

Fundraising 101

Fundraising Assessment

Please rate the level of support your food assistance program receives in the form of dollars/food from each of the following sources:

Rating scale:

1 = Great support

2 = Good support

3 = OK support

4 = Want more support

5 = No support

Congregations	1	2	3	4	5
Schools	1	2	3	4	5
Local Businesses	1	2	3	4	5
Civic Groups	1	2	3	4	5
Individuals	1	2	3	4	5
Grants	1	2	3	4	5

Add up or review your scores to identify your strongest supports and areas to focus on in future. **TIP: Diversifying fundraising will insure sustainability of your program and help avoid "donor fatigue."**

Fundraising Questions

Do you prepare an annual budget?	Y	N
Do you prepare a fundraising plan for your fiscal year?	Y	N
Do you set goals for your fundraising efforts? <i>(Examples: holiday appeals, March Campaign, events, etc.)</i>	Y	N
Is your board active in fundraising year-round?	Y	N
Do you actively engage your community in your fundraising or just wait for donations to come in?	Y	N
Do you have a fundraising committee or group focused on this?	Y	N
Do you use available local media to the fullest extent, including the newspaper, radio and television?	Y	N

Pick at least one of your "nos" to work on this year. **TIP: Second Harvest can help you turn all your "nos" into "yeses" – just ask us how!**



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Congregational Fundraising



Ideas for the future:

1. Send a mailing several times a year with important information about what is going on at your food assistance program. It doesn't have to ask for money, it can be newsy and fun.
2. Make sure there is always a speaker available and get invited to all the faith communities in your area to share your story. (Even if you have to invite yourself!)
3. Host a lunch at the site of your food assistance program for all of the clergy in the faith community. Feed them and provide education about your program. Get them connected.
4. Welcome all new local clergy personally or with a card.
5. Recruit volunteers from every faith community. Talk to clergy about new arrivals, people with special skills, etc.
6. Ask to be included on church/temple/mosque bulletins for events, write an article, offer recipes, recruit volunteers or solicit donations.

School/Youth Group Fundraising



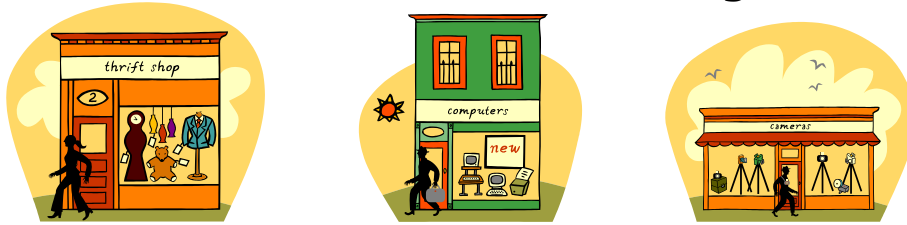
Ideas for the future:

1. Contact the schools in your community so they know about your program and the service opportunities you have available.
2. Engage the National Honor Society or other school groups/clubs.
3. Get to know the adult advisors for groups/clubs and encourage their participation in your program – chances are they'll recruit the kids too.
4. Be prepared to tell the schools what items you need most. Consider special drives – diapers, hygiene or household items, etc.

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5. Do you have a college in your area? If so, reach out to them for project support, internships, service opportunities, etc.
6. Ask for specific types of volunteering and outline the time involved.
7. College students are often looking for job experience with things like marketing, grant writing, communications, computer support, and more! Connect with departments that coordinate internships, service programs or facilitate course requirements.

Local Business Fundraising



Ideas for the future:

1. Work with your local chamber of commerce or business group to get the word out about your food assistance program. Become a member of the chamber, speak at meetings, host events, etc.
2. Hold a special lunch for local business people; let them know what's going on at your food assistance program and what your needs are.
3. Encourage a little bit of friendly competition between local businesses.
4. Be sure to have boxes, bins or barrels available for any food drive.
5. Work with your local grocery stores to have collection bins placed in the store and maybe even pre-packed bags for donation.
6. Work with your local banks.
7. Find out if businesses have a philanthropic program and ask for volunteer support or donations.
8. Give good PR. Make sure to publicly thank businesses for their support this is good advertising for them and you! Write press releases or articles for the local paper or other media. Tell others about their good works – word of mouth is great for generating good buzz for a business.
9. At events thank sponsors/supporters with signs.

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Civic Group Fundraising



Ideas for the future:

1. Identify the civic groups in your community, which may include: Jaycees, Lions, Rotary, VFW, American Legion, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Kiwanis, Elk Club, Friends of the Library and more.
2. Join these groups to provide maximum exposure. Perhaps volunteers or board members are already members and they can help the group learn more about you.
3. Develop a cooperative relationship with the groups.
4. These groups could help by fundraising, food drives and volunteering at your food assistance program.
5. Use existing PR channels. When you work with these groups ask that they mention your partnerships in their press releases or event information. Do likewise for them.

