



Fundraising Toolkit

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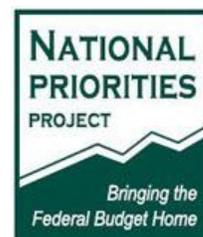
Sample Fundraising Letter

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**American Friends
Service Committee**



Introduction

Fundraising is an important part of your trip to Washington DC

Many people cannot afford to cover the cost of the trip to Washington DC, and must look elsewhere for funding by asking friends, family, churches and business associates for help. This is not just an opportunity to raise money, but also a way to reach out to communities. It is a way for individuals not participating in the film festival to be involved. People are usually excited to give money toward a cause that promotes civic engagement by youth and may ask for a report once you return. Fundraising can be an outreach opportunity, and this process can sometimes even be fun. Sound incredible? Read on.....

A healthy and profitable approach to fundraising is to view it as an opportunity to let your friends, family, and community share in your experience. Remember, you are not going on a pleasure cruise, and you're not asking for a hand-out. Rather, you are embarking on a serious mission to to pro-actively engage in activism for more just world and enact a brighter future. **By asking your community to support you, you are actually giving them an opportunity to participate in this work.** Your supporters can -- and will -- feel a personal investment in your struggle for justice. Not only will this ensure enough funding for your trip, but it will help to build the movement for social justice as well.

Remember, people want to help you. People want to give money to good causes. And people want a personal connection to their philanthropy. Looking at fundraising from this perspective, you are doing your contacts a favor by allowing them to support you and the cause you represent!



Guide to Fundraising

10 Useful Tips to Get You Started

Fundraising can be a fun, exciting and fulfilling part of the journey. To help along your way, check out the following tips how to start your fundraising campaign and other tips to guide you throughout the process.

1. Start early

2. Make a list of everyone you know and all the local organizations and companies who might be able to donate. This list can include your family, friends, neighbors, contacts, etc., but can also include people from other aspects of your life, such as your place of employment, school, place of worship, neighborhood groups, doctors, teachers—anyone you think may be able to help sponsor your trip. Many local organizations or companies are eager to donate to causes like yours, so think outside the box!

*Tip: Some people you contact will be extremely supportive, sharing your enthusiasm and excitement, while others may not respond, but always remember, "if you don't ask, you won't receive."

3. Write out your goals and reasons for this trip. This will be useful when you are talking to potential sponsors or writing fundraising letters, to explain how a contribution to your Washington DC trip will make a positive impact. Learn all you can about federal discretionary budget, so you can explain why you chose to participate in the festival.

4. Designate a "Fundraising Ally." This person can be a friend, parent, coworker, AFSC staff member, or anyone who will check in with you about your progress, offer more ideas and recommendations, and share your enthusiasm about your experience.

5. Start early and create benchmarks. Develop a fundraising plan and get started. Look at the total amount of money you need to raise, and set periodic goals that serve as benchmarks to keep you on target.

6. Keep your emails and letters short and simple. Your letters and emails to sponsors should be no longer than one page. Too much information could overwhelm sponsors. Generally, people will be more likely to contribute when they are assured that it is a good cause and that you are committed to making a difference.

*Tip: Always follow-up. It is important to get on the phone with small businesses, civic or religious groups, and your friends and relatives to let them know that you really do need their support. One follow-up call can make the difference between a person sending a check or forgetting about it.

7. Ask for a specific amount of money. When you say "contribution", some people are thinking \$5, while others are thinking \$500. Tell people how much you need, and let them know the total amount that you are hoping to fundraise.

8. Convey a sense of urgency to potential sponsors. This limits their time to forget about giving you a contribution. Give your sponsors a specific date by which to get back to you. Put this date in your sponsor request emails and letters and send them friendly reminders, with a note of how much closer you are to getting toward your goal.

9. Recognize your sponsors. Always thank your sponsors; they will appreciate the recognition and praise. Write a personalized thank you note to everyone who contributes. You can also host an event before you depart to publicly acknowledge and thank your supporters

10. Host a get-together when you return and invite all your sponsors. A great way to secure funding from religious organizations, civic groups, alumni associations, and educational institutions is to offer to give a presentation when you return. Highlighting your experience and what you learned helps people understand how their contributions made a difference. Photos of your trip can speak volumes.

Corporate Giving

Ask for Plane Ticket Donations

Most airlines have some sort of community relations or community involvement department. The purpose of these departments is to give back to the community. Some airlines give funding, some give out tickets and some do both. Airlines receive hundreds of requests per week and therefore have to sometimes make strict qualification rules.

