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# Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



Help Papers Series  
Support Materials for Parent/Child Programs

TOPIC:

# Fund-Raising

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## **Fund-Raising**

**INTRODUCTION:** Professional fundraising organizations will tell you that money is not the best motivation for people to give to your organization, even though that is exactly what you need. Both your giver and the volunteers need to have a reason for the project. “What are you going to do with the money?” is the first question you get. It doesn’t matter if the candy bars or Christmas tree is just what they want. If you want your public to give happily, deeply, and often; you must satisfy their need for self-gratification in their giving.

**The person(s) in charge** of your fundraising activity(s) must be generally very controlling by nature. There is a lot of discipline and management of time, materials, and money that needs watching over. An organized mind will be better when it comes to simplifying the process so all goes smoothly. That person should be paired with a happy, fun filled person or committee to add a spark to the event. Some call it Fun Raising!

“Fund-raiser”, it's that feared word that every parent dreads. The good side is that the funds that are raised are for a good cause, your program. If your program is like most, you are pretty much self-funded.

**First step** is to have a goal, or a reason to raise funds. Having a plan is the most important step to having a successful fund raising event. Having a goal or purpose for your fund raising is important whether it is money or supplies, such as materials for a pine car track or supplies to build a float or money to buy a teepee or just money to enhance the operations of your tribe or nation. If you have a specific goal you can use that as a marketing tool. By having a picture or drawing of what you are working towards it will enhance your sales efforts. Sometimes people are more willing to donate materials from their inventory or stock to help your cause instead of making a cash donation. If money is necessary sell something that the buyer will enjoy.

**When selecting your commodity** there are lots of choices; make a product to sell, sell a product at a profit, or provide a work force to provide labor. Your group can make baked goods or craft items to sell. With baked goods you have storage and freshness problems, so this should be taken into consideration. With craft items you can have supplies donated, but if you have to pay for supplies you need to establish an investment cost vs. what you can sell the item for. Selling merchandise is number one on most groups’ list. Candy, donuts, cookies, coupon books, Christmas cards, wrapping paper, Indian made pencils, Christmas trees, Christmas wreaths, holiday gifts, popcorn, nuts and candles are just a few of the items that are available.

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If you are actually selling products, make sure the arrangements and contracts with the suppliers favor you, not them. If it seems they are getting the best deal, they probably are. A simple plan is best for all. Also a short time frame is favorable, as turning of materials quickly means the same for money and profits. Always ask for references when dealing with a company you do not know, and follow up on that reference. Remember, if a fundraising organization sought you out, they probably paid that person for their finding service, which adds another layer of cost to the product; that may make the price not so palatable to the buyer, or reduce your profit. There are no handling fees when volunteers do the work. The exception is a salaried person of the company that has no financial interest in the deal.

Whatever you pick, there are several things to consider. Try to pick an item that isn't already being sold by another group in your area (GOOD LUCK) analyze cost vs. profit and also to be considered is how much money you have to put up front. Also is there any risk in not selling which would be a loss of revenues. Another option is pre-selling such as taking orders for baked goods or pre-selling gifts. If you pre-sell and order off of forms for future delivery of goods, make sure the forms are clear as to the product description, price, payment, and delivery arrangements. If supplying a work force, evaluate the amount of work vs. dollars earned. Sample items in this area are car washes, spaghetti dinners, pancake breakfasts; fish fry's, selling refreshments at a nation event, or providing a work force for yard work etc. If providing a work force, be sure that amount of work vs. wages is agreed upon preferably in writing.

Another option is a raffle. If this method is chosen, make sure you comply not only with local rules but with local city area solicitation laws too. Displaying the prize along with their chances of winning is very important. The best raffle results occur when only a stated number of tickets are being sold, which defines the chances of winning.

If items must be sold door to door an adult should accompany the children. And please never go after dark. Safety is an important issue. Always make sure all members have a letter of introduction, identification tag, or are wearing your apparel such as vests or tribal shirts. To increase sales and seller initiative, add some prizes. Figure out what profit you have to work with and pay for your incentive prizes out of a percentage of that. Some groups will apply a percentage of extra sales towards the person's next campout costs. Anything you can do to motivate the sellers will enhance your results.

If your organization needs headdresses for all the chiefs, photograph one and present it to the people. Display it for the volunteers before you send them out to the streets, or grandma's house. When you are trying to support the needy kids to weekend camp, show photos of what the kids will be doing. If you are simply trying to cover the year's event expense budget, make a list of the events and attach photos of the places with a total of the goal needed to accomplish them. Knowledge of the dollar amount of the need is also necessary to have available. Get It?

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An often-overlooked fund-raiser is the simple donation. You need to create a cover letter with your purpose clearly stated on a nice letterhead. Be sure to include your non-profit tax ID number. Most corporations and unions have a community help fund and if you make the right contact and have all your information in order you may be surprised what an afternoon's worth of work may grant you. In one of our experiences we asked a large corporation for \$18 worth of hot dogs to sell to raise funds and were turned down. But we were then told that we could have a check for \$100 out of their community "help fund". A simple blanketing of letters can reap big returns.

***IMPORTANT:** When considering soliciting or accepting a donation from a business or organization, be sensitive to ethical boundaries. Accepting support funding from a source whose function may be morally or ethically questionable may not be worth the potential conflict of interest or embarrassment caused.*

The time of year has a big effect on fund raising. Try not to coincide with other fund raising efforts. Many larger corporations have annual budgets for community relations work. Try to submit requests for donations early in their budget cycle.

The last method to mention is about raising money from within. Most of your events will have hidden costs such as mailings, firewood, prizes for activities, craft supplies, and a magic fire start. This money has to come from somewhere, so if your group is against having a fundraiser then these funds will have to come from within. Adding a little bit onto the cost of each event, say if the cost of camping is \$21, that you round it off to \$25. If you have 20 campers you would have added \$80 to cover the hidden expenses and possibly buy some patches. Whichever methods you choose try to make the event fun and successful. And remember this is for your benefit.

**Rewarding the sellers:** There are many examples of reward plans to sellers. Some times providing the service, or satisfying the need is enough, but don't count on it. Just don't give away the needed dollars. Agree ahead of time on a goal for the event needed to be able to satisfy the prize package. Remember, simple rewards are many times just fine, especially when children are part of the selling cycle. There needs to be room for the moral lesson too.

Enjoy your FUN-D-RAISER!

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR EFFORTS!!