



# Grassroots Fundraising Guide

**It's essential that we learn how to access the resources of our campuses & communities to support our real food efforts.** Rather than rely on big foundations, corporations, or the government for money, "grassroots fundraising"—fundraising from people and institutions around us—is essential for long-term success of grassroots organizing efforts.

**This guide will help you brainstorm resources that are available for your group.**

**The most important thing to remember: Get started now!**

Get together with your team and come up with a pitch or sample email, divvy up your contacts, and go talk to them!

**The second most important thing: be confident and persistent.**

Most people give to worthy causes when asked. If you frame your request with a clear explanation of the problem, the solution, and how their donation will enable you to implement that solution, you'll be successful.

## It's your \$\$! Access University Funding

**As college students, many of us have access to lots of funds through our schools.** Real Food Challenge groups have had success in getting funds from:

- **Student organizations** -- Co-hosting events is a great way to build coalitions and expand your outreach. Student governments often are more willing to fund events that are hosted by more than one group.

- **Student government** -- If your school has funds available for student groups, jump through the right hoops to get access to it -- it's probably your money anyway, from student fees.

- **Academic departments** -- All sorts of academic departments potentially have interest in your real food efforts, and they often have money to fund things related to their field -- Try your Environmental Studies, Geography, Nutrition, Agriculture, Sociology/Anthropology, and Business schools first, then look for individual professors in other disciplines whose work is relevant to social justice, sustainability, and/or food systems.

- **On-campus centers/offices of various sorts** -- Student Activities, Civic Engagement, Service Learning, Social Justice, Sustainability, University Chaplains or other specific campus research centers (Center for Rural Life, Center for Urban Sustainability etc) often have funds to support students' non-academic efforts, and are often interested in co-sponsoring events.

- **Sponsorship from local businesses or nonprofits** -- Like student organizations, some local businesses or food-related nonprofits might be interested in co-sponsoring an event, which is also a good way to meet potential allies in the community.

## Real Food Real Party!

You can raise lots of money all at once by having fundraiser events, if you're willing to put in the effort. Here are some tips for planning solid, fun, effective fundraising events:

**Set a goal.** How much money do you really need to make? Plan your event around that goal. If you are planning a dinner and you need to raise \$300, and you want to charge \$20 per person, you need 15 people to come. Which means you need to invite at least 30 people. -- Remember the rule of halves!

**Be creative.** Fundraisers are a dime a dozen, so a little imagination can go a long way. You want people to get so excited that they not only come themselves, but also bring a few friends with them.

**Be ambitious & realistic.** Don't spend 20 hours and tons of resources planning an event that will only result in \$150. Think about a realistic plan, and also be ambitious about the goals that your fundraiser can meet -- think creatively about how to build up your group and support for your efforts via a sweet fundraising event!

**Put the food in real food fundraiser:** if you're doing things right, you've got some great cooks and bakers for allies. Put their talents to use! Be sure any fundraiser features tasty eats.

**Create lots of opportunities to give.** Make it easy for people to give you their money. Remind them many times! At a house party, for example, you could charge at the door, have people roaming with donation cans, and then also charge for root beer, cupcakes, and a kissing booth (if you have willing volunteers...)

**Collective Bargaining.** Make sure you are cutting a deal with venues, suppliers and people that will give you the biggest cut of money. Not only are you giving them a chance to support a great cause, but you are also offering free advertising.

**Make money.** This is a fundraiser, y'all... people aren't just paying for the experience, they are paying because they believe in what you are doing and they want to contribute to your team! Let them!

## Fundraising Event Ideas

**Bake Sale:** you're a food group. Show all those other groups how it's done. Ask local groceries to donate some of the ingredients, and then you'll really be rolling in the dough!

**Skill Auction:** Sell off your group's sweet skillz! Auction off epic baked goods, DJ'ing, a bike-tune-up, haircuts & styles, a photoshoot, art, a dinner party, etc.

**Pay Me Not To:** Get a flock of pink yard flamingos, giant inflatables, huge banners, or other annoying-but-not-destructive materials. Plant them in your friends' yard, with info that they donate to have them removed, or they stay there!

**PartyParty:** Get a great band, make a lot of (ideally donated) food & beverages. Promote a ton, charge at the door, and have lots of games & gimmicks that give an opportunity for people to donate throughout the party.

**T-shirts, Screenprints, Pins, Oh My:** If you've got really skilled artists, make some beautiful schwag and sell it for real money. Have a donation jar available as well -- make it clear that you are fundraising, not just selling sweet stuff.

**Fancy Real Food Dinner:** Make friends with a fancy chef in town or a dining hall cook who wishes they could be making fancier things than dining hall food. Get a lot of gleaned or donated food from farmers & local folks. Polish up your group's dicing and sauteing skills and prep a fancy local, sustainable, real food dinner. Sell tickets for big bucks to profs, staff, community folks. Have some tickets on a sliding scale for your friends too.

**Call People Up:** Plan a phone bank, gather your group, practice your messaging and just call up your friends, family, allies & supporters. Make epic snacks, keep track of your goals & progress, keep it fun!