



SCHOOL FUNDRAISING:

Planning, Executing & Succeeding

Brightspark®
by WorldStrides

BEGIN

Are you planning a fundraiser? Sometimes, getting started is the hardest part. Consider this a launching pad for teachers and performing arts directors who want to make the most out of their fundraisers via excellent organization, smart resources, and inspired creativity.

As fundraisers become more popular and competition increases, simple fundraising methods get lost in the crowd. A successful fundraiser takes foresight. We'll help you take advantage of facts you already know – such as your timeline, audience, and amount you need to raise – to optimally plan out missing factors. You'll also find best practices for promoting your fundraiser and collecting funds.

Once you have organized your step-by-step process, you can access resources and tools needed to move your fundraiser forward. We also provide some of the thought processes behind unique fundraisers that left us inspired.

The benefits of fundraisers go beyond the monetary. Brightspark Travel helps you create successful campaigns that give your students opportunities for growth throughout the fundraising process.

We wish you the best of luck!

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FUNDRAISING FOR STUDENT TOURS

As a student travel company, we encourage educators to conduct fundraisers to make trips more affordable for more students.

Keep in mind several unique aspects of fundraising:

- While many students will want their fundraising money to be allocated toward their individual trip, some states require fundraising money to be pooled.
- The destination of your student tour can play a role in your fundraising method.
- Your fundraising timeline will depend on when you booked and how much time you have before the trip.

When you are raising money for your Brightspark Travel tour, you will benefit from the following:

- Resources such as e-books and blog posts.
- Assistance from our staff of experts with fundraising experience.
- Option to automatically send donation requests to friends and relatives.

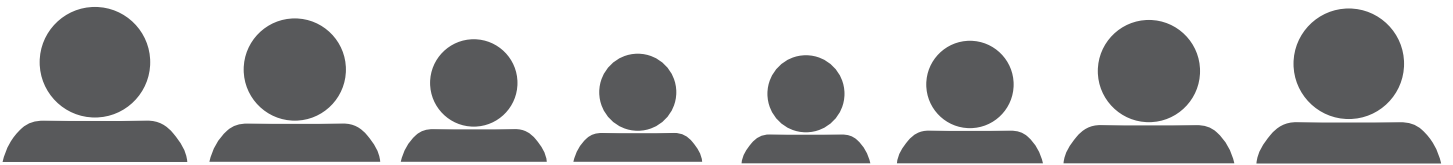
Did You Know?

One group raised enough to pay for **50% of their student tour!**



PLANNING PROCESS

A well-organized plan gives your fundraiser focus and ensures that it is in line with your set of circumstances. To create a solid plan, consider the following:

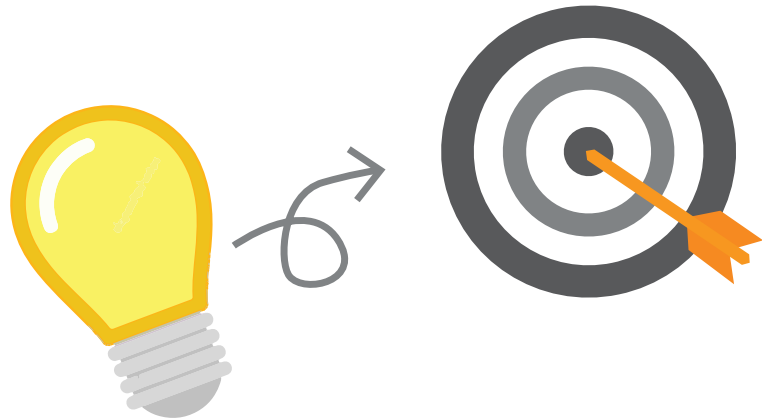


KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The first question you must ask is, “**Who would support your goal?**” Parents, friends, and relatives are safe bets. Think of community members with ties to your goals, such as former band students who want to help the current class attend a performance tour or local artists who will donate toward your art club. Defining your relationship with your audience is essential to the methods of fundraising you choose.

Think of **what your audience has to offer**. Would people donate large sums, small sums, time, or resources? Think of non-financial ways audience members could help your fundraiser. For example, if a student’s parents own a restaurant, they may allow you to use the space for a fundraising event.

Once you identify who would support your fundraiser, you should plan to use appropriate approaches for different types of audiences. Ask yourself questions such as, “What are their interests?” and, “What are their motivations for fundraising?”



