

FUNDING YOUR EFFORTS

A lot of people are uncomfortable with asking for money, but there will be costs associated with your legislative initiative and you must have the funds to run a winning campaign. Just remember that you're asking people to donate to a very important effort! Think of it as them making an investment in the campaign.

BUDGET

The first step to raising money is to figure out how much you need (your budget). This will tell you how much money you need to raise for your effort. Many of the large donors you approach will want to know how much money you intend to raise and how it will be spent. It will be important to have the overall plan and budget established so you can share this information with them.

As you develop your fundraising plan, it is important not only to have goals, but to be realistic as well. Prioritize your plan to include fundraising goals. If you raise all the money you target, then you can implement your entire plan. But you should also be prepared to scale back your effort and know which areas of your budget can be trimmed if you only raise half the amount you anticipate.

STEPS

1) Identify a fundraising chair/contact: Elect one person within your committee to be the finance person. Others in the group will also be involved in fundraising efforts, but it's important to ensure that one person is coordinating all the various efforts. The last thing you want is for a group member to approach someone to ask for money who has already committed a significant sum. Fundraising efforts must be coordinated and well-organized. With one person primarily responsible for overseeing the program, you can ensure that all efforts are occurring in an organized fashion.

2) Figure out your targets: Brainstorm with your group as to who is likely to contribute to your efforts. Here are some suggestions of people and groups to approach to solicit funds:

- Prosthetic companies and facilities
- O&P manufacturers and suppliers
- Physicians
- Physical therapists
- Individuals who have suffered limb loss and their families
- Individuals at risk for limb loss

Not all donors will be in the same category. For example, prosthetic companies have the potential to be major donors and give you a significant sum of money. Individuals with limb loss could also be in that group, although, depending on their circumstances, they may give you a smaller sum.

3) Develop a plan: You need to determine how much money you will ask of each person, how you will ask for it and who will make "the ask."

FUNDRAISING METHODS

There are many different ways to raise money. Given that you're probably on a tight schedule, we suggest you focus your efforts on phone calls, letters and meetings. While hosting an event is a fun way to raise money, it's very time-consuming. Plus, events have overhead costs (food, drink, etc.).

Major Donors: Set up a time to meet individually with major donors. Review the plan and budget and explain to them how the money will be used. Then ask them for the specific amount you have identified. Remember, unless you ask for a specific amount you won't get what you need.

Phone Calls: For moderate-level donors, you may want to conduct phone calls. Have key people on your committee who know these individuals contact them directly. You may want to bring these potential donors to a briefing and explain the campaign to all of them together. Then explain how much money you will need from each of them to accomplish the goal.

Letters: For smaller-level donors, you can begin by sending a letter. The letter alone won't be enough, and not everyone will give. If you've decided you need to raise \$500 from 20 individuals, you will need to identify and mail letters to at least 40 people.

FUNDRAISING TIPS

The first rule of fundraising is: Ask for a specific amount. If you simply ask for money without an amount or ask for "whatever you can give," you'll never be able to raise the amount you need.

Here's a good way to think about your fundraising appeals:

If you decide you need to raise \$50,000 for your program, you'll want to find a mix of large, moderate and small donors.

- Two major donors (perhaps prosthetic companies) to give \$10,000 each = \$20,000
- Four moderate-level donors to give \$5,000 each = \$20,000
- 20 individuals to give \$500 each = \$10,000

TOTAL: \$50,000

The second rule of fundraising is: You will raise about half of what you've planned from a specific source. What does that mean? Well, about half of the people who say they'll give will actually send a check. Following up with people and developing relationships will help, but plan to raise more than you need.

So, to use our example above, if you need to raise money from two major donors, four moderate donors and 20 small donors to meet your goals, then you should identify and ask for money from twice as many (four major donors, eight moderate donors and 40 small donors).

FOLLOW-UP METHODS

There are two kinds of follow-up:

- 1) Reaching out to someone to encourage a donation
- 2) Thanking someone who has supported the campaign.

- **Reaching Out:** A great example of this is calling the people you sent your letters to. We all get so much junk mail, this important appeal may have gotten lost in the shuffle. Set up a volunteer night and call everyone who received a letter. The personal touch of a phone call will increase your donations. It's always best to have someone who knows this individual call them. If that's not possible, simply have someone with your fundraising committee make the call.
- **Thanking Donors:** As soon as someone gives you a contribution, send a thank-you note to this person. It is critical that you acknowledge and thank donors for this investment in your cause.

You may want to include major and moderate donors in briefings to keep them abreast of your progress. Remember, these are often very busy people, but inviting them to briefings will keep them interested and invested in your campaign. They will see the progress you've made and if you are in need of additional funding, they may be more likely to contribute again.

Make sure to include all your donors (large and small) in a big "thank you" party after the session ends. If you have achieved victory, then this will be a huge celebration. If you've simply reached the end of the session and need to pick up the ball again next session, you still want to include them in an event. Remember, you'll need to go back to them next session and ask for more money. Make sure to get a local restaurant to donate the food and space for the event.

FOLLOW-UP TIPS

What If a Donor Is Hesitant to Write a Check?

If your group is new, it may not have a proven track record. Sometimes people hesitate to write a check to an unfamiliar group. Offer to provide them with names of other donors (with these donors' approval, of course). Also, rather than just asking for \$5,000 you can ask them to fund a part of your program. Show them your budget. Explain that \$5,000 will pay for the cost of printing and mailing. People are often more open to giving if they're funding a known, specific aspect of your program.

You can also ask them to volunteer. They may be more willing to give their time than their money. As they help you reach your goals, they'll learn more about the campaign. And they'll be more likely to donate once they see the great work that is being done.

What If a Donor Can't Contribute Money?

Sometimes you will ask people or companies for money and they will tell you flat-out they cannot give at this time. But that doesn't mean they still can't be of help through other means, such as "in-kind" contributions.

What Are In-Kind Contributions?

For more information or to get involved, contact the Advocacy Department
at 202/742-1885 or appl@amputee-coalition.org

An in-kind contribution is a donation of goods or services. Examples include:

- A local facility may pay to mail information to their patients.
- A company may be willing to pay to print your materials or allow you to use their facilities for meetings.
- A friendly facility or local business might send their employees over to volunteer with your group.
- Restaurants may be willing to donor food and space for an event you are hosting.
- Local stores might donate a prize for a raffle or silent auction.



See: *Sample Budget, Fundraising Plan and Fundraising Materials in the Appendix.*

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