



A Guide to Fundraising

Fundraising Keys

With careful planning, consistent effort, the “right” fundraisers, and an enthusiastic team, you will be surprised how easily this part of your preparation will fall into place. And the resourcefulness and generosity of your supporters might well exceed expectations. Make sure that as you explore and engage in fundraising, that you are doing so in accordance with all laws, guidelines, and policies set in place by your governing organization, as well as local, state, and federal laws & guidelines.

- **Non-Profit-Status.** You will generally find greater success in soliciting donations by having your organization/board of directors/booster club apply for State and Federal Non-profit status (i.e. 501c3, 501c4, 501c7). Work with your local tax professional on gathering the necessary documentation and materials for the application and assisting your program to determine what the right application is for your organization.
- **If numbers and circumstances allow, designate sub-committees to have ownership of different fundraising activities.**
- **Success usually depends on involvement of the many - participants and projects!** Don't make fundraisers optional. Require every musician to participate – after all, it all goes to supporting your program and ensuring your venture is successful.
- **A little enthusiasm and positive attitude go a long way!** Give it all you've got. We all know a positive attitude can accomplish anything.
- **Establish fundraising traditions!** For example, one client hosted an annual Renaissance Festival, replete with sets, costumes and well-established activities so that each year, the entire community came to anticipate the event. Participation and donations from this one tradition funded many of the group's performance tours. Others will host annual chili cook-offs in the winter, or a swing dance event in the spring, or an annual 5/10k... Remember, the more consistent you are with the event/fundraiser, the more it comes a “main-stay” within



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your community. Just like it took time to build and establish your successful ensemble/music program, it takes time to build and establish successful fundraisers.

- **Visibility is paramount. publicity in your community, city, and state is often key to the success of fundraising projects.** Can your event be advertised and shared in your local newspaper/TV/Radio, can your school or arts community run your event in their local publications, etc.
- **Regularly Assess Resources!** Tap into the unique and plentiful resources of your performers and their families and/or social networks to capitalize on “in-house” talents, skills, and connections. Your group’s resources can be immensely valuable in fundraising. Get as many goods and services donated as possible. There are likely many business owners and business contacts that already exist within your program – how can you recruit them to support your goals?
- **Combine fundraisers!** Don’t rely solely on one fundraiser to get your program the funds you need – do numerous fundraisers that ALL help! For example, organize a dinner show with a raffle afterwards, or a Swing Dance event with a Silent auction, or a 5k/10k with apparel sales of the race jerseys, etc

Fundraising Ideas

1. **MCI Hawaii Trip Raffle** – roundtrip airfare for 2 with 5 hotel nights in Waikiki (first \$3500 goes to MCI – clients have raised anywhere from \$20-\$50K annually). Get the raffle tickets professionally printed (i.e. ticketprinting.com), have professional flyers designed/made, advertise this all over your social media. Either have the proceeds go 100% to your organizations’ general account, or we have seen better success with each musician selling tickets keeping a certain percentage of the sold ticket fees within an account with your organization.
2. **Community Event** (ask local stores to donate food items or supplies) – Chili cook-off, spaghetti dinner, pancake breakfast, etc. Be prepared with a request on official letterhead and be sure to include your tax number and the purpose of the fundraiser.
3. **Business Partnerships and Sponsorships (business logos on trailers, programs, shirts, banners, etc.)** – offer to advertise their local business, in return for a donation. Sell spots on your organization’s trailer, on your organization’s shirts, offer to put their banner up at your concerts/events, list them in your concert programs, etc.
4. **Ask Local Businesses for Corporate Donations** – ask for specific amounts to cover specific needs (motorcoach, meals, hotel, etc.). Again, offer to advertise for these companies in things you are already doing: T-Shirts, Banners, at your events, in your programs, etc.