MATCH IDEAS TO GOALS AND REALITIES

You may get excited about a big idea, but keep your timeline and goals in mind when you are planning your fundraiser. Be clear about what you are fundraising for and the amount of money you would like to raise. Consider resources such as skills your students may have, your pre-existing budget, and unique support parents can provide.

Set realistic dates. **Remember that we must receive all your fundraising two weeks before your final payment date.**

Did You Know?

77% of all Americans have contributed to school fundraisers.

5 TOP TIPS FOR SPREADING THE WORD



Mr. John Smith
123 Brightspark Rd.
Chicago, IL 12345

1. PARENT LETTER

Keeping parents in the loop is essential. In addition to speaking with them about your fundraiser during face-to-face interactions, consider sending an official announcement in a well-crafted letter.

This letter should include the following:

- a. Your mission statement: This introductory section should include the reason for your fundraiser, your fundraising methods, and your goal amount.
- b. Any details relating to your fundraiser: Tell parents how they can help with the fundraiser and if you will hold any events. Be sure to include important dates.

Keep in mind that you may have to pay for postage if you mail the letters. You may pass out the letters to avoid the cost – just make sure your students get the letter into parents' hands.

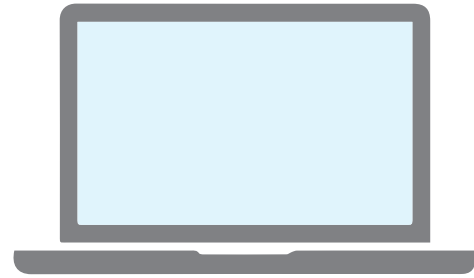
PROMOTING YOUR FUNDRAISER

2. EMAIL BLAST

In addition to sending parents and other contacts information via snail mail, you can keep them updated with a series of emails. Subjects may include:

- A kick-off announcement similar to the parent letter
- Details and fun information about upcoming events
- An update on your progress at the halfway point
- Reminders to get friends and relatives involved
- “Final stretch” announcement sent a few days before the end of the fundraiser
- Thank you email with results after the campaign ends

Check out some of our favorite email tools in our resources section on page 18.



3. POSTERS & FLYERS

We suggest distributing posters and flyers around your school and community to raise awareness for your fundraiser. To best know where to place these materials, think about where your target audience spends their time.

You can design your group’s poster, or you can let an artistic student show off his or her skills.

The designs for posters and flyers will need to be adjusted to fit each format, but the overall aesthetic should be consistent throughout. Here are some other tips:

- a. Use photographs, drawings, or a unique combination of graphics.
- b. Feel free to use creative fonts, but don’t use too many different types, and make sure they’re all legible.
- c. Keep the text clear and minimal: pair a clever tag-line with essential information such as dates, times, cost, group name, and locations.
- d. Don’t know where to start? Check out tools like Canva.

Like mailers, posters can have an associated cost. To avoid this, see if your school offers high-quality printing.

4. LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Local newspapers, websites, and radio or TV stations are often looking for unique human interest pieces and features on education. Write a press release about the goal of your fundraiser, how it will benefit your students, and how the public can contribute.



5. SOCIAL MEDIA

Students, parents, and other community members are on social media; your fundraiser should be, too.

Whichever platform you choose – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. – make sure it matches your audience and messaging. Specific outlets are more appropriate than others for different types of posts. See our suggestions for pairing posts with specific social media platforms on the next page.



REMEMBER TO THANK THEM

After your fundraiser has come to an end, be sure to thank donors, volunteers, event attendees, and students. Thank you letters to donors should outline where funds are going and how an individual's contribution made a difference. General thank you announcements can be made on social media or via email.

WHAT TO POST ON DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



WRITTEN POSTS

- Highlight basic information about your fundraiser, such as your goal, important dates, and fun facts about your destination.
- Share announcements such as upcoming events or your overall progress.



PHOTOS & VIDEOS

- Start a hashtag related to your fundraiser and encourage students and donors to include it in their posts.
- Post pictures or videos related to your fundraiser's purpose or end goal, showing off students working on the fundraiser, or highlighting products and services you are selling.



LINKS

- Share content related to your fundraiser. This can include articles or blog posts, videos, and websites of any businesses partnering with your group.

