

38 Ways to Raise \$500

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- Give it yourself. This is the easiest way for those who are able, although if you are able to give them that much money you should be helping raise much more than \$500.
- List all your friends who are interested in your organization, or similar organization. Decide how much each one should give. Write to them on your own stationery, include a brochure from the organization and a return envelope. Phone those people who don't respond in two weeks, Some people will need 10 friends to give \$50, and some people need 50 friends to give \$10. Most people will need a combination such as: 2-3 @ \$50, 4-5 @ \$25, 15 @ \$10.
- Give part of the \$500. Then ask your friends to join you in giving \$25, \$50, or whatever your gift is. This is most effective because you are not asking them to do anything you haven't done.
- Set up a challenge campaign. Challenge gifts can be quite small. Tell people you'll give \$5 for every \$25 they give, or will match every \$10 gift up to ten gifts. For added suspense, make this challenge during a fundraising event. You or the host can announce, "We now have the Dave Buckstretch Challenge for the next five minutes. Dave will give \$5 for every new member that joins Worthy Cause."
- If your organization has a diverse funding base with several grassroots fundraising strategies in place, use them all:
 1. sell 100 raffle tickets for \$100
 2. give \$50
 3. bring 10 people to an event that costs \$10 to raise \$100
 4. buy two gift memberships @ \$15 each to raise \$30
 5. get 15 friends to join @ \$15 each to raise \$225
- Help with your organization's phone-a-thon. Bring the names of people you think would like to join and call until you have raised \$500. Or trade names with someone in the organization and call their friends until you have reached \$500. This is particularly effective for people who are shy about asking their own friends for money, but not afraid to ask people they don't know.
- Acquire mailing lists for your organization. If you belong to another group, perhaps you can set up an exchange, or perhaps you have access to a list of members of some other group. You can ask all your friends to give you the names of 10 to 15 people they think would like to join. You would need to recruit about 25 members at an average gift of \$15. Depending on how "hot" your list is, you might need as few as 200 names (to do a bulk mailing) or as many as 1500-3000 (if you expect a 1-2% response.) You would have to have a greater response if you wanted the mailing to pay for itself and also generate \$500.

- Give the organization something they need that is worth \$500, such as a fax machine, filing cabinets, couch, adding machine, computer program, etc.
- Pledge \$20 a month, and get one other person to do likewise. Then sell \$20 worth of raffle tickets.
- Teach a seminar on a topic you know: fundraising, knitting, organic gardening, organizing, proposal writing, environmental impact reports, gourmet cooking, dog grooming, starting your own business. Charge \$20-50 per person, with a goal of 20-30 people. Either absorb the cost of promotion, or have enough participants to cover it.
- Give some or a lot of things to your organization's garage sale, making sure they are worth \$500, and then help to sell it all.
- Have a fancy dinner at your home or a regular dinner at someone's fancy home. Serve unusual or gourmet food, or have special entertainment. Charge \$25 or more per person, and have 20 or more guests.
- Host a wine and cheese party. Do not charge admission and invite as many people as you can. During the party, give a short talk about your organization, and ask everyone to consider a gift of \$25, \$50, or \$100 or more (depending on the crowd). Either pass out envelopes and ask people to give then, or after the party contact everyone individually who came and ask for a major gift. Indicate that you have given, and if appropriate, how much you have given.
- Get your gambling friends together. Charge a \$5 entrance fee, and have a poker evening, asking that every "pot" be split with the organization. Individuals win and so does the organization. You can charge extra for refreshments, or include one or two glasses of something with the price of admission. (Watch the laws in your community on this one. In some communities it is illegal to gamble, even in your own home.)
- Do one fundraising event every other month that nets at least \$75. This might look like:
 1. Poker party raises \$100
 2. Fancy dinner (8 people at \$25) raises \$200
 3. Sell 50 raffle tickets @ \$1 raises \$50
 4. Book sale raises \$50
 5. Recycle newspapers raises \$100
- Solicit small businesses, churches, synagogues, or service clubs for \$500. If you are active in a church, or own your own business and are involved in business organizations or service clubs, this can be very effective. You can often raise \$200-\$500 with a simple proposal and oral presentation.
- Ask 5-10 people to save all their change for 3-5 months. You save yours. Count it at the end of the prescribed time and use one of the other methods to raise the rest. (You may not need to.)

