

# Fundraising Ideas

Short on funds? There are several ways to raise money for your organization: charging membership dues and fees, hosting a special event (banquet, etc.), selling a product or service (bake sale, car wash) or by simply asking for donations. Each method is useful depending on your funding needs. However, soliciting contributions person-to-person is the most successful and least costly with up to a 65% response and 5% cost rate.

Sounds easy, doesn't it. So why aren't more people doing it? Because to be successful, you need to do your homework just like preparing for a final exam or job interview. Effective fundraising is 90% organization and 10% solicitation.

Asking for donations from corporations, foundations, friends or strangers often conjures up images of anxious begging. But, when you share your enthusiasm for your organization and its mission, you engage the excitement of others. You give potential donors the opportunity to participate in your vision and worthy projects. The larger the gift request, the more critical it is to do this face-to-face. To insure success it is important to follow the steps outlined below:

1. **Conduct a Needs Assessment:** Potential donors will have many questions about your group such as its mission and goals. Begin to prepare by answering these questions: what is your organization all about; what problems are you trying to solve; why is your organization qualified to address the problem; how much do you need in cash, services or equipment; what do you hope to accomplish with this gift; why would someone want to give to your cause; what are other funding sources.
2. **Identify Potential Donors:** More than \$125 billion is given away each year by individuals, corporations and foundations. Charitable giving is a two-way street; you must offer psychological value to a donor to receive a contribution. Who is most likely to fund your project: alumni members; friends and family; corporate sales, marketing, public relations or college relations department; private nonprofit foundations...? It is important to enlarge your network of contacts.
3. **Prepare Marketing Materials and Cultivate Prospects:** Prepare a brochure, proposal, photo album, and/or videotape on your organization or project that will positively describe who you are and what you need. Then form a relationship with each potential donor so that he or she can understand your organization firsthand. Invite potential donors to your meetings as guest speakers, guests at an annual banquet and give awards for their involvement.
4. **Contact Donors and Make Solicitations:** The best donor is one you develop as a friend and supporter first. If this is not possible, have an inside contact to make a formal introduction. Ideally, you should speak with each potential donor personally to request funds. But in some cases, a letter or phone call must do the job. Before requesting a donation, make sure you know what types of projects and organizations the potential donor supports; how much is typically given and if CSULB is currently pursuing this prospect for another gift. There is more to gift solicitation than simply asking for money. Don't just stress your needs. Address how it is important for the potential donor to get involved.
  - Focus on human needs not organizational needs.
  - Show enthusiasm for your projects
  - Show empathy with their objections. Explain how you will overcome their concerns.
  - Be businesslike. This is a serious commitment.
  - Share the marketing materials you've brought.
  - Pause and answer questions. Listen carefully.
  - Share the gift size you're requesting.
  - Share what others have given.
  - Ask for the gift.

- A "No!" is not always rejection. It is often a request for more information. Expect objections from the donor. Increase your success by practicing your responses ahead of time to the following: Why should I help you? I already give to other organizations. I can't afford to give right now. I am not interested.
5. **Follow-up:** Always thank the prospective donor whether or not you receive a gift now; they may give later. When you receive a gift, recognize each donor several times with thank you letters, mementos, and/or banquet award presentations, as appropriate. Appreciated donors will give again.
  6. **Additional Help:** The fundraising technique discussed in this brief is a time-consuming effort which can pay rich dividends. If you plan to solicit a large gift (\$1,000 or more) from a potential donor, you must contact the Director of Development, Student Services Division at (562) 985-5255. This Director must also be contacted after a gift is received to facilitate formal university recognition.
  7. **Other Ideas:** Traditional ways of generating funds for your organization are also useful. Check with your SLD advisor before you commit to any purchases, contracts or publicity. Consider the following products, services and special event fund-raisers:
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Art Auction	Textbook Redemption
TV Audience Member	Car Wash
Game Show Participant	Concert
T-shirt Sales	Talent, Magic, Comedy Show
Candy Sales	Pool, Golf or Tennis Tournament
Dunk Tank	Casino Night
Fashion Show	Karaoke Night
Night at the Races	Holiday Grams/Cards
Coupon Sales	Haunted House
Program Advertising Sales	Weekend Trip
Cookbook Sales	Pizza Night
Flower Sales	Banquet
Hosting Career Days	College Bowl
Resumé Books	Massages During Finals
Barbecues	Tutoring
Bake Sales	Dog Walking
Recyclables Redemption	Maid Service
Silent Auction	Walkathon
Swap Meet	Garage Sale