Instructions

1. **Go to the website** of the airline you would like to request tickets from.
2. **Read the giving guidelines** before applying. Most airlines will require that you are a qualified 501(c)(3) organization. Some will require that you have a certain focus. Airlines may have restrictions in their policies.
3. **Write a donation request letter** or proposal. Include who you are, what you're doing (IHTD Film Festival), where you're going (Washington, DC), why you need the funding, etc., how much you need-be specific about number of tickets or dollar amount and the number of people participating.
4. **Submit your request.** Most airlines have this option available on their website, and few airlines want or will accept requests via standard mail. You will likely have to create a user account and provide specific documentation, such as tax id numbers and whatever information about your organization the airline requires. Each airline differs, but most airlines want the request at least 3 to 6 weeks before the event you need them for.
5. **Ask others to donate miles to you.** If you are an individual or your organization doesn't qualify, you can use MileDonor to post why you need miles. People interested in donating miles can peruse these boards and if they find your cause worthy, they might donate miles to you.

Here are some airlines to contact:

- [Orbitz](#)
- [Southwest](#)
- [Delta Airlines](#)
- [United Airlines](#)
- [Jet Blue](#)
- [US Airways](#)



Fundraising Events

Fundraising events raise awareness of important issues and allow you to be creative, giving sponsors something in return while you generate interest for your campaign.

PARTIES/EVENTS

These can range from simple pizza parties to black tie affairs. Use the "Who Do You Know" principle. Do you have a friend in a band or know the owner of a bar or a restaurant? One idea for an event could be having a band play at a club where you can fundraise by receiving all or some of the cover charge. Is there a holiday coming up? How about your birthday? Instead of gifts, ask your friends or family to help sponsor your trip. Always explain to your guests that you are working toward your goal to travel to Washington DC to participate in a film festival.

- **Host a film screening of your video submission**
Invite your friends and family to a private film screening of the video which you are submitting to the festival. This is a nice way to let people what you would do for your community with a trillion dollars.
- **Host a Dinner or House Party**
Hosting an event with family and friends can be a fun way to fundraise! Organize a party and ask your guests to pay an entrance fee with a suggested amount, provided the amount is well over the cost of the party. At the party, include a trivia game about the federal discretionary budget! Or,

have a local band perform at the party and ask for a cover charge. Remember to limit your party budget to about 1/4 of the amount per person of your suggested donation amount.

- **Restaurant Event**

Events at restaurants can incorporate a donation for food or beverages in exchange for generating business. Perhaps you know of a restaurant that would let you host an event in which they donate food or charge an added amount on top of each bill as a special promotion. Or, a restaurant might allow you to host an evening with an all-you-can eat buffet where you get a percentage of the total bill for promoting and bringing in customers. Always be careful in structuring these events, and be clear about your expectations to everyone involved.

SALES

Traditional ways to raise funds may include bake sales, arts and crafts sales, candy sales, garage sales, etc. Do you know someone who is a great baker, an artist, or a published writer? Ask them if they might donate their creations to you so that you may allocate the sale, or suggested contribution, toward your goal. Many people who are hesitant to donate money may give something around the house that you can sell at a garage sale, flea market, or on eBay.

RAFFLES

Raffles can work well for fundraising groups. Often groups can get items donated to them from local stores, companies, and restaurants, which they can raffle off. If there are no large items to raffle off, you can buy an item, as long as the proceeds from the raffle are well over the price of the item purchased. Plan to have the raffle at some type of event, such as a party.

RACES

Sign up for a local run and ask people to make a small donation for each mile you run. You could even sign up for an already established marathon such as the New York Marathon or London Triathlon. Some people will respond better if they see that you are working hard to obtain sponsors and are truly dedicated to your campaign. Remember that these events usually have application and selection procedures, so greater time, preparation, and training may be required.



Using Blogs & Social Networks

Gain support from your network

Creating blogs, websites, and fundraising pages on social network sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn, is a great way to fundraise with many people at one time. You can update people on your progress, promote fundraising events, and post videos, pictures, and more from your experience. You may also want to publicly thank the people who have sponsored you by posting their names on your webpage.

