

Success of fundraising activities may be attributed to the following seven general principles:

- 1. Think Positively:** As you plan for the year, think big and dream a little. Ask yourself, "If money were not an issue, what would the group do?" Use your imagination. It is generally easier to scale down your organization's plans than to scale up mid-year. Begin by assessing the feasibility of your goals in light of available resources. A dose of realism is necessary at this stage, but remember to remain positive.
- 2. Establish Financial Goals:** If you do not know where you are going, you will never know if you have arrived. Organizations must establish an annual budget. The development of a budget should follow, not precede, the establishment of your organization's positive, but realistic, goals for the year. Making the group's plan fit the budget rather than making the budget fit the plan is a common error of unrealistic organizations.

Create separate, detailed budgets for activities that will require funding. Call several vendors to solicit the best possible buys for goods and services. Remember to figure in hidden expenses like sales tax, office supplies, or copies. Once a budget of proposed expenses is developed, it must be reviewed against existing resources. The specified dollar figure, beyond existing resources that will be required to complete the group's program for the year, becomes the group's fund-raising target. If this figure is large, do not panic; it is time to be both creative and realistic.

- 3. Develop Creative Fundraising Alternatives:** Once you have established a financial target, identify all potential sources of funds and develop creative ways to tap these sources. Successful organizations utilize multiple approaches to fund raising. Other things to look for when raising money are methods to barter (e.g., speakers who will donate their time in exchange for experience or a chance to plug an organization or cause).
- 4. Establish A Fundraising Plan:** Fundraising is like any other group project; it cannot happen successfully if left to chance. Successful fund raising requires careful planning. Answer the basic planning questions — Who? What? When? Where? and Why? (See steps to fund raising in next section.) As you creatively explore approaches to fund raising, it is important to balance the costs to the organization. (For example, required outlay of time and of human resources, material and existing financial resources, the risks involved in fund raising, any potential liability, and the possible loss of resources or good will.) If the risks are greater than what the group wishes to assume, it is time to go back and revise the organization's overall goals for the year to reflect a reduced financial base. Once a fund-raising plan is developed, write it down.
- 5. Obtain Organizational Commitment:** If only a few members will implement your plan, it will fail! It is imperative to gain organization support and commitment. Brainstorming fundraising ideas and discussing your proposed strategy in small groups and incorporating members' ideas are a good start to gaining support for the project.
- 6. Follow University and Community Procedures:** Many fund-raising activities require prior University or community approval, particularly for sales and solicitation activities. Some activities are restricted or prohibited under the University policy or state law. You should be familiar with both the approval procedure and limitations before you undertake a fundraising activity. A Student Activities Office staff member can assist you with this process.
- 7. Evaluate Fundraising Activities:** In order to determine your level of success, maximize learning opportunities and advise future leaders of the organization. It is necessary to evaluate your fundraising activities. This evaluation should go beyond a simple comparison of the dollar goal to the amount raised. It should include a qualitative analysis and conclude with recommendations for future fundraising activities.

BEFORE YOU ASK!

Be prepared. Do your homework on past grants, activities or administrative policies. They may affect your request and background information on department's funding record. Be sure your proposal is well written, contains complete details and includes a detailed budget. Do not focus only on money. Remember donations such as phone use, office supplies, copying, typing and other free materials are helpful. Do not be discouraged if you are referred to someone else; you may not be at the right office -- they are trying to help.

The following are possible funding sources.

SEGREGATED FEES

Criteria: Must be a currently registered student organization with the Student Activities Office and all officers must be enrolled as UWM students. Political organizations, political activities, or religious activities cannot be funded by segregated fees. See *Student Organization Manual* for procedures to apply for funding (available in the Student Activities Office, room 350 Union).

OTHER SCHOOL & COLLEGE GOVERNMENTS

For specific information about possible funds available from your school or college's student government, contact them directly (e.g., L S & A, Engineering Council, etc.).

ACADEMIC DEPT.

Project must be related to the department's emphasis. Project should serve the educational needs of students. Approach the department via the chairperson or administrative assistant. Try to have a name of a contact before approaching.

UWM ADMINISTRATION

The project must service/benefit/involve the student body. The project should serve educational needs of students. Contact the Chancellors Office or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. You will probably be referred to an assistant who will provide information about funding criteria and guidelines. In addition, you may need to complete an application and prepare a funding proposal.

CORPORATE OR FOUNDATION GRANTS

Researching donors that will turn out to be good prospects takes time, but the results should be well worth this investment. Be realistic in your expectations. Foundations and other grant-makers cannot meet all of your financial needs. The vast majority of the money given to nonprofit organizations is actually donated by individuals.

Do not make the mistake of focusing all your efforts on one donor. Your prospect list should include a number of options. Even the most experienced proposal writers receive many more letters of rejection than they do grants. You also should avoid compiling a list of several hundred pie-in-the-sky prospects and sending off a mass mailing of your proposal. Approaching a donor for support is a highly individualized process that should be conducted in a businesslike manner. The range of print and electronic resources now available to grant-seekers is extensive.

Grant-makers typically fund nonprofit organizations that qualify for public charity status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. These are organizations whose purposes are charitable, educational, scientific, religious, literary, or cultural. Their income cannot benefit private individuals, and their influence on legislation or political campaigns is restricted. Public schools, libraries, and other government organizations also qualify as public charities, although they usually have not applied for 501(c)(3) status. Under federal law, foundations are permitted to make grants to individuals and organizations that do not qualify for public charity status if the foundations follow a set of very specific rules outlining their expenditure responsibility. The rules for expenditure responsibility require the foundations to file a number of reports certifying that the funds were spent solely for the charitable purposes explained in the grant.

Occasionally, donors will make grants to organizations whose tax-exempt status is still pending, but most will ask for proof of your nonprofit status before considering you for funding. If you decide to seek nonprofit tax-exempt status, get the How To Form and Operate a Nonprofit Corporation form in the Student Activities Office.

FUND RAISING DO'S AND DON'TS

- * Do double work (sell T-shirts at a dance marathon).
- * Do obtain as many donated supplies/services as possible.
- * Do keep records of everything you do.
- * Do make the most of every opportunity.
- * Do have a goal.
- * Do your homework on immediate needs and final goals.
- * Do get groups together before and after every event to applaud successes and to evaluate.
- * Do use thoughtful planning.
- * Do think positively.
- * Do utilize multiple approaches to fund raising.
- * Do give donors something tangible for their donation.
- * Do keep track of those who have supported you in the past.
- * Do watch for opportunities to build on others' efforts.
- * Do be energetic, creative and enthusiastic.
- * Don't rely totally on dues.
- * Don't allow fund raising to disrupt the regular business/ programs.
- * Don't ask for a fixed price when a donation or in-kind service will do.
- * Don't assume that all pledges will automatically pay - remind them.
- * Don't expect too much from members.
- * Don't have a fund raiser based on impulse - plan carefully.
- * Don't let the treasurer handle all the responsibility-spread it around.
- * Don't wait until the last minute for anything - be prepared.
- * Don't let one person completely control all the finances - have at least one more person to verify transactions.
- * Don't forget to be creative, enthusiastic, and have fun!