Individual Fundraising



Ideas for the future:

1. Do you keep track of all individuals who donate to you? This can be as simple as a 3x5 card file box or a computer spreadsheet or database. Track donors for thank yous and future requests.
2. Do you send a letter requesting donations from your existing donors during your fundraising events for the holiday season, March Campaign, special events, etc.?
3. Do you acknowledge everyone who donates with a thank you letter?

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4. Invite potential donors to a special evening and do a presentation about your food assistance program. Send a follow-up letter asking for a donation to support your work.
5. Thank supporters publicly with coverage in local media (newspaper/radio) or press releases or when speaking at events

Grants



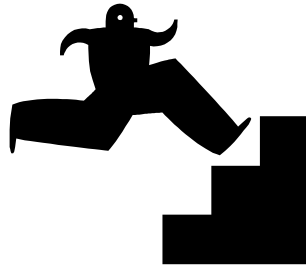
Ideas for the future:

1. Seek information about organizations/foundations in your area that provide funding? i.e. local phone companies, energy companies/co-ops, community banks, Thrivent for Lutherans chapters, businesses, etc. Look on their websites or ask them directly.
2. Get to know local branches of regional or national businesses; they can put in a good word for you at their foundations and may also have local funding opportunities that pop up.
3. When it comes to grants it is best to try local opportunities first. Large foundations like the Bush Foundation don't normally fund small organizations. It is the same with foundations such as Target, General Mills. Unless you have a new initiative you will more than likely be turned down. Always investigate and ask questions before investing time into any grant.
4. In Wisconsin check out <http://grants.library.wisc.edu/>. In Minnesota check out the Minnesota Council of Foundation <http://www.mcf.org/nonprofits>. These sites have a number of tools to help find, write and apply for grants. For publications listing foundations with grant information in Wisconsin <http://www.wifoundations.org/>, and Minnesota <https://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/resources-tools/resources-by-topic/fundraising-grantseeking/>

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5. Specific projects may have specific funding. For example, there are grants available for community gardens. Research grants based on specific programs. Google is great for this!
6. Take a grant writing class. Even if you don't write the grants it's good to know more about the process and what grantors are looking for.

Fundraising Action Steps



1. What ideas can we implement immediately and how do we go about it? (Try one at least one of the ideas from each category above.)
2. What are our fundraising weaknesses?
3. What are our fundraising strengths?
4. What do we need help with – communications, grant writing, event planning, outreach to faith community, outreach to school, outreach to community, Internet/social media, public relations, business relations, etc.
5. Who can help us with the above?
6. What ideas do we really like, but need time to plan or gather resources?
7. What are our goals for our fundraising program?
8. What is the timeline for our goals and action plan?

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Fundraising Ideas from Food Shelves

Here are just a few fun ideas –

- **Baby pool** – when the director was expecting her baby she had a pool going on Bellybets.com. Participants could be entered into a drawing for a gift card if they made a donation of at least \$12.16 (her due date) to the food shelf.
- **Money auction** – at the food shelf's gala event they pass around a jar in which people throw in cash. Toward the end of the evening the jar is auctioned off. The proceeds of the auction go to the food shelf and the winner gets the jar. The first time they did the auction the jar was “donated” back and auctioned off an additional three times.
- **Sponsor a month** – businesses, civic groups, individual donors and churches are asked to sponsor the food shelf a month each year by donating enough to pay the bills or food purchases. A letter is sent with a specific dollar amount and months available.
- **Sponsor a program** – donors are given a dollar amount to sponsor a certain number of items such as back packs or senior meals. It gives them a sense of how many people they are helping and provides you a specific amount to ask for in a different way. It can also help donors sponsor at a level of giving they are comfortable with.
- **Donor wall** – some agencies have created a wall or other permanent commemoration at the food shelf or in the community to trigger a donation and provide recognition.
- **City competition** – an area food shelf benefits when the mayors of the cities it supports put their hair on the line by competing to see which city can raise the most funds from residents and businesses. The losing mayor gets his/her head shaved.

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General Tips:

- Be creative, be fun
- Always say thank you, many times in many ways
- Get others involved – more ideas, more fun, more money!
- Don't rely on just one source of revenue or fundraiser. Diversify for sustainability!
- Try at least one new idea every year or with each event. You may be surprised at the results.
- Don't always ask for something. When you communicate/advertise/network in the community just telling them your story from the heart helps with fundraising efforts when the time comes.