COLLECTING FUNDS

Once you have chosen and planned your fundraiser, start spreading the word and collecting your funds. A manual collection process can lead to inaccuracy, misplaced cash, returned checks, and confusion among different group members. Nowadays, digital precision is key. Thankfully, you have many online tools at your disposal to simplify your collection methods.



Crowdfunding sites are a great resource for collecting and tracking donations. Explore some of our favorite crowdfunding sites on our Resources & Tools on page 18 in order to find the right one for you.



Payment services like PayPal, Zelle, Venmo or other systems your bank may have are great for easily collecting funds both online and at events. During in-person events, purchases can be made with mobile payment apps.



Our **Help Me Travel** tool allows you to receive funds directly in your account. Flip to the last page or talk to your Tour Consultant to learn more.

Remember

No single crowdfunding site or payment tool is the “right” way to collect your funds. Choose whichever program you feel most comfortable using.

Many crowdfunding programs will charge a fee or a percentage of your collection. Brightspark’s **Help Me Travel** tool does not.

Asking for donations

An ask is the moment when you or your student requests someone's donation, either over the internet, on the phone, or during a face-to-face interaction. Be sure to prepare your message so it best aligns with the recipient.

To get the most out of your ask, follow these tips:

- Clearly yet persuasively explain your cause and its importance.
- Suggest a specific donation amount and tie it to a tangible benefit: "Your gift of \$50 will help pay for Julie's workshop with a Disney professional."
- Make sure to include a timeline or deadlines for donations.
- If possible, find a benefactor to match donations, which can be a great selling point for other potential donors.

UNIQUE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

The era of generic fundraisers is over thanks to increased popularity and competition. Run-of-the-mill bake sales no longer stand out. Explore some of our favorite, unique ideas from groups like yours!

HEALTH FOOD FUNDRAISERS

In many states, much-debated movements toward ending childhood obesity have led to the demise of a fundraising tradition: the bake sale. While opponents of the junk food ban lament that “fruit simply doesn’t sell as well as cookies,” we believe that, with a little effort and creativity, health food will out-fun sweets.

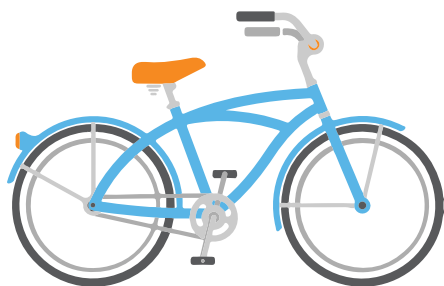
Several schools have taken advantage of this fad by pairing up with Jamba Juice. The national juice and smoothie company will put on an event at your school complete with smoothies, staff, and money management. A percentage of the proceeds will go toward your organization.



FITNESS FUNDRAISERS

Fund your student tour while getting your town in shape and having fun! Many groups have hosted marathons, walk-a-thons, and charity bike rides. Add an extra layer of competition by challenging your friends and family to reach the number of miles between your hometown and your tour destination.

You can also prioritize fun over fitness and have a dance-off, a jump rope competition, or superhero run. If your group prefers the indoors, you can stretch your eye muscles and test your brain power with read-a-thons or trivia tournaments.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES



Developing partnerships with area businesses is a great way to get your community involved. Do parents own their own businesses? Consider asking them to donate space, resources, or funds. If you're holding a competitive event or a gala, like a casino night, local retail stores can provide items for silent auctions or team prizes.

Some local businesses may want to sponsor the group in return for logos on a trip t-shirt. When the shirts are worn again after the trip, the business continues to reap the benefits.

STUDENT SKILLS

Events showcasing your students' talents encourages them to get involved in the fundraising process, and it helps the community support your group in more ways. Whether you direct the concert band in a special recital or help the 7th grade put on a quirky, eclectic talent show, give your students the chance to shine.

In one of our groups, a marching band student with a knack for photography sold framed photographs and put the proceeds toward buying instruments for his school band.



OUTSIDE-THE-BOX

In addition to catching the attention of onlookers, quirky fundraising events can be quite lucrative. For example, Custom Fundraising Solutions sets up one-day-only mattress sales, where name-brand mattresses can be bought at a discounted price. A percentage of the profits goes directly to the school.

One school set up a sumo wrestling tournament, and in the weeks leading up to the event, the school donated money to select which teachers would compete.

