

# Fundraising

Jan Greer Langley  
Community Capacity Building Tool Kit  
Funded by Human Resources and Skills Development  
Canada  
National Literacy Secretariat  
June 2003

## Fundraising

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## Fundraising

*"People give to people," Joyce Young.*

There are good fundraising ideas and there are bad and there are good fundraising ideas that turn bad. This chapter will help you:

- get creative with your fundraising ideas,
- plan a fundraising event,
- determine value for effort, and
- help you evaluate your event.

The fundraising experts all agree that in order to fundraise successfully, you need to have a group of people committed to raising funds for your organization. Fundraising is not something you can do successfully all by yourself, unless it is what you do professionally.

**Step #1.** Get a fundraising committee organized. Name them the "fundraising task force."

Choose people who believe in your cause and who have a good network of contacts who will donate to your cause. Let them organize and carry out fundraising activities on behalf of your organization. Be involved but let them and volunteers they include do the work.

**Step #2.** Choose a fundraising activity.

Fundraising categories include:

- Individual grantors - government, foundations, service clubs, corporations.
- Special events and product sales - lotteries, dances, dinners, etc.
- Direct marketing - mail, telephone and door-to-door campaigns.
- Individual major donors - average people, not necessarily wealthy.

(There are advantages and disadvantages to each activity.)

**Step #3** Carefully plan your activity keeping costs and return for value in mind. Meet with your fundraising committee to:

- Create a timeline for the event.

- Create a critical path for the event that includes who, what, where, when and how.
- Appoint leaders who will ensure that the event planning is carried out as planned.
- Prepare a budget for the event.
- Determine where services for the event can be found through in-kind or cash donations.
- Develop sponsorships.
- Check in with the timelines regularly to make sure that the planning is on schedule.
- After the event thank all volunteers and contributors.

### **Profiles of donors and methods of fundraising:**

#### **Individual grantors:**

Government, foundations and corporations require a written proposal. Proposal writing was discussed in a separate module.

Getting a donation from a service club usually requires a letter and a visit. Either visit the service club and give a talk or invite them to your program.

#### **Special events and product sales:**

There are a number of special events that can be carried out. In this category, the donor is receiving something for their money. Here are some examples:

- Events around food; breakfasts, lunches, receptions and dinners where guests are charged above the cost of the meal and are generally entertained in some way.
- Raffles, lotteries and auctions all involve selling something. Generally items are donated to the cause and then volunteers sell tickets to make money. In the case of an auction, items are donated and people bid on the items. Auctions are usually held in conjunction with a special event. (A lottery license must be obtained prior to selling tickets or holding lotteries. See form on page\_\_\_\_.)
- Educational events; a lecture series featuring sought after speakers, authors or celebrities.

- The rock-a-thon, walk-a-thon, slim-a-thon, anything-a-thon; people are sponsored to participate and paid according to how many hours they rock, miles they walk or pounds they lose.
- Parties and galas; these events can usually justify high admission prices and attract large numbers of people and include gala dinner-dances requiring "black tie," benefit concerts or major sporting events. Lower priced events in this category include dances, outdoor concerts, poor-boy luncheons, picnics, beer gardens or community suppers.
- The stay-at-home event; people buy a ticket to non-existing event and then stay home and relax. The invitation to the non-existing event tells people how much they are saving by staying home and includes names of entertainers who won't show up. Or, send a tea bag and ask people to have a relaxing cup of tea, or a "high tea" at home in return for a donation to your cause.
- Celebrity chef dinners. Ask local chefs to donate their time to prepare a special dinner. Guests pay a high-ticket price to attend these special dinners.

### **Direct Marketing:**

This category includes letter writing, door-to-door and telephone marketing campaigns. It takes a lot of work to appear credible with these types of campaigns. People are so bombarded with the door-to-door and telephone campaigns that when they answer the door or telephone, they can be abrupt. Having well known community members carry out these campaigns may help.

Local cable networks will host special television campaigns and it's worth getting in touch with them to combine a television marketing campaign with the literacy community involved in interviews to educate the public.

If embarking on a letter writing campaign, research is required to establish a mail list of local businesses and individuals. Again, depend on your fundraising task force to create these mailing lists.

The request letter is of the utmost importance and must be well written. As well, follow up telephone calls are made to those people who received the letter and once the donation is received a thank you letter must go out right away.

Hints for writing a good request letter:

- Write in terms of people, not large issues.

- Document positive testimonials and successes (with permission).
- Make it appealing.
- Help the donor understand how their donation leads to results.
- Provide a visual image.
- Address each letter personally.

Example: (Ask one or more of your students to use their name and profile.)

John Martin is twenty-five years old and has a young family. He is not able to read to his two pre-school children. Without his help, his children will not read as well as the other children when they go to school. Until John can read better he will not be competitive in the work force or participate as much as he could in the community. Until now, he has done seasonal labour or lived on social assistance.

John has taken a positive step. He is attending our literacy program and learning to read. In time, he will have a better quality of life and so will his family. With your help, we can continue to help John and other adult learners.

There are ten students in the adult literacy program. A donation of \$50.00 will help tremendously in keeping our literacy program open and helping many people in our community like John.

Please send your donation to [name and mailing address of program]. A charitable receipt will be issued for donations over \$10.00. [Only state this if you have a charitable number and can provide a receipt.]

Or, ask for funding to buy books and other essential teaching resources.

In any donation request, never ask for money for:

- rent
- salaries
- phone bills
- core costs
- a deficit
- reaching a goal of XXX dollars.

**Individual major donors:**

These people do not necessarily have to be wealthy. Some of these gifts will come from average people in your community who believe in the

benefits of literacy. There are two ways to do this. The first and most successful way is to find one person who will make a major donation to your program and have that person influence the people in his/her network. This person will have greater access to other through social relationships, community or work.

Have one of "them" do it in ways like:

- making the request directly
- hosting an intimate reception at their home
- joining them for a visit to your program and having people for refreshments afterward at their home.

Or, train a staff person to meet with potential donors on a face-to-face basis. With either method, clarify key messages and always add the human element either through a student's story or by having a student attend a meeting with you to talk personally about how literacy has changed his/her life. Practice your message before meeting with someone.

### **Donor Recognition:**

Donor recognition should be personal, meaningful and equitable. Develop your own donor recognition pyramid. Here is one example of a donor recognition pyramid.

Literacy Champion                                  \$1,000 or more

This donor will be publicly recognized (through the media or at a special event) and the donor's name (and logo) or picture will be highlighted on all marketing materials and will receive a special recognition award and a thank you letter. If the donor is a business, place their logo on the signage for your classroom.

Literacy Hero                                         \$500 to \$999

This donor will be publicly recognized at a special event, will receive a framed plaque to display in his/her home or office and a thank you letter.

Literacy Winner                                    \$100 to \$499.

This donor will be publicly recognized at a special event and a thank you letter.

Literacy Friend

Up to \$100.

This donor will receive a personal thank you letter and a framed certificate.

Each program will develop its own way of recognizing donors. Special recognition events can range from dinners (very expensive!) to teas or receptions at a community location or at your literacy programs. Most donors would prefer that their money **not** be spent on expensive displays of appreciation.