



## how much would you give?

- purpose**
- To provide participants with the skills necessary to ask for individual donations for their cause or organization
  - To explore the strengths of youth and adults in fundraising

**time** 2 hours

**group size** 20 to 30 participants

- materials**
- Flip chart paper
  - Index cards
  - Markers
  - Pens
  - Handout: What We Gave/Got and Fundraising Tips

**prepare ahead** Create handouts or flip charts with definitions of linkage, ability, and donor's interest (see Step One for definitions).

### introduction

Explain that the group is going to learn how to raise funds for members' organizations or causes through asking for direct donations. Many people are uncomfortable asking for money, but asking others for money when it's coming from the heart is much easier. Remember, fundraising is just providing people with the opportunity to give to a worthy cause.



### step one

Ask the participants whether they have donated any of their money in the past year. To whom have they donated this money? Record their responses on flip chart. Ask them to think about why they gave to those organizations. What prompted them to write that check or give that dollar? On a new sheet of paper, record their responses. Ask the participants whether they know the number-one reason people donate money. (The answer is, “Because they were asked.”) Explain that this is the reason we are working on our skills in asking people to support important causes.

Explain that getting funds for our causes and organizations is important. After all, money is needed to pay for the light bill and staff time at the YMCA, or for the space at the local food pantry, or for the medical expenses at the animal shelter. So what are the ways to raise funds for good causes? An organization can raise money in four basic ways: direct donations, special events, sales, and grant writing. This activity will focus on direct donations.

According to the Fundraising School at the Center on Philanthropy, the most effective method of fundraising is to ask for direct donations, face-to-face. In the long run, people who directly ask for donations from individuals and corporations get more funds and more repeat donations than they do from the other methods of fundraising.

**trainer note:** For more information on the different methods of fundraising, see some of the resources listed in the Resources chapter.

Direct donation fundraising is simply asking others to give to your cause. It can happen face-to-face, over the phone, in a letter, or through a website on the Internet. Whichever method you choose, it’s still just letting people know about your cause or program and giving them the opportunity to help through a donation. Three important pieces of information to know in this type of fundraising are the **linkage, ability, and interest** of a potential donor.



**Linkage** is finding the right person to ask a donor—a person with some link to them. Maybe they know each other. Maybe they share common interests. **Ability** is the ability of the donor to make a donation. Don't ask donors for \$1,000 if they can probably only donate \$50, and don't ask them for \$25 if they often give \$500! **Donors' interest** consists of reasons they might believe in the cause. What's their stake in your program or cause?

When you're asking from the heart, what seems difficult can actually become easy. All it takes is a little practice and preparation.

Tell the group that they are going to try out the direct-donation method on each other.

## step two

Have the participants divide into youth–adult pairs. Ask the teams to select one cause or organization that they both strongly support or care about. Ask them to write their cause or organization on one side of an index card. On the other side, they should draw a line splitting the card down the middle with “What we gave,” “\$1,000” on the top left, and “What we got” on the top right. Explain that each team now has \$1,000 (no more, no less), which they can give away to other causes in the room. Each time they give away some of their money, they should deduct it from the \$1,000 they have in the left column, until they have no more money to give away. At the same time, they will be presenting their cause to other groups and asking them to donate to their cause. Any money that is donated to them should be recorded in the right column. Ask the participants to keep track of which teams they gave money to and who gave them money by noting the group's initials or names by that deduction or donation.

Be very clear that the \$1,000 they have to give and the money they receive are two different streams of money and cannot be combined. That is, they can't give away the money they've gotten from other people. And they cannot give any of their \$1,000 to their own cause.

## section four: philanthropy: a new arena



**trainer note:** You might explain that giving away the money they received from other people would be unethical. After all, those donors wanted their money to go to the specific cause that team presented to them.

Tell the participants that they will have 10 minutes to strategize and then 20 minutes to move around the room, listening to people's causes and donating part or all of their money to them.

**trainer note:** If your group is large, you may wish to give them more time to mill around and listen to other people's causes.

Tell the group that when they are strategizing, they may want to think about several questions. What linkages do they have in the room? Do they have an idea of specific people's interests? Does one or the other have a better story to tell for a specific potential donor? What are the "selling points" of their cause or organization?

