



Fundraising Ideas

This Youth Service America Tip Sheet contains a list of basic fundraising ideas that you can organize to provide small amounts of money for various activities you may get involved with such as disaster relief, National Youth Service Day, or other community service ventures. You may use one of these ideas or come up with one of your own. You may also find that you can combine some of these ideas.

-a-thons

This fundraising idea traditionally involves creating an event that raises money during a certain amount of time. You could raise money by having others simply call in to donate money like the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon held on Labor Day. You could also raise funds by holding a hair cutting-a-thon (charge for each haircut), a walkathon (charge people to walk), or some other fun way to get people to donate money. These events usually take place during a fixed time period – like for 24 hours or 12 hours or 2 hours.

Art/Photo Exhibit

Your community may have local artists both young and seasoned who would love to exhibit their art or photography to help raise money for your cause. You would need to find a place to hold the exhibit and then charge people to come in while letting visitors know how their money will help others.

Bake Sale

You and your friends, neighbors, and family can bake some sweets to sell. You can hold it at a shopping center, at your school, church, or some other public place that attracts lots of people. Tip: rather than pricing items individually, ask for straight donations – you'll raise more money, and don't have to worry about adding everything up!

Car Wash

You can partner with a local gas station or other large venue to hold a car wash and work with local businesses to obtain the supplies you'll need for free. You charge money for each car you wash.

Concert

Many people in your community probably have talents that could be used to put on a fundraising concert. You can identify people at your school, faith community, nonprofit organization, or other places.

Dance Party

Find a location in your community to hold a dance. Secure a DJ and then throw open the doors to

your community's dancers for a small entrance fee. You can involve your church, school, or community organizations.

Door-to-Door Sales

Lots of companies provide products that can be sold and that you can receive a percentage of the price each item sold. Some of these companies include Krispy Kreme Donuts, Sees Candy, Ghiradelli Chocolate, etc.

Fish Fry or Barbeque

The idea of a fish fry or barbeque is to have a cookout and sell tickets for people to come to eat. You can cook anything you want. Work with your family, friends, and others to put on this fundraiser.

Garage Sale

Work with your family, friends, and neighbors to collect items that are no longer being used and sell them to raise money.

Lemonade Stand

Making & selling lemonade is an age old effort, which has proven to be a successful way to raise money. Tip: rather than pricing items individually, ask for straight donations – you'll raise more money, and don't have to worry about adding everything up!

Panel Discussion

This type of fundraiser involves inviting prominent experts to come talk about a topic of importance to your group or issue. You have the person(s) speak and then have a facilitated conversation. The fundraising piece would be to charge an entry fee and you could also charge for refreshments.

Personal Appeal

This involves asking your friends, neighbors, family members, and others for a contribution to your cause. You can do this in person, via mail, through email, or whatever creative way you think will generate the most money. Tip: if you are raising money for a nonprofit organization, Ripple Kids recommends using Firstgiving.org to create your own fundraising page. Visit www.ripplekids.com in our resources section for more information

Proceeds Drive

This type of fundraiser is a way for you to partner with a restaurant or store to get them to share their proceeds from a day of sales, or a single product, or some other mechanism to support your cause. Talk to your local store manager or owner. This is also a way for the store or restaurant to get more customers.

Raffle

You can partner with a store, restaurant, car lot, or some other entity to obtain valuable prizes that you can raffle off. You would sell tickets and then pick one of the tickets to be the winner of the prize. You could raffle off books, electronic equipment, computers, etc.

Recycling Drive

Lots of communities across the country have a recycling center where you can newspapers, different types of metal, and other recyclables and sell them to the center.

Service Fair

Many people in communities want to volunteer but don't know how they can get involved. This is an opportunity where you can help them by organizing a community service fair where organizations throughout your area can come and give out information or make presentations about their work. You could charge an entry or you could charge the organizations to have space. You could also use some of the other fundraising ideas like selling food, conducting a raffle, silent auction, etc.

Silent Auction

A silent auction is much like a raffle except that instead of selling tickets for each item you get people to bid on items – writing down what they are willing to pay for the item. Usually you start the item at its real value and then people bid more money beyond the price of the item. This is often done at an event like a service fair or fish fry or dance.

Spare Change Drive

Most everyone has change. A lot of people take their change home and put in a container to use on some other day. People generally dislike carrying around a lot of change. This means that people are often willing to give their spare change to a good cause. You could ask people in your community for their spare change or you can involve people in your school, church, organization, etc.. You can also partner with the stores and restaurants in your community to keep jars at their counters and when they are full to give them to you.

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