

Alternative Fundraising Ideas!

Why does it matter?

It is important that all foods and beverages sold at and by schools and out-of-school time sites reinforce good nutrition. Promoting healthy options during meal or snack times while allowing regular unhealthy fundraisers sends youth conflicting messages. Fundraisers can be successful and engage youth, the community, the school building and out-of-school time programs in meaningful ways without undermining healthy eating messages.

What can you do?

- Talk with PTO/PTA/PTSA representatives, principal, coaches, school and booster clubs, out-of-school time site/program staff, parents and food service staff about healthier fundraising options. Provide them with examples of alternatives.
- Write a policy that fundraisers are activity-based, sell non-food items or only sell foods that meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold in school.
- Enlist students to research and develop healthy, profitable fundraising ideas.
- Encourage all groups that participate in fundraising to develop a budget and plan for the school year that clearly outlines fundraising goals and activities to reach those goals. This might include:
 - What the funds will be used for and how much those needs will cost
 - Fundraising activity
 - What will the activity promote? A product, service, specific vendor, etc.?
 - Estimated revenue from activity
 - Estimated expenses resulting from activity
 - When will the activity occur
 - Estimated number of hours youth and/or parents will be expected to participate
 - Clearly outline what will be expected from youth and parents

Give me some examples!

Activity-Based Fundraisers

- Walk-, Run-, Bike-, Dance-, Skate-A-Thons!
- A dance
- Skating rink events
- Jump rope or hula hoop competition
- Team sport tournament (encourage youth and families to join)
 - Softball, kickball or volleyball
- Field day (encourage youth and families to form teams)

Non-Food Fundraisers

- Charge admission for a talent show (sell school or site promotional items at the event)
- Hold a yard sale or auction where youth, staff and parents donate items
- Ask local businesses or community members for help:
 - Donate a certain portion of sales from a given date or time to the school or site.

Alternative Fundraising Ideas

- Donate items or services for live or silent auctions (such as vacation packages, lawn care, baby-sitting or lunch with a local celebrity)
- Donate products, services or tickets for events as prizes for a raffle drawing. This might include items such as tickets to movies, sporting events, concerts or amusement parks and gift certificates or vouchers for everyday services like a car wash, dry-cleaning, lawn mowing or even snow shoveling!
- Sell school or site promotional items
 - Consider tying the sale of specific items to other events or campaigns, such as selling water bottles to go along with a school, site or community wide campaign to encourage drinking more water!
- Start a recycling program
- Organize a festival, craft fair or art sale and charge admission. Sell locally created arts and crafts or sell students' art, such as drawings, paintings, pottery, cards or jewelry. Encourage creativity!
- Singing/Musical telegrams – have the music, chorus or band deliver the telegram for a special occasion
- Sell ad space in the school newspaper or newsletter to local businesses
- Hold a coin drive. Make it a competition between classrooms or sites and allow students or classes to decorate jars for collecting the coins.
- Sell theme baskets full of non-food items for holidays or special events. Encourage youth to come up with the contents of the baskets, take orders ahead of time and let youth put the baskets together.
- Connect classrooms and donors at www.donorschoose.org and www.adoptaclassroom.com

Food-Related Fundraisers

- Invite local chefs or restaurants to donate healthy appetizers and desserts for a “Taste of Your Town” event and charge for admission
- Are there local groups who like to cook, such as ladies groups, dads groups or youth groups? Let these local chefs prepare a healthy community meal and charge by the plate. Ask local grocery stores to donate food.
- Sell cookbooks full of healthy recipes – ask a local registered dietitian to approve the recipes
- Ask a local chef, cooking instructor or registered dietitian to donate their time to do a healthy cooking demonstration or teach a healthy cooking class. Charge for admission.
- Sell healthy snacks made by youth in their class or program
- Hold a community wide youth cooking show or competition and charge for admission. Ask local businesses and grocery stores to help with the cost of the food and supplies.
- Hold a grocery store fundraiser in which the local grocery store gives a percentage of community members' purchases to a designated local school
- Ask a registered dietitian to donate their time to do grocery store tours and charge for admission.
- Hold a family or celebration night focused on healthy eating and physical activity and charge for admission. Think about healthy options that could be served. Having a cookout? Consider turkey burgers, whole grain buns and sides full of fruits and vegetables. Having a pizza party? Consider giving everyone a personal cheese pizza and having available a vegetable bar where they can pile on their favorite vegetable toppings. Try fruit pizza for dessert! Serve water or 100% fruit juice. Market the night as a family fit night! Check out this [Healthy Community Events](#) playbook for more ideas on planning a healthy community event.

Alternative Fundraising Ideas

If foods or beverages are being sold as fundraisers, ensure they meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold in school. Consider selling fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, lean protein (such as nuts and seeds), low-fat and nonfat dairy foods and bottled water as alternative fundraising foods and beverages.

For more information or ideas for healthy fundraisers, contact Jill Turley, MS, RD/LD, SNS, National Nutrition Advisor at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, at jill.turley@healthiergeneration.org.