ONLINE TOOLS AND SITES TO GET STARTED:

www.travbuddy.com

www.tumblr.com

www.blogger.com

www.wordpress.com

www.livejournal.com

To create a website for free with no HTML knowledge needed, use: www.sites.google.com

MORE ONLINE RESOURCES:

1. Kickstarter.com

From www.kickstarter.com :

- **Kickstarter is the world's largest funding platform for creative projects.** Every week, tens of thousands of amazing people pledge millions of dollars to projects from the worlds of music, film, art, design, publishing, and other creative fields.
- **A new form of commerce and patronage.** This is not about investment or lending. Project creators keep 100% ownership and control over their work. Instead, they offer products and experiences that are unique to each project.
- **All or nothing funding.** On Kickstarter, a project must reach its funding goal before time runs out or no money changes hands. Why? It protects everyone involved. Creators aren't expected to develop their project without necessary funds, and it allows anyone to test concepts without risk.
- **Each and every project is the independent creation of someone like you.** Projects are big and small, serious and whimsical, traditional and experimental. They're inspiring, entertaining and unbelievably diverse. We hope you agree... Welcome to Kickstarter!

Tips for Kickstarter:

- If you choose to use Kickstarter, be conscious of your **time limit**
- **Advertise** your Kickstarter campaign through social networking sites, such as Facebook.
- Provide the Kickstarter information to your collected **contacts**, as well.
- Kickstarter might charge fees for certain features, even though use of the site is mostly free.

With these things in mind, go to: <http://www.kickstarter.com/> At the top left of the page, you will see the kickstarter logo, a link to discover projects, and a link to start your project. Click on "**start your project**".

It will ask for your name, email, and a password. In order to run a kickstarter campaign, you must be 18 years old and have a major US Credit or Debit Card. **If you are under 18, find an adult to sponsor you**, such as a parent or your Fundraising Ally.

Kickstarter will give you a list of things for which Kickstarter fundraising is prohibited, and then they will ask you a few questions about your project. Be sure to highlight the creative energy you put into your project, and specify that you are asking for travel funds in order to attend a film festival in Washington, D.C. Emphasize the leadership, community, and educational aspects of this experience.

2. GoFundMe.com

<http://www.gofundme.com/>

GoFundMe.com is more flexible than Kickstarter about project proposals, . With GoFundMe, you can raise funds for anything, including creative projects and travel.

GoFundMe will walk you through setting up your fundraising page. First, it will connect to your PayPal or We Pay account. It will ask for your social networking information (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) so that **it can post your fundraising progress automatically**, and reach out to your friends and followers for you.

Tips for GoFundMe:

- Designate one person from your group to take charge of your GoFundMe page. It could be your Fundraising Ally. A single page will **keep your fundraising simple** to see and work with.
- Alternatively, each individual from your group can set up a page, in order to **automatically access a wider range of people** from your collective social networks. Individual pages run the risk of becoming uncoordinated with each other.
- Frequently Post links to your group's GoFundMe page on facebook and Twitter, if you don't already have it automatically connected to your accounts.

Note that:

- **GoFundMe charges a flat fee of 5%** on all payments collected. That means for every \$1.00 collected, \$0.05 goes to GoFundMe, and not to your cause.
- **You need a PayPal or WePay account** to use GoFundMe.

- Funds you raise are sent to your PayPal or WePay account, which also charge small fees for each transaction. These fees are deducted from each transaction automatically so you're never billed for anything.
- PayPal will charge **2.9% AND \$0.30** per transaction.
- WePay charges a flat fee of **3.5% OR \$0.50** cents per transaction –whichever is greater.

3. Facebook Causes

The Causes application on Facebook is among the leading fundraising tools for non-profit organizations. Causes is one of the many resources you can use to quickly spread the word of your plans, and promote your fundraising goal through your Facebook account.

Causes allows you to set up a personal fundraising page to share with your Facebook network that you need their financial support. Through Causes, your supporters can contribute funds by credit card, choosing a one-time or recurring monthly contribution.

How does it work?

Causes uses Network for Good, a non-profit organization that promotes and facilitates donating and volunteering online. Network for Good is an industry leader among third party fundraising sites.

What should I know about using Causes?

If you plan to use Facebook Causes to fundraise your trip fee, please note the following:

- **Fundraising early is highly recommended** to help you successfully meet your program fee due date. Please encourage sponsors to contribute no later than 90 days prior to your start date. We encourage participants to pay any remaining balance of the program fee by the due date, and continue to fundraise. Please remember that sponsor contributions received from third party sites require extra processing time.
- **Sponsors contributing to your trip fee through Causes are donating to Network for Good.** Sponsors will receive tax receipts from Network for Good and their donations cannot be refunded.

Emails & Letters to Sponsors

Writing letters and emails to sponsors is one of the easiest and most effective fundraising strategies. Email is a free, and powerful way to reach a large number of potential sponsors. Emailing makes it easy for the people on your contact list to forward your message to others they know—in fact, it's a good idea to suggest this in the email. You can send emails or hand-written letters to friends and family, employers and work colleagues, clubs, places of worship, local banks, foundations and charitable organizations in your area.

