

# Successful Fundraising Strategies

Here are some general principles to consider when planning a fundraising strategy for your organization:

- 1. Think Positively!** As you begin to plan - think big. Ask yourself, "If money were not an issue, what would the group do?" Dream a little and use your imagination. It is generally easier to scale down your organization's plans than to scale up in mid-year. After thinking big, your group can then begin to assess the possibilities of these goals in light of your resources. A dose of realism is necessary at this stage in your thinking, but be positive.
- 2. Establish Financial Goals.** If you don't know where you are going, you will never know if you have arrived. Determine how much you need by establishing an annual budget. A budget should follow the establishment of your organization's positive, but realistic, goals for the year. (Trying to make the group's plan fit the budget rather than making the budget fit the plan is a common error characteristic of stifled organizations). Once a budget of proposed expenses is developed, it should be reviewed against existing resources. The specified dollar figure beyond existing resources that will be required to operate and complete the group's program for the year becomes the group's fundraising target.
- 3. Explore Creative Funding Sources.** Successful organizations utilize multiple approaches to fundraising. So once you have established a financial target, identify all potential sources of funds and develop creative ways to tap these sources.
- 4. Establish A Fundraising Plan.** Fundraising is like any other group project; it cannot happen successfully if left to chance. Successful fundraising requires careful planning. Answer the basic planning questions -- Who? What? When? Where? and Why? As you creatively explore approaches to fundraising, it is important to balance the costs or required expenditures of the organization with the risks involved in fundraising. Make sure the fundraising activities are going to be worth the effort. If the risks are greater than what the group wishes to assume, it may be time to go back and revise the organization's overall goals for the year to reflect a reduced financial base. Remember, think positively and creatively. Once a financial plan is developed, write it down.
- 5. Organize the fundraising activities.** Obviously, when selling, giving away, or raffling an item, the less you spend on it, the more your group makes. Ask for donations and if you can not get it for nothing, get it for cost. Do not try to have one person do everything, but instead, get everyone in the group to participate by delegating tasks. Publicize the fundraiser, train members how to run the activity, and secure all donations well in advance of the event.
- 6. Evaluate Fundraising Activities.** To determine your level of success, it is necessary to evaluate your fundraising activities. This evaluation should compare the dollar goal with the amount raised, seek feedback from members about their thoughts of the event, and include recommendations for future fundraising activities. Remember to say "Thank You" to all appropriate people and keep records of everything.

Information adapted from California State University - Chico, Office of Student Activities.

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

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Used book sale  
Guess # of beans in jar (or variation)  
Student-faculty talent shows  
Garage sale  
Auctions  
Student-faculty art show  
Raffles  
Ad/coupon book  
Mum sales  
Carnivals/circus  
Calendar sale  
Banquets/roasts  
Singing messages  
Sell buttons/t-shirts/bumper stickers  
Birthday cake delivery  
Finals week care packages  
Holiday bazaar  
Car washes  
Garage/Rummage sale  
Donuts & cider sale  
Celebrity auctions (local celebrities)  
Work day at faculty/staff homes  
Service auction (time and effort)  
Balloon sales  
Plays/concerts  
Art/poster sale  
Fashion luncheon  
Holiday plant sales  
Roving dinner party  
Lemon eating contest  
Haunted house  
Plant sale  
Bagel/pretzel sale  
Antique show/art fair  
Marathons: run, walk, rock, eat, etc.  
Seesaw competition  
Bake sale  
Tournaments  
Catering  
Flower sale  
Balloon bouquet delivery  
Recycling drive  
Collect cans/bottles/papers  
Sell candy  
Sell unusual item with OU logo  
Alumni donations  
Merchant donation auction/sale  
Benefit dances  
Pledges  
Bicycle-a-thon or any other "a-thon"  
Contests where winners are decided  
by voting with pennies