- Ask 2-5 friends to help with a bake sale, book sale, or garage sale. You and your friends bake the goodies, or get the books or other stuff required for the sale, staff it, and help clean up afterwards. This is an excellent way to get people involved in fundraising without ever actually asking them for money.
- For the fairly rich: give your organization \$5,000 as an interest-free loan for a year. They invest it, earn 8-10% and at the end of the year, they give you your \$5,000 back.
- The Farming Out Method: Entice 5 friends to sell 100 raffle tickets each, or to raise \$100 however they like. Share this list of suggestions with them. Give them a nice dinner at the successful end of their efforts (or a bottle of good wine, or a weekend away).
- Invite people to your birthday party and ask that in lieu of gifts they give money to your organization.
- Lead or get someone to lead a nature walk, an architectural tour, a historic tour, a sailing trip, a rafting trip, or a horseback ride. Charge \$15-25 per person, or charge \$35 and provide lunch. Advertise the event in the newspaper to draw in people from outside your organization.
- If you live in a nice house or own a getaway cottage in a beautiful place or in an expensive city, rent it out for a week or a weekend two or three times during the year and give the proceeds to your organization.
- Organize a service raffle. Get four people (one can be you) to donate a simple but valuable service that many people could use and sell raffle tickets for \$3-\$5 each. Keep the price a little high so you don't have to sell so many and so that the buyers have a higher chance of winning. Services can include child care for a weekend or for any weekend night two weekends in a row; one day of housecleaning; yard work; house painting (interior or exterior), etc. Sell the tickets to neighbors, work mates, and to other board members. Encourage people to buy several by offering discounts for multiple purchases, such as one for \$5, 3 for \$13, 4 for \$17, 5 for \$20. If you are really bold or live in a more affluent area, or have few friends, sell the tickets for \$20 each. A full day of housecleaning for \$20 is a real bargain, and buyers have a high chance of winning with fewer tickets sold.
- If you belong to a church, research whether your church or theirs has a discretionary fund. Many churches have small pools of money available to groups through a women's fellowship or pastor's discretionary fund or various seldom-used endowments. Grants are often in the \$50-\$500 range and so go largely untouched by fundraisers. Sometimes simply writing a letter will free up this money and it tends to be renewable if someone is willing to ask the church yearly.
- Research all the service clubs in town and see what their giving policies are. They often have formal giving guidelines for large grants of \$2,000 and up, but have smaller amounts of money available for specific small projects.
- Find out what items your group needs and try to get them donated. This is good for people who really hate to ask for money but who don't mind asking for things that cost money.

Items that one can sometimes get donated include computers, paper, office supplies, office furniture (second-hand from banks and corporations as they redecorate), typewriters, adding machines, food, even cars.

- Ask someone to donate \$50 a month for a year. Ask four people to donate \$10 a month for a year. Ask nine people to donate \$5 a month for a year. Get the organization to send reminders to them or send the reminders yourself.
- Give it yourself. (This is so good I have to say it twice.)
- Strategy with a long-deferred payoff (we hope): leave the group a bequest.
- With similar hopes as above, get friends to include the group in their wills.
- Ask friends who belong to service clubs, sororities, antique collecting groups, support groups, bridge clubs, etc. to discuss your organization in their group and pass the hat for donations. A once-a-year sweep of even small organizations can yield \$100 from each.
- If, as a child, you collected something avidly that you now store in a basement, consider selling it. Coins and stamps are particularly valuable and have usually increased in value over the years. But your collection of rocks, toy ships, rockets, arrowheads, or dolls can also be valuable. When you donate the income from the sale, you can deduct that amount from your taxes -- an added bonus of this strategy, since you probably paid little or nothing for the items in the collection.
- Have a sidewalk sale or garage sale for your whole neighborhood or building. Go around to your neighbors and tell them you will take their stuff outside and sit with it all day to sell it if they will donate half or all of the proceeds to your group. Since this is stuff people want to rid of anyway, it is a good deal for them. In one apartment building with ten units participating in donating stuff, an organization netted \$3,000 in one day. Three people from the organization helped with the selling. With a few high-ticket items, such as a washer/dryer or some nice lamps, you can make good money.
- If you have an artistic bent, offer to design greeting cards to specification for organizations or individuals for a fee. If you are good at calligraphy, sell your skills to schools for graduation announcement, friends for classy but low-cost wedding invitations, or just fun certificates such as "World's Greatest Dad" for Father's Day or "Outstanding Friend." Create unique Halloween costumes or masks. Donate the proceeds from your artistry.
- Create a take-off on the "adopt-a-highway" techniques by naming budget items of your group as available for adoption. You could develop a flyer that reads, "The following items have been found near death from negligence and abuse. Won't you help? \$25 per month will ensure that our computer is maintained. \$100 per month will release our photocopy machine from toiling with no toner and a dying motor. (We can lease a new one.)"
- Similar to the suggestion above is the "Details Auction." This is for all your friends whose desks are overflowing with papers or who can't get their receipts in order to give to the tax preparer or who complain they can never find anything. If you are well organized, offer to

clean up their desk, get their Rolodex in order, file their papers, etc. If you like to shop, sell that to people who don't and do all their holiday shopping for them, or buy birthday, baby shower or niece/nephew presents for them. Anything that people feel they cannot control is the organized person's fundraising dream come true.

- Find out which of your friends (perhaps this is true for you also) work in corporations with matching gift programs. Then ask them to donate and get their gift matched, and ask them to ask their co-workers to donate and get their gifts matched.