

**Northwest Cooperative
Development Center**
www.nwcdc.coop



Cooperative Starter Series
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Fundraising Ideas For your start up Co-op

When starting up a Co-op, raising funds is crucial to building a healthy financial base and helping you fulfill the needs of your organization.

When going out into your community, keep a few things in mind before asking for donations or fundraising collaboration.

1. Remember that potential funders must connect with what you are doing. Be prepared to speak or write about your organization and the vision and mission of your group.
2. Make an appointment with the person you are soliciting, it shows them that you respect their time, and will give you credibility.
3. When asking for donations be organized with what event or need your organization has, have it in letter format so that the business owner can consider this request.
4. Have people sign up on a contact sheet to keep them informed about your organization and events.

Newsletters- Newsletters, whether done through the mail or email, are effective marketing and fundraising tools. They are a great way to update your current members or interested people and an opportunity to list events, wish lists, ask for donations, and cultivate volunteers.

Garage sales- Sell some higher end items such as washer/dryers etc. and have people in your group go through things they no longer need and ask friends and family to do the same. Advertise in the newspaper and online at craigslist.org. Have friends who like to make baked goods for your sale. Have literature about your organization available and have a sign in sheet for future contacts.

Holiday wreath sales- If relevant, find a local wreath maker and buy wreaths at cost, or make them your self and sell at local events or take orders for wreaths and deliver them to a central location for pick up.

Matching gifts- Collect money within your group to total \$1,000 and ask for others in the community to help match it.

Raffles- Raffles can be great tools for fundraising especially if you combine them into an event and have really great items to win. Offer something such as \$1.00 a ticket or \$13.00 for 15 tickets or \$20.00 for 25 tickets. Encouraging people to buy more tickets for the extra “free” tickets is worth it and can generate quite a bit of money quickly.

Store percentage sales- Connect with a local business that would be willing to donate part of their profits for a day or one day a month, and then make sure you let people know to buy there on this day.

Pledges- Have your group gather pledges, **(\$1.00 a day) \$30 a month= \$360 a year**. Multiply that by **20** pledges and you have **\$7,200** for a year. Once you begin this process, you may find you can easily surpass your monthly and yearly goals for your organization. Begin the donations with your steering committee and raise money from there. The financial commitment of your steering committee is crucial to successful fundraising. It shows commitment and dedication to the organization and is great leverage in asking for money.

Events- Events give you the opportunity to speak about your organization and raise money. There are many different kinds of events and all are beneficial to fundraising in their own ways. Here are some examples:

Musical or performance events- Ask a local band or improv group to donate the profits from an event to your group.

Dinner or Breakfast Events- Informal events sponsored by your organization can be great PR and raise funds. You can host spaghetti dinners, or pancake breakfasts and charge a certain fee. Or you could host it for free and ask for donations from attendees. Many stores will offer donations of products that can be used in this kind of event. Pledge cards could be used simultaneously with this event.

Create an activity day- What is your focus for your co-op? Is it alternative energy? Biofuels? Create an activity or video that educates the public about your organization and an opportunity to educate people about your mission. Show this at your events.

Auctions- Many businesses donate items to help organizations, if you are a nonprofit or under the umbrella of a 501(c) (3), more stores will be apt to give for the mere fact that it is a tax write off. A silent or live auction is a fun way to increase funds and generate interest in your organization. Auctions need a lot of P.R. and require start up costs, so it is best to build up a following before having one.