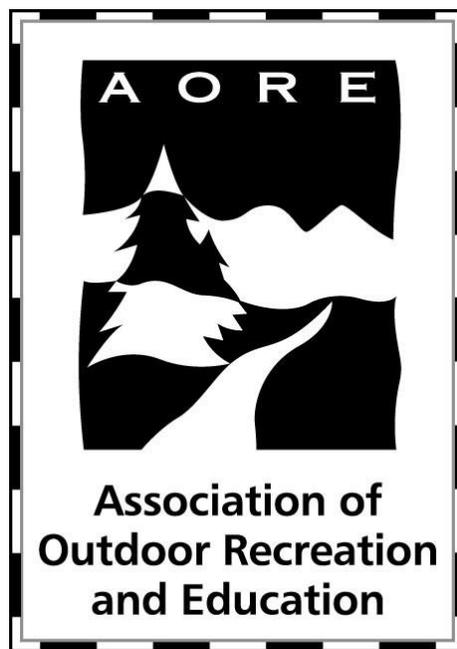


Fundraising 101 – Getting Started



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Fundraising is a great way to create community buy-in for your trip or conference. One of the most important keys is to start early! You will run out of time faster than you think, and when asking for money from individuals, businesses, universities, or sponsors, they have paperwork and other hurdles to clear that take time. The earlier you start, the better!

You can fundraise through various sources. You will find information in this document to help make your fundraising experience both fun and effective. Please feel free to contact your student rep at any time with questions about your fundraising adventure!

Step 1 – Figure out the costs.

Create a spreadsheet listing all the costs of your trip/conference. Include items like flights, hotel, car rental, gas, registration, membership, food, and shuttle service. Once you have a budget for the trip, it's time to look at your own budget! What expenses do you have compared to your incomes? Is there room in your weekly/monthly budget to set aside \$10-\$20 a week to save towards your trip? Showing your own dedication to funding your trip will help convince others to fund your cause!

Step 2 - Make a list of everyone you know.

You might be surprised at the number of friends and family, acquaintances and colleagues who are willing to support your fundraising efforts. You should also list out possible organizations that can help, like student clubs, departments on campus, churches, professional organizations, student government bodies, etc.

Step 3 - Choose and implement more than one method of fundraising.

We always encourage participants to write fundraising letters to their personal contacts; it's also a good idea to find alternative options for raising funds. Ask community businesses, churches, or college clubs to sponsor you. Maybe give a presentation to a service club (i.e. Rotary, Jaycees, Lions, etc.). Even hosting social events like car washes, garage sales or raffles can raise enough funds to sponsor, at least partially, your trip. Check out some of the sample fundraising letters in this document!

Step 4 – Start the paperwork!

If you are applying for funding through your department, through your student organization, through your university, or from a scholarship or other source, there's likely a paperwork process to get started. And that process takes time! Figure out deadlines, many are often as far as 6 or more months ahead of the event date! And

often, there are limited sources of funding, and they go to first come first served, so you'll want your paperwork in at the first possible chance! Universities operate on a unique fiscal year that usually starts July 1, so get your paperwork in as close to that date as possible!

Step 5 - Set a timeline and go for it!

It is important to plan well in advance. Start with your fundraising goal and work backward. Leave yourself plenty of time so your fundraising experience can be a successful and enjoyable one.

Step 6 – Get your resume up to date.

You will probably have to include a resume, cover letter, and possibly a trip log with applications for funding. Some individuals might also ask for it to see your experience in paper form. It's always a good idea to have an up-to-date resume and trip log. Check out the resources available in your student member portal for a sample resume and trip log, and consider registering for a resume-review at the AORE conference or year-round through the Student Development Committee.

Fundraising Strategies

1. Writing a Fundraising Letter

Successful fundraising letters are concise. Make sure to convey a sense of urgency, explain how the reader's donation will make an impact, and ask for a specific, individualized dollar amount. Professional contacts, for example, probably can contribute a greater amount than those who are still students or work in the nonprofit sector. And don't be afraid to ask your more established contacts for \$100, \$200 or even \$500!

