



Grassroots Fundraising Toolkit for Summer Projects

Grassroots fundraising empowers people with the opportunity to help contribute to services and projects that change the world. What better way to help people feel empowered than to allow them to help raise the funds needed for a cause that will benefit them? Don't know where to start? This toolkit will show you how!

Perhaps the greatest lesson that any fundraiser can learn is that grassroots fundraising is not about just asking for money, but rather about giving people the opportunity to make a difference. Everyone likes to make a difference, but most of time you have to present the opportunity rather than waiting for people to take the initiative.



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Fundraising Tips! How to Find the “Fun” in Fundraising

Some information in this section of the guide were provided by: Mike Alilionis, GreenPeace Student Board

Getting Past the Fear

It's okay to have a fear of fundraising, but now it is time those fears to overcome them.

Remember:

- Fundraising isn't evil or bad.
- People who fundraise aren't slimy or shady.
- Organizations that fundraise aren't only concerned with a quick buck.

Fundraising enables hundreds of thousands of organizations around the world to serve – literally – billions of people. Fundraising is the lifeblood of your summer project. Without fundraising, you wouldn't be able to carry out your mission.

Think about the following:

- What is the mission of your summer project? Why does it exist? Why does it need the money? Isn't that mission worth pursuing? How can you not raise money to support it?
- Fundraising for your summer project is serving the greater good – because not fundraising would prevent your fellow humans from being served.

Remember: *The worst that will happen if you ask someone for money, is that they say “no.” The best that will happen, is that they give you a donation!*

Be Powerful and Confident!

- Use strong, friendly eye contact
- Always be upfront about the subject
- Remember: dollars translate into success

Try roleplaying a fundraising ask!

- Give direct feedback, when necessary
- Always give attention to the things that folks are doing well
- Congratulate all victories - minor/major

Best Practices for Fundraising

1. Be creative

- Brainstorm of every possible way to get AND use materials you will need.
- The more you brainstorm the less likely you are to spend \$\$\$.
- Fundraising is not always about getting money (ie. fundraising for food or material donations.)

2. Free first!

Having brainstormed, try to get the materials for free.

Call around!

Need food? Call every grocery store in the area and ask them to donate some non-perishable food!

Matching gifts

Brainstorm which businesses and organizations might be willing to match funds raised by your group. I.e. If you raise \$500, the company gives you \$500.

Call the media

- Instead of buying ad space
- Ask your school/local newspapers, radio, and TV stations if they could advertise.
- Have radio or TV interview you about what you're doing.

Borrow

In the over-consuming world we live in, sharing resources is always possible.

3. Set goals

- Set fundraising goals! For what is needed.
- Goals should be SMART – Strategic, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, & Timelined.

4. Apply, apply, apply

Awards, bursaries, grants, and other funding that are often very available for students.

5. More ideas!

- See if local government, community groups, or churches can donate.
- Schools typically have funding for student groups, go and ask student activities office, student government, coalition groups, academic departments, individual professors, other campus departments, food provider. (If they don't have the funding, maybe they know someone who does)
- Ask a local restaurant to hold a benefit night, where a percentage of the night's proceeds go to your organization (typically ranges from 10-50%).
- Have a community dinner/potluck/wine and cheese party and ask attendees to donate their spare change to your cause. If doing a wine and cheese party, try to get wine/cheese donated.
- Host an event (charge admission) and invite a special speaker such as a local celebrity, renowned community figure, or politician.
- Outreach to allies, local businesses, and churches that support your cause (i.e. the Sierra Club, Kiwanis Club, Boy/Girl Scouts, gardening/outdoor clubs, etc.) Again, if they don't have the funding, they probably know someone who does.)
- Ask friends/neighbors to donate unwanted items for a yard sale/Ebay auction that will benefit your summer project
- Hold a benefit concert for your summer project (Through several degrees of separation, someone knows of a band itching for a large crowd/cause to perform for.)
- In college, my environmental club made/sold eco-friendly laundry detergent in reused water bottles for \$1/bottle. We made about \$500/semester. (Be creative!)

6. Make it personal

- DO NOT come across to donors as 'using them for money.'
- Fundraising is fundamentally *engaging people* in the cause and making it personal
- How will their donation be used and why is it important?
- Make them feel a part of the campaign.

Here are some questions to guide you in creating your personal narrative:

- **The Story of Self:** This component of the narrative relates to the formation of an understanding of who we are based on where we have come from and why we are doing the things that we do. It is deeply introspective and healing, allowing for strong and deeply interpersonal interactions from a genuine understanding of self. This section is about sharing YOUR passion for the work that you do with the person you are trying to reach. Some formative questions include:
 - What were key moments in your life, including early childhood, that either reflect your current values or turned you towards your current path?
 - Intuitively, why does EAC and community action feel important to you and link with your personal history?
 - What has been your persistent calling or passion and has held you back from your potential?
 - Why are you concerned with local issues of justice and oppression?
 - Construct a narrative for your summer project.
 - What is your relationship with money, do you like asking for money, have you ever wanted a lot of money? How have your economic perspectives grown?
 - What communities most affected you the most to support grassroots action?
- **The Story of Us:** Developing the narrative of community centers on coalescing a stronger sense of self with common interests and experiences. This section is about building a bridge with other people and shaping a vision of community with them and with others like you. This "us" might be youth, it might be people from your city, or it might be the universal us felt through a spiritual sense. Formative questions:
 - In what past situations have you bonded with a group in a synchronized manner? What form of group mission inspired you to stronger, longer-lasting, and more action-oriented relationships?
 - What is inspiring about your local work, how have you been inspired by being part of EAC?
 - What importance do you place on working together to achieve individual and global vision?
 - How can a group solve problems?
 - How can a donor's story and gift empower the community, your organization and/or EAC?
 - Which communities do you feel most comfortable or inspired to engage?
 - How do you communicate and find your role within a group?
- **The Story of Now:** Realizing that our local communities have a compelling impact on similar issues, projects, and communities elsewhere, demands and inspires us to form a global understanding of a place within collective movements. This global understanding elevates our message and connects with donors concerned with their role in universal issues. This section is about creating a sense of 'the fierce urgency of now.' Questions:
 - What were the issues that inspired you to be part of the movement?
 - What are the most recurring issues in the news that your community identifies with and how are these framed?
 - What do you hear people talking about at coffee shops or the bus stop?
 - Why do we need to create local grassroots solutions NOW and why do we need funding from THIS donor NOW despite what the skeptics are saying about the economy?

7. Give thanks!

- Always say thank you.
- Tell them about success of event
- Tweets and Facebook updates when people have contributed - similar to National Public Radio, example, "Jane just donated \$x to [our summer project] because she feels the youth climate movement is doing cutting edge work to turn our economy clean and begin clean energy projects. Feel the same way? Donate now to [our summer project]!"
- Let them know that their help was crucial to success. (Think like how PBS ends each program, "This show was made possible by viewers like you.") It shows how much you value their effort!

Strategize to Maximize Your Funds!

1. Create a team of fund-raisers (with guidance)

How to create a fundraising team:

- Brainstorm to create a list of prospective donors. *Contact information for donors of political candidates likely to support your cause can be found on Huffington Post's campaign donor site (<http://fundrace.huffingtonpost.com/>)
- Provided templates a fundraising team can copy and paste into emails & Twitter.
- Celebrated successes often to keep the momentum building!
- Meet with/call the fundraising team to make sure they are on track and felt confident!
- Brake down the possible ways the team can reach their goals so it is less daunting.

2. Use the Internet more than you already do

Most of us take for granted how powerful the Internet is. We know we should use social media, online payments, and email newsletters, but how often do we take the time to use these strategically? The Internet allows fundraisers to diversify the way of contacting prospective donors. Fundraisers can be very targeted (direct email, Facebook message, etc.) or fundraisers can just put the opportunity out there (Twitter, mass email, posts on your web site, Facebook fan page, or blog). Every donor will resonate with messaging differently, so employ a variety to media to reach them. Fun tip: Use a fundraising thermometer so everyone can track the fundraising progress!

3. Use urgency!

The first step is to set a goal, then use urgency to meet it. People who leave things to the last minute say, "I work best under pressure," remember this with donors. Whether approaching a deadline or certain milestones (e.g., "10 days left!" "Half-way there!"), explain why people should give NOW. When launching a fundraising campaign, it can be handy to not publicize it; that way urgency drives most of the donors to give in the final weeks. Try reaching out to a handful of donors early and let them know of the urgent need for them to build a strong base, then when launching the public campaign there will already be a good deal of momentum. This works well because everyone understands that they were making a significant contribution exactly when it was needed.

Fundraising Letter Template:

[Your Name]

[Your Street Address]

[Your City, State Zipcode]

[Date]

[Name of Future Donor]

[His/her Street Address]

[His/her City, State, Zipcode]

Dear [Future Donor]:

This summer, the partners and allies of the Energy Action Coalition are launching initiatives to train and empower young people to help build a socially just, clean energy economy. There are 17 youth-led summer clean energy projects happening across the country that demonstrate the viability of clean energy solutions to meet the needs of communities.

With the support of local partnerships and a national network of fellow summer projects, participants create self-sustaining projects that have a direct impact on their communities and that serve as models for others to build on. The projects encompass many initiatives such as ground-breaking strategies for energy efficiency, urban agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable transportation, waste reduction, and green industry. Young people are leading the way to prove that the green economy is not only vital, but absolutely viable.

[Paragraph describing the story of you] It is an honor to be selected for the [your program], and I am excited about attending and creating a clean energy economy in [your city, state]. My passion is for [...], and this program will provide me with the skills to be an effective [...]. I am writing to ask you for your financial support to [help me attend/further advance the program].

[Paragraph describing future plans of your program/project, how those plans will affect this donor. Story of us, now]

A donation of \$20, \$50, \$100 from you to [your program] will make a big difference. Your contribution will be used to help [...] and develop the skills I need to become a leader within our community, city, and state. [Include line if donation is tax-deductible]. If you are interested in helping me, I would be more than happy to provide you with the additional information.

I will contact you soon to discuss my request for your assistance. Thank you for your time and consideration. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]

[Your Email Address]

I hope I can count on your support!