

Fundraising with Recycling

General Fundraising Tips

Form a Fundraising Committee

- Experience is helpful; dedication a must.
- Fundraising works best as a team effort--talk about what each member can contribute and how they anticipate participating.
- Involve students, parents, members of the community, business representatives.
 - School fundraisers offer students an experience at project organization, meeting goals, and team building.
 - Involving a range of stakeholders in the fundraiser will help develop school and community pride, as well as support for the fundraiser.
- Role of the committee:
 - Develop and track fundraising goals and tasks.
 - Create a timeline, follow through with it, and monitor deadlines.
 - Recruit other volunteers to implement the project.
 - Troubleshoot the project.
 - Keep detailed records of progress and results; promote the results.

Have a Purpose for the Fundraising Campaign

- Fundraisers need a worthy cause. Keep the purpose in mind throughout the fundraising campaign. For example, if the fundraising effort is for the school's recycling program, promote what the funds will be used for, such as purchasing recycling bins, signage, etc.
- Donors will want to know what they are giving to and volunteers will want a clear understanding of what their time and effort will result in. In outreach for the fundraiser, define the benefits for students, the school, families, and the community.
- Set campaign milestone goals, not just dollar amounts. This will help to keep your campaign focused and fun.

Outline the Financial Goals

- Include any fundraising expenses in the total amount, such as gasoline for transporting collected materials to the recycling center, supplies for outreach, mailings, etc.
- Assign a committee member to keep track of expenses and funds raised.

Clearly Determine Volunteer Needs

- What activities require volunteers?
- What are the volunteer duties?
- What is the expected time requirement for each volunteer?

Develop a Plan and Timeline

- Start with a plan that includes goals, logistics, a fundraising kickoff, outreach (fliers, ads), and scheduled events.
- If possible, start planning the fundraiser at least one month in advance.
- Set beginning and end dates for the fundraiser.
- Use a goal chart (such as a "thermometer") to track progress.

- Check the school and community calendar to make sure that fundraising dates do not conflict.
- If involving the community, consider conducting the event on a weekend to gain the most participation.
- Include time to send out appreciation notes to donors and volunteers, to issue rewards and/or prizes, and post the results of the fundraiser.

Recycling Fundraiser Drive

Volunteers Needed

- Establish a coordinating committee to set the timeline for the drive, determine logistics, and conduct outreach.
- Volunteers to receive the recyclables and sort and load them into transport vehicles.
- Volunteers with trucks, trailers, or vehicles to transport materials to the recycling center.

Determine Materials to be Collected

- More than likely the only recyclables that will bring in revenues will be redeemable beverage containers (or aluminum cans in states without redemption laws).
- If the goal is purely to raise money, limit the fundraising drive to accept only redeemable containers (or aluminum cans).
- If the goal is to raise money and provide a community service consider expanding to other materials, such as newspaper, office paper, milk jugs, and other plastic bottles.

Find a Redemption or Recycling Center

- Check the Internet or phone book for area recycling centers. Contact the recycling center BEFORE organizing the collection to verify exactly what they accept and if there are any specifications (for example, no crushed cans).
 - Check into starting an account at the recycling center so that as materials are redeemed the funds will be secure.
- In some rural areas, the only place to redeem containers may be a “reverse vending” machine at a supermarket. These machines will not accept crushed containers and may not accept larger plastic bottles. Visit the supermarket and try out the machine prior to the collection. The containers have to be “fed” into the machine, so inform volunteers of the potential time involved.

Determine the Drop-Off Location

- Designate an area of the school that will allow for safe traffic control and plenty of space for staging the materials to get them ready for transport to the recycling center.
- The drop-off location and staging area should be sufficiently away from the street in order to prevent traffic backup into the street.

Set Recycling Drive Timeline

- A recycling drive can last one day, several weeks, or even months.
- Determine the fund drive day(s) and hours. More than likely the fund drive will work best on a weekend morning in order to gain the most participation from the community and

avoid interference with school activities. Set a window of two-to-three hours for the collection.

- Plan an extended fund drive in advance so that collection days can be promoted together, this allows contributors to store up materials.
- Offering additional collections will require more advance planning, coordination, and outreach. However, the gain in funds will be substantial and the collection duties will become routine, making it easier for volunteers.
- If the drive is to occur over several months or during the school year, schedule it at the same time each month, such as the second Saturday, between 8-11 am.

Collection Containers

- Storage containers or bags are necessary at the collection site in order to make handling and transportation of the collected materials easier.
- If collecting all redeemable beverage containers, have multiple bins or bags for each material to be collected — glass, aluminum cans, and plastic bottles.
- Keeping the materials separated as they are dropped off will make redeeming them at the recycling center much easier.
- Check with a local hauler to see if they have older carts they do not use and may be willing to donate.
- Durable reusable bags are available at low cost. These bags can be mounted using metal or wooden posts for easy removal and transport to the recycling center.
- Contractor bags or other durable plastic bags can also be used.