Mention that you will host a small open house before your departure to recognize the generosity of your donors and thank them for their contributions publicly. Offer to present a slide show or lecture upon your return. Using creative fundraising strategies like these helps to secure funding from contacts at religious organizations, civic groups, alumni associations and educational institutions.

Always remember to follow up! You should be on the phone with the small businesses, civic and religious groups, and friends and relatives you have contacted to let them know you really do need their support. One follow-up call can make the difference

between someone writing a check immediately or pushing your letter to the back burner indefinitely.

A letter-writing campaign is one of the simplest and most effective fundraising methods you can employ. Send letters to friends and family, employers and co-workers, clubs you belong to, churches or temples, local banks, foundations and charitable organizations in your area. The Rotary, Lions and Elks Clubs; Junior League; Junior Chamber; and The United Way are some larger charitable organizations that may be interested in donating to this cause, as well.

2. Find Funds from Your School

One major source of funding is your own school. Many school clubs are allocated a certain amount of funding through a student activities committee; see if your club is eligible. Also, many academic departments have discretionary funds for projects and programs. If your trip can be integrated into an academic or service-learning course, there may be funds that can be used for your program. Just don't expect the resources to jump out at you! Often, you'll have to dig through websites, student government protocols, or organization by-laws to find out how to request funding. But just remember, even if you spend 10 hours hunting for information, if you get a \$500 scholarship that's \$50/hr you just made! Keywords you'll be hunting for: travel grant, professional development, conference funding, presentation grant, student travel award.

3. Attract Local Businesses as Sponsors

Local businesses are far more likely to make a contribution than large corporations. The key is identifying a link between you, or someone close to you, and the owner of the business. You may want to approach the business with a letter first, enclosing all relevant information, and then follow up with a phone call. Promise to write them a thank you letter, then let them know you will make some sort of picture-filled display to display in the business upon your return home. In this way, you not only are thanking the business owner for his/her generosity, but also are providing him/her with free publicity!

4. Collaborate with Service Clubs and Churches

Service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and Optimists; fraternal organizations such as Elk and Moose Clubs; and religious groups such as churches and temples are excellent sources for fundraising. Follow the "who do I know?" principle: is someone you know a member or the friend of a member?

The best course of action is to contact as many clubs in your area as possible and ask to give a presentation to them. Many clubs have breakfast, lunch or dinner meetings; ask to speak for 15 - 20 minutes during these meetings to present your request and explain what you will be doing.

This is your chance to sell your intended experience. Remember, you are not asking for money for a vacation. You are asking for a donation to participate in a life changing experience that you can share with your community/university/program. Also, let the organization know that you are willing to come back and show them slides or a video of your program experience when you return.

After your presentation, write a follow-up letter to thank them for letting you speak and reiterate your request for financial support. Be specific about how much you are requesting and how it will be used, and be sure you are realistic about the amount you request. A total of \$200 - \$400 is probably reasonable.

5. Throw a Successful Fund Raising Event

- Sales - One of the traditional ways to raise money is through bake sales, candy sales, garage sales.
- Raffles - This works best for groups raising funds. Here again, use the "who do I know?" principle. Often groups can get donated items or gift certificates from local businesses and restaurants, which they then can use as raffle prizes at a larger event (dances, etc.). If there are no large items to raffle off, groups can chip in to purchase a big-ticket item like a bike. As long as the proceeds are well over the purchase price, there's nothing wrong with this plan of action!
- Parties, Dances, Music, Etc! - Gatherings like this can range from formal affairs to simple pizza parties. Remember your "who do I know?" principle: do you have a friend in a band? Do you know the owner of a bar or restaurant? Some simple ideas include having a band play at a club where you can collect a cover charge or a percentage of the sales. Or perhaps you can create a deal with a restaurant to offer an all-you-can-eat buffet from which the profits are shared. Get creative!

We hope this resource is useful to you. Although we've provided a few suggestions, it is important to remember why you are raising the money and what is going to be most effective for you personally. Be persistent. You might get a lot of rejections and become discouraged at times, but there also will be a lot of people who will support and encourage you.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR CAMPAIGN!