

# How to Host a Successful



# FUNDRAISING EVENT

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THE EXCLUSIVE GUIDE



When you think about school fundraising, two types of campaigns typically come to mind: product fundraising and fundraising events. Events are popular because they are fun and they engage the community. Hosting an event is a wonderful way to raise needed capital for your school. This mini e-book teaches you everything you need to know to host a successful campaign event. We start with the basics- what are fundraising events and do they work. We then provide you with several event ideas and close out with tips and best practices to ensure success.

## Chapter 1: Fundraising Events



### Fundraising Events

Schools host a variety of events to raise capital towards a specific cause or to help offset general operating costs. Events can be hosted as standalone campaigns, or they can be in

conjunction with an existing campaign. There are endless kinds of events to host and ways to execute them. The target audience can be students, parents, the surrounding community, or all of the above. Profits are made through ticket sales, a donation table, or both. Profits can be boosted by selling merchandise, having a raffle, or food sales at the event.

## Do Fundraising Events Work?

Statistics show that fundraising events are worth the effort. On average, 56% of nonprofit donors attend events and 67% of supporters volunteer at events. This means that, on average, about 2/3rds of your supporters will get involved with your cause and over half of your donor base will pay to attend your event. This means a huge advancement towards your goal.

In addition to raising capital, fundraising events help bring awareness to your cause. In fact, adding an event to your current or ongoing campaign can be a great marketing tactic. Events are a great way to make your supporters feel involved and valued and to build relationships with your supporting community.

If you can meet your capital goal without hosting an event and you don't have an interest in relationship building or gaining awareness for your cause, an event may not be for you. Events are great fun; however they require a lot of work. There are many costs involved including monetary, time, manpower, and materials. If you think an event is not the best option for your school, consider a popular alternative such as a [product fundraiser](#).

Even if you decide to sell products, you can still incorporate an event into your fundraiser. Consider a 'Big Event' as an incentive

to get your students to sell more items. Options include an inflatable party or splash party, educational magic show, or an exciting encounter with reptiles. [Learn more](#)

## Chapter 2: Event Ideas



### Types of Fundraising Events

Below we've listed some event ideas and tips. Check out [4 tips](#) for bringing in more people to support your school fundraising event.

#### Dinner and Dance

Host a dinner and dance gala. This event can be for students, or it can be adult-only for parents, community members, and alumni. Go as casual or as fancy as you'd like, but ensure your event matches the culture and the values of your school.

**Tip:** Ask local businesses to get involved by offering no-cost or discounted products and services. This helps you maximize your profits while allowing local organizations a chance to market their brand. Businesses to consider contacting include restaurants, musicians, party stores, and rental companies.

## Movie or Game Night

A movie or game night is an event anyone can attend that requires little to no upfront costs. A movie night can be hosted in the school gym or auditorium. For an extra special evening, screen the film outside in the local park. Game nights can range from board games to carnival games. You may even choose to host a casino night.

**Tip:** Provide popcorn, snacks, and beverages for participants. If hosting a game night, consider making it more competitive with prizes for game winners.

## Fun Run

Hosting a fun run is a great way to support your cause, encourage community health, and of course- have fun! Let your creativity run wild when choosing a theme for your fun run. A paint run, an obstacle course, a costume or dress-up event... the options are limitless!

**Tip:** Involve participants when choosing your theme. Come up with three to four fun run themes and let participants vote for the one they find most exciting. Your supporters are more likely to follow through in purchasing tickets and attending the event if they are involved in the planning process.

## Art or Exercise Class

Host a workshop for your next fundraising event. A few examples of classes you can host include flower arranging workshops, painting classes, yoga and dance classes, and collage-making sessions. Participants have the opportunity to learn a new skill while supporting your raise.

**Tip:** Schedule more than one time slot per event. It's likely there will be supporters who want to attend your event but aren't available at the scheduled time. By scheduling two or three time slots you can maximize your turnout. If hiring instructors, ask if they're willing to offer a discount for purchasing multiple sessions.

## Picnic or Cookout

A cookout is an event everyone can enjoy. Cater in from a local business or host a potluck-style picnic. For a memorable event, add entertainment such as music, games, or a raffle draw. Similar to the dinner and dance gala, you can ask local businesses to sponsor the event by providing products and services such as food, music, tablecloths, or games.

**Tip:** Be aware of food sensitivities, allergies, and dietary preferences. Ask about dietary restrictions during ticket sales, and make sure there is a safe food and beverage choice available for everyone.

## Seasonal Events

Take advantage of the seasons when planning your fundraising events. Below are some ideas for each of the four seasons.