SEASONAL FUNDRAISERS

If your fundraiser takes place near a major holiday, take advantage of the season's spirit. For a December fundraiser, one group set up a station outside a popular department store and offered to wrap shoppers' gifts for a nominal fee. *Be sure to establish a relationship with the store in advance so you're not turned away on the day of the event.*



Did You Know?

Each year, schools and youth groups earn around **\$2 billion** with fundraisers.

DESTINATION THEMES

An increasingly popular fundraising tactic is to theme your event or activity around your trip destination. Traveling to New York or Chicago? Host a thin crust or deep dish pizza night, where guests can make their own meal. Philadelphia groups can host a build-your-own-cheesesteak dinner. You can also try to partner up with a local restaurant to cater a meal at a discount or donate part of the proceeds.

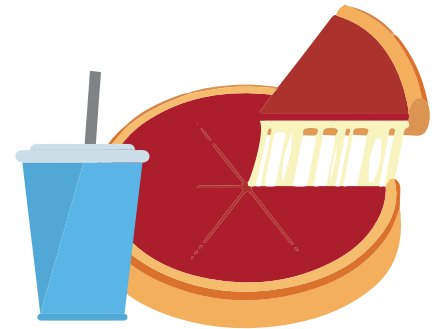
Hopping across the pond to Madrid or Barcelona? Set up a paella or tapas cooking class. You can boost your event with a silent auction or a raffle, or include a Flamenco show (and a dance lesson). If your student trip is to Paris and the French Riviera, bring Monaco to your town with a fancy casino night. Groups traveling to Italy can host a pasta dinner or a Venetian masquerade.

Whether you're traveling to the state capital or to a faraway land, you can set up a school fundraising experience that raises money while letting students, parents, and chaperones experience the culture and traditions of the destination country.



DONOR PARTICIPATION

Relatives, friends, and other community members often want to get involved in a way that goes beyond writing a check. Give them the chance to participate more fully with events like spelling bees, trivia nights, or cooking classes. For an entry fee, your donors can take part in a fun, memorable activity that deepens your relationship.



RESTAURANT FUNDRAISERS

Some local and chain restaurants support the community by hosting fundraising nights and giving a percentage of their receipts to your group. Make the most of your fundraising efforts – and reciprocate your partner restaurant’s support – by promoting the night in your school, via e-blasts, and on social media.

“The thing that works best for us is when we ask local restaurants in our neighborhood to sponsor an event. Next Tuesday, for example, the local pizza place is giving us 20% of that day’s proceeds.”

- Catilin M.
Language Arts Teacher

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF FUNDRAISING

While monetary benefits are obvious, fundraisers also allow students to develop skills that they can carry well into the future.

STRATEGY & PLANNING

Involve students in the planning process as much as possible. Let them know why you made a decision and encourage them to share their ideas. As you progress toward your goal, ask them why they think a certain method did or did not work well.

SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Your artistic student can design the poster while your math whiz can track the group's progress. Students learn how their unique skills can contribute to the team as a whole.

SALES & MARKETING

From promoting your event or campaign to making the specific ask of a business or community member, a fundraiser is usually the first time a student has had to "sell" a cause or idea. Fundraisers encourage students to be persuasive, professional, and upbeat – even in rejection.

RESUME BUILDING

As students work hard to plan and execute a successful fundraiser, they build skills they can include on college applications and resumes later in life.

FUNDRAISING INSPIRATION

Brightspark Blog
Top School Fundraisers
School-Fundraisers
Mightycause

EMAIL

Mailchimp
Litmus
99designs

DESIGN

Canva
Lucid Press
Cometdocs
Educators Technology

FITNESS FUNDRAISING

My Fun Run
Boosterthon

CROWDFUNDING

Help Me Travel
Fundly
Fundrazr
Pay It Square
Go Fund Me

PAYMENT PLATFORMS

PayPal
Venmo
Zelle



HELP ME TRAVEL

Brightspark's **HELP ME TRAVEL** tool easily lets friends and family support students' trips by making a payment directly to their account.

Once registered, participants can access **HELP ME TRAVEL** on the online portal.

Remember to submit your fundraising two weeks before the final payment due date.

Read up on travel tips, in-depth insights on top destinations, and even more fundraising ideas on our [blog](#)!



877-545-0070 | brightsparktravel.com