



FUNdraising for Youth Justice Awareness Month

A Step-by-Step Guide to Fundraising for Your Event

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7/23/2012

This document will help you fundraise for a National Youth Justice Awareness Event. The step-by-step guide includes instructions and tips on how to: create a budget and set goals, create a fundraising committee, get your fundraising committee together, get in kind donations, and raise your bottom line.

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Here are a few strategy steps for raising funds for Youth Justice Awareness Month to meet your fundraising goals and have fun at the same time!

Step 1: Create a Budget & Set Goals

Write down all the items that you are going to need for your event and list these under "Costs" on a piece of paper.

Not sure what your costs might be? See a sample budget at:
http://cfyj.org/documents/5k_budget_sheet.doc.

Look at everything that is on your "Costs" list and split these items up into "Expenses" categories. Estimate what these will cost.

Next, think about what items that might be donated by businesses (e.g. water), lent to you by local businesses or groups (e.g. loud speaker / microphone) and services that might be donated by friends or businesses (e.g. photocopying flyers).

Think about places where you can get these and add them to an "In-Kind Contributions" column.

Subtract possible in-kind donations from your total costs and that is your Bottom Line, that is your baseline goal of what you need to raise to cover your costs.

If you are successful at getting all the items, rentals and services donated that you want and raising your Bottom Line before your event, you will be able to devote all the proceeds from your event such as registration, ticket sales, tee-shirt sales, to your campaign!

Now, think about what you want to raise for your campaign, such as creating and printing outreach flyers & brochures, hosting an Advocacy Day at the state capitol, and building a take action website.

Estimate (or "guesstimate") those costs and add that to your Bottom Line and that is your 'Man on the Moon' fundraising goal. That is, this is the amount you are hoping to raise.

The worst part is now over. Here comes the FUN part!

Step 2: Create a FUNdraising Committee

Think: "Who can I call to help me with this event?"

Ask 2-3 of these friends to serve on the FUNdraising Committee.

(Tip: A FUNdraising Committee can be really fun. 2 or 3 heads are better than 1 plus this is really more FUN as a team).

Step 3: Get your FUNdraising Committee together

Host your FUNdraising committee at your house, local coffee shop or bar.

Bring copies of your budget & goals. Bring extra paper and pencils/pens. Set a time frame (e.g. 2 hours). Make/order some coffee and create your fundraising plan.

Talk about and assign some of the steps below.

Step 4: Get your 'in kind' donations, rentals and services covered

Look at your in-kind donations list and think about who you might contact to ask for these items. Make a list of people to contact and assign members of your fundraising committee to reach out to them.

Write a brief donation request letter and be sure to include the name of the person who can approve your request. Do not write "to whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir/Madame" if possible. You may need to call ahead or look online for the names.

Tip

- Keep one letter and fill in a different amount depending on who you are asking. For example, you could ask potential local sponsors for \$50 and then ask foundation or corporate sponsors for \$100, \$250 or \$500. I would put in the amount you think they could potentially give.
- List three levels (eg \$100, \$250, \$500) and send that letter to everyone. When you make your follow up calls, then see what amount they are likely to give.

- Ask organizations for \$50-100 (depending on the group) and ask them to be local sponsors; Then ask corporations and foundations for \$250 - \$500 and ask them to be state sponsors.
- Tailor the amounts in your letter to each 'region' to account for differences in the economy, etc..

Need a sample donation request letter? There is one available at:

<http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/foodsolicitationlettertemplate.doc>.

Go in person to drop off your request letter (if possible). If the person you need to reach is not available, leave your letter and make a follow up call.

Once you get donations approved, be sure to write down the person you spoke with, the date/time and pick up date/time for future reference.

Confirm all donations at least one week before your event and set up a pick up time.

(Tip: This is a great task to hand off to a volunteer to confirm donations and pick up donations).

Step 5: Consider one or more of these ideas to raise your Bottom Line (and beyond!)

#1: Create an Event Host Committee

Make a list of 10-20 friends, colleagues, co-workers and family members.

Call them on the phone and ask if they'd serve on the Event Host Committee by:

- Lending their name to the event (e.g. will they put their name on the event flyer?)
- Donating or raising \$100
- Bringing 5 friends to the event
- Sharing the event flyer & email with all of their contacts

Example:

10 friends x \$100 per friend = \$1,000

10 friends x 5 of their friends each recruited to attend = 50 people at your event

(Tip: Always ask more people as some folks will say no, some will say yes but might not be able to bring as many people or donate the full amount].