Answer any questions the participants have.

### **step three**

Ask the pairs to begin, first with their strategizing, then with their solicitation. Provide 3-minute warnings before the ends of both the strategizing period (10 minutes) and the solicitation period (20 minutes).

### **step four**

After the time has elapsed, instruct the participants to add up the amount of money they received for their cause and find a seat. Have each team share its cause with the entire group and tell how much money they raised. See who received the most money for their cause. Also ask the group whether any teams did not give away all of their money.

Explain that the activity was focused on a strong method of fundraising: direct donations. If they are going to start raising funds for their organization, this approach can be a foundation for that work. So take some time to have participants think about their experience.



## step five

Quickly debrief the activity with some of the following questions:

- What did you observe during the planning and solicitation periods of the activity?
- How did you feel about asking others for money?
- How did you feel when you were donating money?
- What did youth and adults do differently in this activity?
- What did they do that was the same?
- How did you determine which causes you donated to?
- How was thinking about people's linkage, ability, and interest useful to you?
- What are some important things to know when you start fundraising?
- Think about your potential donors, your organization or cause, and so on.
- How can youth–adult partnerships be used in direct-donation fundraising?

**trainer note:** When asking about why they donated to causes, be sure to highlight the groups that received the most money. Ask the people who gave to those groups what made them so successful.



### step six

Divide the participants into groups of three to five people. Distribute sheets of flip chart paper and markers to each group. Ask the groups to think about their experiences in the exercise and answer the following questions:

- What strengths do adults bring to youth–adult fundraising teams? What strengths do youth bring?
- What advice would you give to youth–adult groups that want to fundraise? How could they be most effective?

Have the groups record their responses about youth and adult strengths on the flip chart paper. Ask each group to share their suggestions with the large group.

### step seven

Distribute the Fundraising Tips handout.

**trainer note:** Take some time to read through the handout with participants, and see if they have any questions.

Ask the participants to develop their own fundraising handout for their group based on their own experience and suggestions.

### Variations

**variation one:** Ask the groups to develop fundraising scripts for youth–adult fundraising teams.

**variation two:** Examine all four fundraising methods. Ask the group to discuss any experiences they’ve had with the methods. What are some potential benefits of youth–adult partnerships in each of those methods? Divide the participants into four groups, assign each group a method, and have them brainstorm ideas for how they could use that method for their organization.

# what we gave/got

<b>What we gave:</b>  <b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>What we got:</b>
---	---------------------

<b>Our cause is:</b>
----------------------

what we gave/got - a handout

# fundraising tips

## Research and Preparation

1. Make a gift yourself. How can we ask others to give if our cause isn't important enough for us to give to it?
2. Prepare a packet of information. It could be something small that you'll leave with donors or something more involved that you'll keep with you. It might include a description of your program, statistics, pictures, and contact information.
3. Research your potential donors' linkage, ability, and interest. Who knows them? How do they know us? How much could they give? Why are they interested in this cause?
4. Practice talking about your cause and asking for money. Work with your fundraising team.

## Making the Ask

1. Make an appointment. Ask in person!
2. Talk about your cause and why it's important.
3. Smile. Make eye contact. Listen.
4. Ask for a specific dollar amount.
5. Answer questions. If you don't know the answer, say so. Get the information to them later. Ask for the dollar amount again.
6. Wait. Let them make their decision.

## Follow-Up

1. If you get a donation, thank the donor. Send a thank you note the same day. Continue thanking them through recognition and other means.
2. If you don't get a donation, thank them for their time. Send a note the same day thanking them for their time and helpful suggestions.

## More Tips

- Remember that this is a financial decision for them. It's not about whether or not they "like" you.
- Don't say no for anyone else.
- People will not give if you don't ask!
- Use this method for individuals, corporations, charitable groups (e.g., Kiwanis and Lions), congregations, and others.
- Practice, practice, practice! Practice with others on your fundraising team or with friends or family. Practice answering hard questions, and share difficult questions with others on your fundraising team. You'll get better with every ask you make!
- Create a script for your youth-adult team. Use it to practice your "pitch" and to make sure you hit all the important points.
- Whenever you ask for money, ask the potential donor if they know of other people who might be interested in donating to your cause. Even people who don't donate to your cause might have friends who will!