Outreach

- Start promotion several weeks to one month or more in advance. Post fliers around town. Distribute fliers to parents and to shoppers at local stores and other places where people gather. Check with local pizza delivery companies to see if they would be willing to include the flier in takeout orders. Distribute to local businesses and ask them to post the fliers and save their recyclables for the drive.
- Adopt a catchy logo or theme — “containers for art” or “cans for the environment” — something that people will remember and associate with your cause.
- State the purpose of the fundraiser, where the funds will go, environmental and community benefits, etc.
- Include the day(s) and time(s) of the recycling drive, where the collection point is, and what is acceptable. Clearly let people know how the drive will work—is this the first collection of a multiple collection fundraiser, will the collection occur once a month, once a quarter, etc.
- List the fund drive event on local community calendars, the school Website, and send press releases to local media.
- If multiple collection events are scheduled, send out periodic reminders. Announce the volume of materials collected so far, amount of money raised, where the funds are going, etc., and when the next collection will occur.
- Solicit donations from a local print shop for printing fliers. Allow the print shop to place its name and contact information on the flier in exchange for the donation. Ask the printer to use recycled paper (and state “Printed on Recycled Paper” at the bottom.)

On-site Signage and Traffic Flow

- Have signage that clearly states what materials are acceptable, and that materials need to be relatively clean and free of liquids and food debris.
- Place signs and cones to help direct traffic in as smooth and safe a manner as possible.

Assign On-Site Volunteer Tasks

- *Directing traffic:* Have sufficient volunteers to ensure that traffic lines do not reach into streets, and that vehicles can efficiently drop-off materials.
- *Materials receiving:* As vehicles drive up to the staging area, volunteers unload vehicles, quickly check over the materials, and hand them over to a volunteer in the materials staging area.
- *Materials staging and loading:* Sort and pack materials into bags, bins, or boxes.
 - Materials must be sorted and packed separately — redeemable glass bottles, redeemable plastic bottles, and aluminum cans — for transport and loaded into the transporting vehicles.
- *Transportation:* Ensure that all transporters know the recycling center location and hours of operation.

Fundraising through Recycling Cell Phones, Cartridges, and Small Electronics

Numerous businesses and organizations¹ provide fundraising opportunities for schools through recycling inkjet cartridges, toner cartridges, cell phones, and other small electronics. Check the Websites below for specifics. Most of these entities provide collection boxes, free shipping, labels, etc. However, be sure to review the company's requirements to determine acceptable items (brands and models), packing specifications, and any other requirements.

[B.C.S. Recycling Specialists](http://www.scrapdr.com) (Cell phones, PDAs, iPods, digital cameras, inkjet cartridges)
www.scrapdr.com 877-341-4424

[Global Re-Source Funding](http://www.globalre-sourcefunding.com) (Cartridges, cell phones, digital cameras, iPods, laptops, GPS devices)
www.globalre-sourcefunding.com 866-473-8446

[Green School Project](http://www.greenschoolproject.com) (Inkjet and laser printer cartridges; cell phones)
www.greenschoolproject.com 877.882.5032

[The Funding Factory](http://www.fundingfactory.com) (Inkjet and laser printer cartridges; cell phones)
www.fundingfactory.com 888-883-8237

[Recycle Rewards](http://www.rrewards.com) (Inkjet and laser printer cartridges; cell phones)
www.rrewards.com 888-336-9181

[WirelessFundraiser.com](http://www.wirelessfundraiser.com) (Cell phones only)
www.wirelessfundraiser.com 800-364-0258

[Recycle4kids](http://www.recycle4kids.org) (Printer cartridges only)
www.recycle4kids.org 800-808-6637

¹ This list is not intended to be inclusive, nor does it reflect NERC's endorsement of any business or organization listed.

Other Reuse and Recycling Fundraiser Ideas

[TerraCycle](http://www.terracycle.net) (www.terracycle.net) offers fundraising opportunities for drink pouches, yogurt containers, chip bags, candy wrappers, cookie wrapper, Flavia Fresh Packs, pens, dry erasers, permanent markers, and other items. Check the Website for acceptable materials and packing specifications carefully in order to ensure compliance with fundraising requirements.

Recycled Fashion Show: Consider organizing a fashion show to feature recycled and reused clothing. Accept donations or charge admission to the show for the school fund drive.

Read and Recycle Book Sale: Collect donated books for a month. Secure a place at the school for parents and students to bring books. Check with a local store to see if they would be willing to host a drop-off bin. Ask for volunteers to help sort the books. Store the books in labeled boxes, with general categories such as “children’s” or “general fiction.” Price the books to sell (50 cents a paperback and \$1 for a hard cover). Host the book sale on a weekend day. Donate leftover books to charity.

Junk Art or Inventions Show and Sale: Have students design and develop art or inventions with scraps. Organize a show and offer the items for sale. There is a great deal of information on the Internet about scrap art. Here are a few helpful links:

- [Art Network](http://artmarketing.com/scrapsdirectory.html)—<http://artmarketing.com/scrapsdirectory.html>
- [S.C.R.A.P.](http://scrapreusedandrecycledartprojects.blogspot.com/)—<http://scrapreusedandrecycledartprojects.blogspot.com/>
- [School and Community Reuse Action Project](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3R7OO4sOb0)—<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3R7OO4sOb0>

Other Helpful Websites:

[Aluminum Can Challenge](http://www.cancentral.com/recycle/taskList.cfm)—<http://www.cancentral.com/recycle/taskList.cfm>

[PTO Today, Cans4Kids](http://www.ptotoday.com/ideabag/idea/860-recycling-cans-for-cash)—<http://www.ptotoday.com/ideabag/idea/860-recycling-cans-for-cash>

[Greenraising](http://www.greenraising.com)—www.greenraising.com

NERC’s [Rural School Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting Tip Sheets, Case Studies, and Webinar Presentations](http://www.nerc.org/documents/#SchoolWaste) are available for free download (<http://www.nerc.org/documents/#SchoolWaste>).

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