Tools and Tips for Your Messages to Sponsors

In your email, send updates of your preparation including the balance of the amount you need to raise. Hand-writing letters to potential sponsors can also be effective, because it provides a personal touch. A formal letter may be best when soliciting clubs, churches or temples, local banks, foundations and charitable organizations in your area, or larger organizations like The Rotary, Lions and Elks Clubs, Junior League, Junior Chamber, and The United Way.

We recommend that you personalize every letter that you write with the recipient's name. Also mention that you are a student, what you are studying, and how this trip will impact your future goals.

Media and Press Releases

Your decision to fundraise in order to engage in the federal budget discussion is newsworthy, especially to local papers and websites that often celebrate the fact that they have a local hero among them, someone who is committing time to actively participate in the political process. Write a press release — a one-page announcement telling your "story." Explain the film festival, what you would do with a trillion dollars, why you are traveling to DC, and information about your fundraising efforts.

Circulate your press announcement about your upcoming adventure through the local media — radio, printed press, television, and websites — and particular groups that you are affiliated with that have news bulletins or newsletters including alumni magazines, church bulletins, etc. You can also distribute your press release online for free through the many press release distribution sites on the web such as [PitchEngine](#). Having a short piece published anywhere can go a long way to help your fundraising efforts.

Other Fundraising Ideas

Here are some fundraising ideas from past fundraisers to help you network and leverage your connections in the community.

Reach out to local high schools, universities, or former school committees. Ask if you can hold a fundraiser such as a bake sale, and offer to give a presentation when you get back.

Stop by local businesses, and former or current employers - Local businesses such as coffee shops and book stores may be more likely to make contributions than large corporations. You may want to approach the business with a letter first, enclosing information on your trip and a pledge form, and then follow up with a phone call. One other possible idea is to seek the help of former or current employers.

Check with local and national companies to see if they offer incentives. Many companies will sell gift cards at a discount allowing groups to resell them at face value. Some businesses include Kohl's and Blockbuster.

Connect with local service clubs, places of worship, or religious groups - Service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and Optimists, fraternal organizations, such as Elk and Moose clubs, and religious groups are excellent sources for fundraising. The best course of action is to contact as many clubs in your area as possible and ask if you can give a presentation. Ask to speak for 15–20 minutes to present your request and explain what you will be doing.

Remember, you are not asking for money for a vacation—you are asking for a contribution to engage in federal budget discussion and make a difference for your community and the world. Let them know that you are willing to come back and show them slides or your video submission when you return. After the meeting, write a follow-up letter thanking them for letting you speak and reiterating your request for contributions. Be realistic about the amount you are requesting and how it will be used.

Sample Fundraising Letter

Dear _____,

- **Paragraph One: Introduce yourself and why this trip is right for you.**

*Add an appeal here, such as “A wonderful opportunity has arisen and I’d like to take advantage of it, **but need your help**. This is not just a request for help, but also an opportunity for you to become part of the struggle for a peaceful and more just world.”

- **Paragraph Two: Explain the film festival, American Friends Service Committee, and the National Priorities Project.**

The video contest was launched nationwide in May 2010 to call attention to the \$1 trillion the U.S. has already spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Youth age 13-23 were asked to address the military budget and use their videos to explore how they would spend the \$1 trillion on themselves, their schools, their communities and their country.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization devoted to service, development and peace programs throughout the world. The work of AFSC is based on the belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The National Priorities Project (NPP) makes complex federal budget information transparent and accessible so people can prioritize and influence how their tax dollars are spent. NPP holds the vision of an informed and engaged democracy where all people affected by federal spending priorities have the ability and opportunity to participate in shaping our nation’s budget.

- **Paragraph Three: Tell them how much.**

The cost of this trip is \$_____ for basic accommodations and ground transportation and \$_____ for airfare. This amount is more than I can afford on my own. Accordingly, I am asking for contributions from my family, friends, and colleagues to make this opportunity a reality for me. **Any amount** that you can afford to give would be greatly appreciated! You can either make a check out to Witness for Peace for my delegation fees or to me for airfare.

- **Conclusion: Thank them & enclose a return envelope.**

Thank you in advance for any help you can give. Please feel free to call me with any questions at _____ . I have enclosed a self-addressed return envelope for your convenience.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at [phone number] or American Friends Service Committee at 1-312-427-2533.

Sincerely,