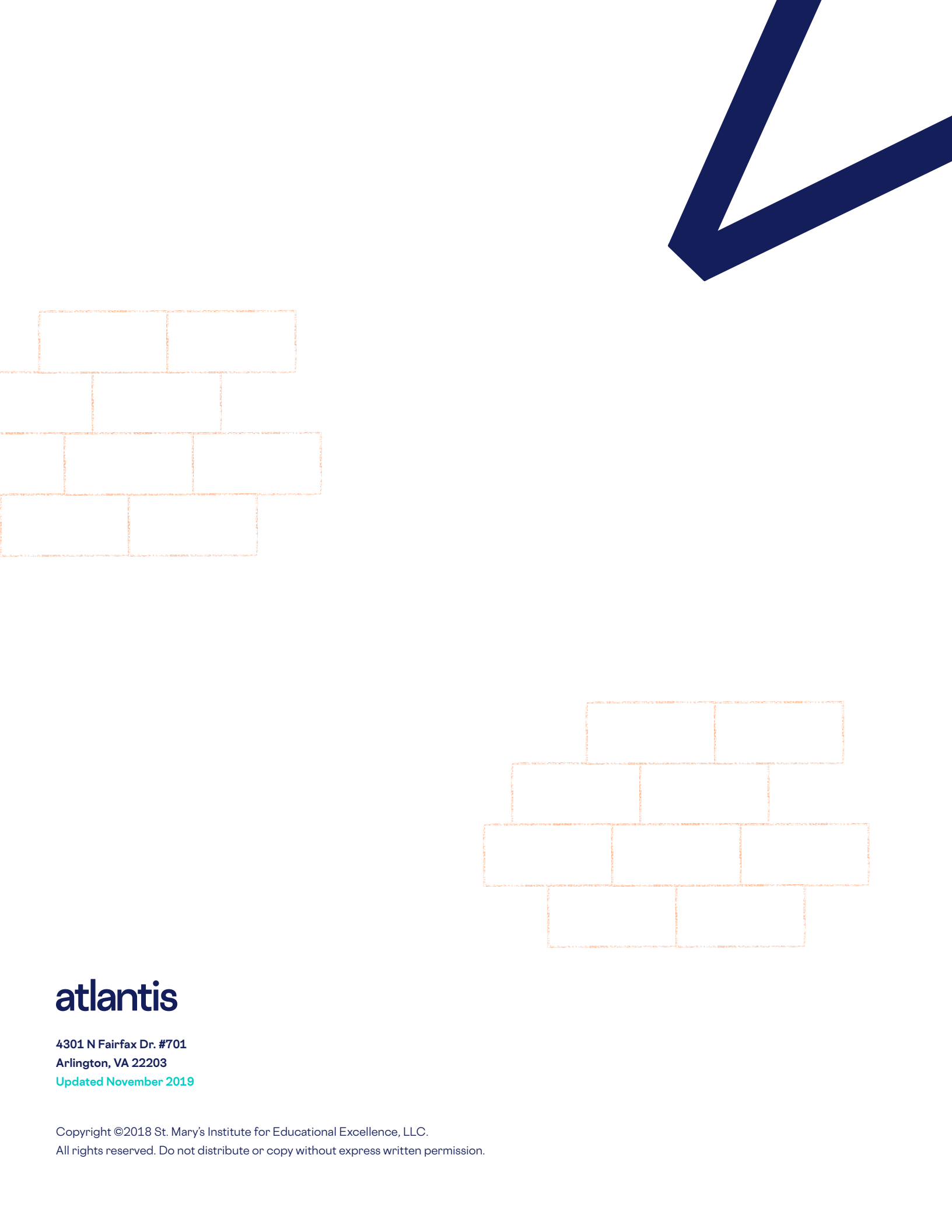


## STRATEGY EIGHT

# Get A Part-Time Job

We know you’ve been hard at work through school in conjunction with diligently raising support for your upcoming trip. However, if you are still in need of additional funds, you might consider getting a part-time job (which many of our alumni have done). Here’s the math: getting a 10hr/week job at \$10/hr for just 10 weeks is about \$1,000 toward your trip! If you are already employed outside of your college, consider proposing a donation matching program to your boss. If these options don’t work with your schedule, many students find alternative routes to making money by using their skills or hobbies. Try selling your artwork, crafts, poems, or other items that showcase your talent and do not cost much money to produce.





**atlantis**

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