

## FUND-RAISING 101

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Raising funds for self-help activities can be a positive experience for group members. As always, be sure the additional funds are necessary for the group to continue its services or to develop new ones. It's important to note that many large and successful self-help groups, such as 12 step programs, are set up to incur very small expenses that often are covered by member donations.

So don't assume fund-raising is needed! If you decide to proceed, gather other group members, establish priorities, and analyze individual interests and skills which may lead the group to select a particular type of fund-raising activity.

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Members may experience many benefits through raising funds for the group. People gain a feeling of personal satisfaction and accomplishment, learn new skills, increase exposure of the group in the community, participate in publicity, and perhaps increase group membership! Additionally, planning and cooperating on a project helps members get to know each other better, which can solidify relationships within the group. Plan some fun into the event through worker parties and other forms of recreation.

A first step is to analyze why people contribute to similar groups and causes. People often contribute because they believe the goals of your group are important, and they are making a sound investment. Therefore, a positive attitude by group members who are participating in the fund-raising is essential. Provide information to donors that will encourage confidence in the group and inspire people to become part of an important effort. In "Helping You Helps Me," a booklet published by the Canadian Council on Social Development, seven people rules for fund-raising success are listed:

1. People give to people. Ask in person.
2. The best people to ask for money are people who have already given money. Keep records of your donors.
3. People cannot respond unless you tell them what you want. Always ask for a specific amount or item.
4. People who ask for money become better givers. People who give money become better askers.
5. People want to back a winner. Be proud of your organization, what you do, and how you do it.
6. More people means more money and more fun. Find a job for every volunteer.

## 7. People want recognition. Send thank-you notes.

Several sources list four general methods of raising money. In the pamphlet, "What Every Volunteer Should Know About Fund Raising," published by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, these methods are listed as: 1) personal contact; 2) special events; 3) direct mail; and 4) grants. Personal contact is recommended as the fastest and most effective way to raise funds, whether door-to-door or to private corporations' public relations offices. (Be sure to check into solicitation laws in your area). Special events may include selling a service or product that isn't available elsewhere in your community. Profit will be higher if it is another company's product. Observe other fund-raising events taking place in your community and talk to the people involved. Some possibilities - other than the usual bake-sales are listed at the end of this info brochure.

Direct mail requests, although reaching many people, can be an expensive proposition. Success of this method depends on an up-to-date mailing list, quality of brochure and graphics, and timing of the request. Grants are often available through foundations, corporations, and governmental entities. Application usually involves writing proposals, meetings with agency representatives, and ability to keep any records that may be required. If group members are skilled in this area, it may be a very good way to obtain funds for certain projects or services.

Organization, timing of events, specific plans and timelines will lead to a smoother fund-raising effort. Keeping track of what works and doesn't work, who contributes or who may be interested will be important for future information. In self-help groups, we have all learned through our experiences, and fund-raising is no exception. Monetary gain is only one of the benefits of fund-raising. "Money isn't the absolute or best answer to all resource needs. Group members working together to raise money or to find other resources carry out self-help principles by cooperating and sharing. They help build a better group. (from "Helping You Helps Me", by Karen Hill.)

## **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUND-RAISERS**

Whether you elect to raise funds for your organization's use, for a charitable organization, or for a combination of the two, a fund raiser should be a carefully planned event.

1. Define why you want to raise money.
  - Do you want money for a specific organizational need (supplies, bringing in a speaker, etc.)?
  - B. Do you want to donate money to a specific charitable organization (be sure you define why your group has chosen that organization)?
2. Analyze your resources.
  - How much money do you need?

- How much money do you have to invest?
  - How many workers can you count on to help?
  - What support (people or \$) can you get from other groups?
  - How much time do you have for planning?
3. Seek input from others.
- Your advisor
  - Other organization leaders - find out what others have done, and what has/hasn't worked
  - Center Programs Staff
4. IV. Generate a list of ideas - brainstorm.
- Involve entire group.
  - Look for unusual avenues - sometimes an off the wall suggestion can turn out to be a lot of fun for planners and participants alike.
- SUGGESTION: If your fund-raiser relates to the purpose of your organization (ex. Horse club - Ride-a-thon donating money to the Humane Society), people will remember the event. Start a tradition; repeating your fund raiser identifies your group with a specific event.

### **Some Fund Raising Ideas:**

- A-thons (bike, dance, phone, haircut, run, walk, horse back riding, singing, etc.)
- Air band contest
- Arts and crafts competition / sale
- Auction
- Beard growing contest; Babysitting services
- Bikeathons
- Bingo, fashion shows
- Cake auction
- Car wash
- Carnival; pancake supper
- Concerts
- Dog wash
- Dunking booth
- Eating contest
- Flea markets
- Haunted house
- Ice cream social
- Kidnap faculty/staff, they must call friends to raise ransom money to be donated to charity (obtain their permission first!)
- Monte Carlo Casino night
- Present Wrapping Service
- Raffle

- Sell and deliver birthday cakes
- Sell balloons
- Sell Christmas trees
- Swimathons
- Talent shows
- Tele-grams; Holiday-gram
- Tournaments
- Walkathons
- Wild hair contest
- Window wash
- Winter beach party
- Wreath sale

For more information read:

The Grassroots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community, by Joan Flanagan, Contemporary Books, Inc., 1982.

The Grant-Seekers Handbook, by Phillip J. Reed, Michigan Nonprofit Management Institute.

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