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5. **Ask the Local Rotary Club, Lion's Club, and Lodges (Moose, Elk, etc.) if They Will Accept the Challenge of Raising \$2-5K for your Benefit** – ask for specific amounts to cover specific needs (motorcoach, meals, instrument rental, student sponsorship, etc.). In return, offer to print/advertise these local organizations on your parade banner, ensemble t-shirt, your concert program, etc., in return.
6. **Silent Auction** – These tend to be VERY successful. Solicit donations then raffle them off. Host the silent auction at an event you are already organizing (end of the year concert, 5k/10k run, spring fling event, chili cook-off event, etc.).
7. **Restaurant Partnerships (% of revenue on a given night/time goes towards the program)** – Many national restaurants do this and it's very easy to apply for (i.e. Chipotle, Wendy's, Applebee's, McDonalds, Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Panda Express, etc.) and many local chains do this as well (local pizza restaurant, family Italian restaurant, local ice-cream shop, etc.).
8. **Run Concessions at Sporting Events** – For school programs, can your ensemble run the concession stands for your schools' football/basketball/baseball concession stand? For community organizations (non-schools), many professional sporting teams (i.e. Arizona Cardinals NFL, Arizona Diamondbacks MLB, Phoenix Suns NBA) will allow community organizations to run one concession stand, once a month during the season, with a percentage of those specific sales going to your non-profit organization. Be sure to have your members get their food handler cards.
9. **Employer Matching** – Many larger businesses/corporations will match what an individual family gives towards their student's trip/performance tour if the parent/guardian works for that business/corporation (i.e. Intel, Motorola, Honeywell, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Walmart, Sam's Club, etc.).
10. **Raffle Night** – musicians (and families) donate services (babysitting, yard work, car washes, etc.) and items. This is the perfect opportunity to have themed gift baskets donated, collect gift certificates/cards from local businesses, a local business may be willing to donate services (oil change, movie passes, grocery gift card, a dinner for 2, tax filing, etc.).
11. **Benefit Concert at Corporate Functions** – Swing Dance (Jazz Band plays), Madrigal Dinner (choir), Chamber Music (orchestra), etc. While hosting an event/function, be thinking "what other fundraisers could we offer at the same event?" i.e. Hawaii raffle ticket sales, themed raffle baskets, silent auction, etc.
12. **Holiday Events** – haunted house, Christmas caroling, performing for corporate Christmas parties, Valentines singing telegram, spring/summer carnival, dinner under the stars with performance, etc.



13. Invite a Local News Station to do a “Spot” on the Ensemble and have them Record During a Rehearsal – This will build and rally community support! The more visible you can make your program, the better!

14. Crowdfunding – there are many crowdfunding options out there, but we recommend you check out <https://www.fundraisegenius.com/> (created by a music educator for music educators) as you keep 85% of what you raise. Other crowdfunding companies keep 30-40% of raised funds.

15. Sponsorship Letters (MCI can provide a template) – Each and every musician in your program can easily compile a list of 5 – 10 family/close contacts that may be willing to support the musician in raising funds (i.e. Grandma/Grandpa, Aunts/Uncles, Cousins, close family friends, family dentists, attorneys, orthodontists, etc.). Have your musician send the customized sponsorship letter in the mail (include a self-addressed return stamped envelope).

16. Press Releases (MCI can provide a template) – MCI will provide your program with a customized press release for your tour. These press releases can be sent to local news, local media, local arts organizations to help build and rally community support for your program’s tour.

17. Sponsor & Produce an Athletic Event (Golf Tournament, 5K, Cornhole Tournament, etc.) – Invite food trucks that will give back a % of sales to the ensemble. While this may be a huge undertaking, seek help from those in your group who have previously produced or participated in this type of event. Make this a committee effort to make the event run smoothly. Seek out information from your local golf course – they may be willing to help you sponsor/coordinate the event. Once the groundwork is done, this could be your biggest annual fundraiser!!!

18. #GivingTuesday Drive (Tuesday after Thanksgiving) – This has been a BIG presence in our digital age. Do more research into #GivingTuesday. Giving Tuesday, often advertised on social media as #GivingTuesday for the purposes of hashtag activism, refers to the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. It is a movement to create an international day of charitable giving at the beginning of the Christmas and holiday season.

19. Scrip Fundraising – Have your program sign up for local “cashback” rewards from local vendors (i.e. grocery stores, local restaurants, gas stations, etc.). Register your program/ensemble with these local reward programs to receive a percentage donation back on everyone that buys something and identifies your program.

20. Coin Drive – have a jar or creative bucket in your classroom/rehearsal space that goes towards your organization’s costs. Consider using a brand-new, red, 5-gallon, fuel container with a slit cut in the top of it for people to donate coins towards your travel fund.



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