

Grassroots Fundraising a training by Picture the Homeless

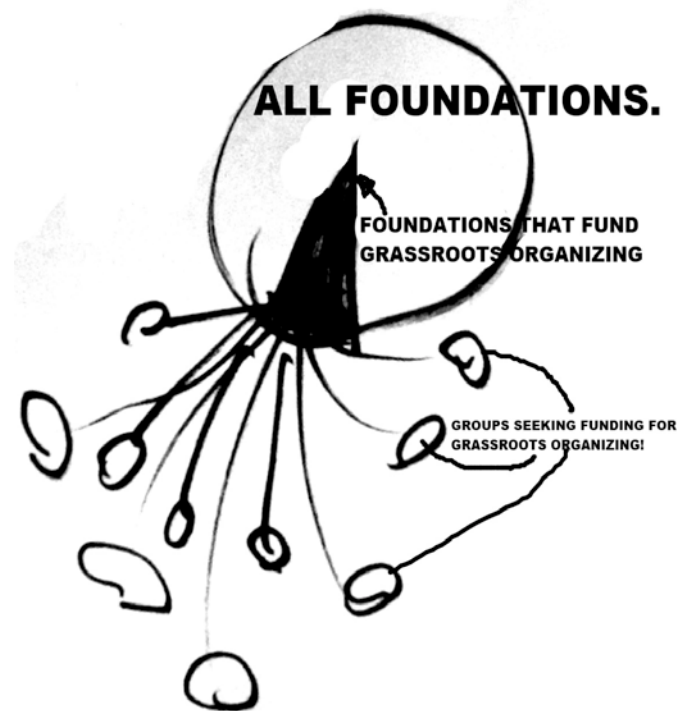
Groups that do community organizing can get funding from three possible places: government, foundations, and people. As an organization that fights for social change, Picture the Homeless very rarely takes any money from the government—because if we become dependent on the city for funding, our ability to go up against the Mayor and the cops and the City Council will be compromised. Most of our budget comes from foundations, but the fact is that there are NOT a lot of foundations that support community organizing, and there are a LOT of groups out there seeking funding. So the most important way for us to get the money to pay the bills is to increase the amount of funding that we get directly from THE PEOPLE. This is called “grassroots fundraising.”

**There's only one way to get money from people:
ASK FOR IT.**

YOU MAY SAY: “But I don't know any rich people! All my friends are having a hard enough time just getting by... so how can I ask them to give money for the organization??”

FACT: 85% OF CHARITABLE GIVING COMES FROM HOUSEHOLDS MAKING \$50,000 A YEAR OR LESS.

Working-class and low-income people are FAR more likely to contribute to worthwhile causes, possibly because they understand issues of economic and racial justice so much more deeply. And they're ESPECIALLY likely to give if someone they trust asks them, and/or if the issue is somehow personally relevant to them.



What are some ways we can raise money directly from the community?

Yard sale
Bake sale
Lemonade stand
Fashion show
Fish fry
Dance Party
Trips
Raffle
Rent party
Gala benefit

Spades tournament
Game night
Bingo
Tour
Block party
Auctions
Clothing drive
Merchandise
Panhandling!!
... and lots more...

Principles of Effective Grassroots Fundraising

Set a clear overall goal and create a calendar. Evaluate our progress, every step of the way. This ensures that we don't get to the day of the event and realize we're way off base.

Set individual goals. How much do we expect each team member to participate? Cook, sell tickets? What happens if people fail to reach their goals?

Break down roles. Who's doing what, and when? These should be posted in a prominent place, so everyone sees what everyone else has committed to.

Build on existing relationships. Who are your friends, neighbors, coworkers? Call them and get them to contribute. People don't give money UNLESS WE ASK THEM.

Appeal to emotions. We do this work because it's important to us. We need to convince other people how important it is, so they'll support us financially. It's our job to MAKE IT REAL for people.

Raise money around the ISSUE, not the ORGANIZATION. People might not get excited if we say “give us \$10 so we can pay our electric bill.” But THEY MIGHT if we say “give us \$10 so we can train homeless folks to pursue employment as community organizers...”

Build leaders. Like all events, fundraisers are a chance for members to step up/take on leadership roles.

Find a spot for everyone. Everybody is good at something. Good fundraisers create space for everyone to contribute something: they could help set up, clean up, DJ, cook, etc.

Function as a team. Everyone needs to step up and take on responsibility, and then FOLLOW THROUGH. No one should stick their team members with an unfair burden of work, and no one should think that they're bigger than the team itself.

Promote the work. Good fundraisers give us a chance to meet new friends and potential allies, and tell them about who we are as an organization and what we do. This can involve speaking about our organization as a whole, upcoming events, our past accomplishments, etc.

Build relationships. To break bread with someone is to form a real bond. Use fundraisers to build strong bonds between members, friends, allies and staff.

HAVE FUN!! Picture the Homeless puts the FUN in FUNdraiser. If people have a good time, they'll feel good about giving us money—and they'll come back to give us more at our NEXT fundraiser.

Build on past successful events. Once we figure out how to do a successful fashion show, for example, it might not make sense to turn around and do a fish fry next. Any kind of event is complicated, so we need to learn from experience.

Celebrate and appreciate. Make sure you call out the folks who worked hard to make the event happen!

Explore new options. Try reaching out to new communities, new people, new neighborhoods—you'll meet all sorts of marvelous new folks who can support our work and give money while they're at it. Try to tap into the networks and relationships that all members and participants have.

Do your homework. Read up on similar events. Interview other people who have done similar things. Learn from other peoples' mistakes and successes!