

# Creative Fundraising Ideas

*Use one or more of these ideas, and try to think of more.  
Good luck, and don't forget to put the FUN in fundraising!*

*There are many creative fundraising ideas out there. The ideas listed here have been used successfully by many people with very little to none fundraising experience over the years.*

## Some General Tips to Remember:

- \* **Set a goal!** Fundraising is most successful when you have a concrete goal to work toward.
- \* **Ask for a RANGE and appreciate small as well as large gifts!** Some people think if they can't give \$100 then it's not worth giving anything - let them know that you will be excited about whatever amount they can contribute - even \$5 or \$10. You can make it a wide range too—how about \$5-\$100?
- \* **Ask as many people as possible** - the more asks you make, the more "YES" answers you'll get!
- \* **Thank Everyone who gives.** People like to know that they are appreciated. Give some love! You can send thank you cards or make a personal call to thank them. Better yet, invite them to your house or to a small gathering to let them know what they helped fund by donating.
- \* **BE SURE TO FOLLOW-UP!** Successful fundraising is successful organizing.

## Some Specific Tried and True Ideas:

\* **Fundraising letter to family and friends** - A tried and true method! Make a list of all of your friends, family, and extended family - old friends of the family, college roommates, members of groups you once worked with, etc. Write them a letter explaining why you are participating in this program, including some information about the group, what you love about the work they do, and what you hope to learn from the experience. Ask for a range of contributions to help you reach your overall goal. (For example: if 10 people give \$20, you will raise \$200!) If possible, enclose a copy of a flyer or some piece of information about the group you are raising money for. Be sure to let them know that you will be in touch after the program ends to report on what you learned.

\* **Tax Return Drive** - Encourage all your friends and family who are against Bush's horrific tax cuts, or against the way their tax money is being used to finance war and repression around the world, to donate their tax return money to people who are organizing to stop Bush's foreign and economic policies. Using tax return money to make a political difference is a great statement.

\* **Group sponsorships** - Some community groups, unions, or church/synagogue groups might be interested in supporting your effort, especially if you are one of their members and representing them in the program. Usually you'll need to write a letter to their board a month in advance, and/or make a presentation at one of their regular meetings to request funds.

\* **Honorariums and College funds** - Many Universities and colleges have money that both current students and alumni can apply for. They will give you a few hundred dollars in return for your agreeing to do a guest lecture to their class upon your return.

\* **Auction** - Get some friends to agree to auction off services - then invite everyone you know to a happy hour at a quiet bar. Once people have arrived and you have explained more about the program and why it is an important act to be involved in, begin the auctioning of services. Auction off: car washing, massages, artwork, bathroom clean-ups, potential dates, etc. Make sure and tell folks that the bidding will start high!

\* **Tips** - Do you have any friends in the service industry? Sometimes these noble souls can be convinced to split their night earnings/ donate all tips to a cause. Even coffee shop workers who do not earn very much have been known to donate a day's tips to a good cause or for a good customer!

\* **Movie night** - Have people come over to watch a documentary about movement building history in the US or elsewhere in the world. Find a film that will spur a discussion around why anti-racism is a crucial lens for movement building! Some folks in the past have been able to get their local alternative movie theatre to donate a free screening of social justice related films and all the proceeds went towards the cause they were raising money for - worth a shot!

\* **Fundraiser brunch/house-party** - At your house or at a friend's, organize a brunch for everyone you know. Send invitations (post-card invitations are cheaper) 2-3 weeks before the event, and follow-up with a phone call. Let everyone know it's a fundraiser for this program you're participating in, and ask \$5 - \$20 per plate. Then, at the high point of the party, give a motivational pitch (a request for money), describing your personal reasons for being part of the organization. They'll probably give even more!

\* **Salsa Dance Party** - Send out invitations, charge at the door, and do a pitch! Do you know someone who could give lessons? Do you know a local club that would let you use their space? Put up flyers all over town! Don't forget to do a pitch!

\* **Radical Mix CD's** - Make a CD compilation of your favorite radical songs, design a cool CD cover, and sell it as a fundraiser! You can compile songs from the US labor movement, anti-war ballads, hip-hop critiques of imperialism, Nueva Canción music (popular Latin American music with revolutionary lyrics), local music, or anything else you want to share with your friends. For the cover, make a collage or include a poem. You can either send it to a bunch of friends and ask them to send back a donation if they can, or you can sell it at one of your parties for \$5-\$10 each.

\* **Original Artwork** - Make some original artwork and offer to send an original piece of artwork to anyone who donates \$50 or more (or whatever amount you choose to ask for). Prints work great because you can make a number of copies, but you can also make hand-made collage greeting cards, knit wristbands, earrings or other jewelry, or any other artsy thing you can make many of.

\* **Raffle or Lottery** - Ask a restaurant to donate a dinner for two, or a massage therapist to donate a massage, or a certificate for a hammock or a purse from El Salvador, or anything else you think people would want. Sell tickets for a couple of bucks, and the winners get the prizes. Or you can do it as a **cash lottery** (the winner wins half of the total pot/ up to \$250): sell 100 tickets at \$5 each, draw one name, and that person gets \$250 and you get \$250 (and the winner can always choose to donate the money back to you!).

\* **CISPES (Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador)** \* [www.cispes.org](http://www.cispes.org) \*