#2: Invite Organizational Sponsors

Make a list of 5-10 organizations that you routinely work with (e.g. your network of allies).

(Tip: This is a great opportunity to outreach to new groups, such as civic, professional, community, civil rights, women's and youth serving groups in your community. Even if they don't 'sponsor' they will become acquainted with you and the issue which is good for building your base).

Write a letter and mail it to each of the organizations on your list.

The letter should ask them to serve as an organizational sponsor by:

- Lending their organization's name to the event (i.e. can you list them on the event program?)
- Donating or raising \$200
- Sharing the event flyer / email with their networks

Need an organizational sponsor letter? Here is a sample: *[insert sample]*.

Give everyone a week to receive the letter, then make follow up calls.

(Tip: Consider offering them 5 "free" tickets to the event, plus their name on the event program and/or flyer as part of their organizational sponsorship).

Example:

5 organizational sponsors x \$200 each = \$1,000

#3: Start a Social Media Campaign

Make a list of 10 friends.

Write up a short email inviting them to donate \$10.

If you feel comfortable asking this, ask your friends to also contact 10 friends and ask them to donate \$10.

Share your requests on Facebook and Twitter. If your event has a facebook page, be sure to thank your donors.

Example:

Asking each of your 10 friends to donate:

10 of your friends x \$10 per friend = \$100

Asking each of your 10 friends to donation AND asking them to each contact 10 friends:

10 of your friends x \$10 per friend (\$100) + 10 of your friends contacting 10 of their friends (100 friends) x \$10 per friend (\$1,000) = \$1,100

(Tip: Consider offering a prize to the person who gets the most friends to donate).

#4: Every Which Way to Friday

If you are 30 days from your event and you haven't reached your Bottom Line goal yet, consider some of these ideas:

Contact the Rotary Club and ask to speak at an upcoming meeting. Make a shameless plug for your event and pass the donation box/can.

Call local women's groups and service organizations such as the Junior League, Zonta Club, Altrusa International, university sororities and fraternities, and ask to speak at an upcoming meeting. Make the same shameless plug. And while you are at it, ask them to volunteer at the event as a service project.

Get on the agenda of a local community meeting. Same shameless plug.

Ask your church to take up a special collection. Yes, the shameless plug.

Put out a donation box/can at a local bakery or coffee shop that you and everyone you know frequents.

Do a raffle drawing at a community gathering. Shameless plug.

Host a table at a community event with event flyers and donation box/can.

Include a donation envelope in your newsletter mailing.

Good old fashioned door-to-door in your neighborhood. A great way to see some old friends and get support at the same time.

Include a donation request in your 'signature' at the bottom of your email.

Include a donation request on your website.

Basically use every opportunity you can to get to your fundraising goal. You believe in this cause and you can convince others to join with you.

(Tip: This is a good activity for volunteers, as in, someone calls you and says, "What can I do to help?" You give them this list and ask them to pick something off the list).

#5: Foundation Outreach

Invite your local community foundation, area foundations, corporate foundations or funder associations to participate in your event.

Not sure who these folks are? Google "Largest giving foundations in XXX [your state]" and you will see a list.

If you know any of them, call them up and discuss your event. Consider asking them to participate by covering the costs of something (e.g. tee-shirts, printing materials) or in hosting the event at their location (if that makes sense for what you are trying to do). Be sure to follow up with an email to confirm your discussion and thank them for their time.

If you don't know them, send an invitation letter with the event flyer. Make a brief follow up call to confirm they received the flyer and invite them again to attend the event.

(Tip: This strategy may not yield a lot of donations in the short term, but if you can get one or more foundation representatives to attend your event, they will see you in action and may be interested in investing in your work at a later point).

Closing Thoughts:

Need a 'thought partner' to brainstorm what might work for you, meet your FUNdraising Committee or discuss and prioritize your FUNdraising plan? Contact Liz Ryan at CFYJ at lryan@cfyj.org.

Want some more ideas and resources? The best resource I've ever seen and have used a lot is "Fundraising for Social Change" by Kim Klein.

Uncomfortable asking your friends and community for money? You are not alone. This is challenging work. With your FUNdraising Committee, you can discuss these challenges and support each other as you raise funds. This is a cause you believe in so once you start making calls, you might surprise yourself at how good you are at fundraising! And, you will definitely get your "elevator speech" down pat while you are at it!

Stuck and haven't raised your Bottom Line yet? I've been there. Call me. Stay strong. You can do it!

Bottom Line: Have FUN while you are doing this!!!!!! FUNdraising can be FUN and besides, you'll make some good friends and have some great times along the way.