## Summer

Events that work well in the summer include:

- Water balloon fight
- Pool Party
- Night Hike
- Ice Cream Social

## Fall

Try these events in the fall:

- Costume party
- Pumpkin carving
- Bake sale
- Art in nature

## Winter

Winter events can include:

- Ice skating party
- Holiday festival
- Bring-your-own-blanket movie night
- Gift wrapping party

## Spring

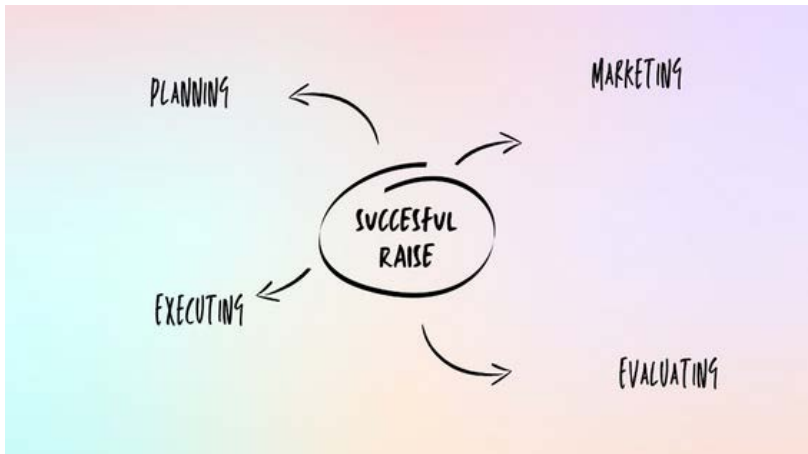
- Community gardening day (team up with your local gardening club!)
- Earth Day party and cleanup
- Flower arranging workshop
- Picnic or cookout

## Online Fundraising Events

It's difficult to have a successful event without some aspect of it being online. How can you [bring the digital realm into your campaign](#)? Host a virtual or hybrid event. A virtual event is entirely online, typically through a video conference platform. This is a great option for auctions, classes, and movie nights. A hybrid event is an in-person event with a virtual option. The live event is streamed so that participants who can't attend due to distance, health, or other limitations can still be involved.

The event is not the only aspect you should be taking online for your raise! Online ticket sales, social media marketing, and digital post-event surveys are all important too!

### Chapter 3: Hosting a Successful Event



## Tips & Tricks to Successful Fundraising Events

After choosing your preferred fundraising event, it's time for the



next steps: planning, advertising, executing, and evaluating. The following tips will guide you through the process.

## 1. Planning

- Create an event committee. This is a designated team responsible for ensuring all aspects of planning, executing, and evaluating go as planned. Each committee member should have a specific role. For example, one member may be in charge of ticket sales while another is in charge of contacting local organizations.
- Consider your organizational culture and values and ensure all aspects of your event are in alignment. For example, you won't want to use paper plates at your cookout if your school advocates sustainability.
- Set a goal. You are more likely to run a successful fundraiser if you have a goal in mind from the outset. Follow the SMART goal method for best results: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based.
- Contact local organizations and other supporters to ask for help. This could be donating supplies, volunteering at the event, or providing services such as budgeting or advertising.

## 2. Advertising

- [Market your campaign](#). Send out flyers, post on your social media, and get people talking about your upcoming event.
- You can announce your event in the paper or on a local radio station. Make sure the announcement includes your school's name, the cause you are raising for, how to purchase tickets, and the time, date, and type of event.

- Ask students, parents, alumni, and faculty to post on their social media and share the news with their friends and family.
- Require advanced ticket purchase. This gives you a realistic view of your event turnout. This tactic also protects your budget by not allowing you to plan for an event of 500+ attendees to only have 200 attendees show up and pay the entrance fee. Advanced ticket purchase also allows you to collect needed information such as dietary restrictions or event preferences such as which contest the attendee would like to participate in.

### **3. Executing**

- On event day, have as many 'school faces' present as possible. Well-known teachers and staff, principals, deans, and guidance counselors should all be visible. Your community will be more apt to support your cause if the members of your organization are actively supporting it too.
- Practice school spirit. Decorate the event with your school colors, logo, and mascot. If appropriate, dress in branded clothing. This can even be a great opportunity to [sell merchandise](#) with your school's name and mascot.
- Get out and mingle. Make sure all aspects of the event are going smoothly. Chat with attendees to make sure they have everything they need. This shows that you are organized, prepared, and care that the attendees enjoy their time at your event.

### **4. Following Up and Evaluating**

- Your campaign should end when your event does. Follow up with participants and other donors to thank them for their support.

- Ask participants for feedback. Did they enjoy the event? Were they aware of the cause? Would they attend another? What type of event would they like to see in the future?
- Evaluate your success. Did you reach your fundraising goal? Was your event in alignment with your values and culture? Did you have the turnout you hoped for? Evaluate what went well and what didn't, and use this as feedback to help plan your next fundraising event.

## Wrap-Up

Now that you have a step-by-step guide and a long list of ideas, you are ready to host your school fundraising event. We hope this guide taught you everything you need to know and prepared you to raise the funds you need for your school's cause.

Interested in learning more about school fundraising ideas and best practices? For monthly inspiration, [subscribe to our newsletter](#) where we share fundraising trends, news, and helpful tips.