

Vanguard Public Foundation Technical Assistance & Capacity Building Curriculum:

A Grassroots Fundraising Guide for Social Justice Organizations

Raising Money from Individuals
in Tough Economic Times



About This Publication

This publication is part of a multi-series technical assistance and capacity building curriculum developed for use by small- to medium-sized nonprofit organizations dedicated to progressive social change.

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About the Vanguard Public Foundation

Vanguard Public Foundation was founded in 1972 by individuals committed to providing a source of funds for organizations working for peace and justice both in the U.S. and around the world. Funding for Vanguard Grants comes from a broad spectrum of individual donors who have pooled their collective resources in order to maximize efforts to end social and economic injustice. Over the past thirty years, Vanguard has established a unique partnership with community activists and progressive donors and distributed approximately \$30 million to social justice organizations.

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I. Introduction

This Guide was created by the Vanguard Public Foundation for our past and current grantees. We wrote this guide because - in tough economic times - non-profits need to be creative and innovative about how, and from whom, they raise the money necessary to do their work. We also wrote this guide because, even in times of plentitude, over-reliance on foundation or government funding is unwise and grassroots fundraising is an excellent, and often untapped, source of income for social justice organizations.

We hope this Guide will be especially useful for groups in the following situations:

- Groups that receive most of their support from foundation or government sources and need to find new sources of funding because of foundation and government cut-backs.
- Groups that have not yet been successful in gaining foundation support, that lack a fundraising infrastructure, that operate on a volunteer-run basis, and/or that cover expenses by "passing the hat" at meetings.
- Groups that already have a healthy grassroots fundraising program and are looking for new ideas.

What is Grassroots Fundraising?

Grassroots fundraising refers to raising money from individuals, especially working-class and middle-class people, who have a real stake in the social, political, and economic transformations for which Vanguard's grantees are working. Each year, working- and middle-class people give away substantial amounts of money to charity. According to the American Association for Fundraising Counsel's Trust for Philanthropy, about 70% of households give away money in any given year. In 2002, charitable giving in the US totaled \$240.92 billion, 76.3% of which came from individuals, and just under 20% of people living on welfare gave away money.

These statistics demonstrate that "ordinary people" are an existing and potential source of support for social justice organizations. Even in times of high unemployment, many individuals' giving patterns have not been negatively affected. These are employed people who give out of their income - rather than from stocks, shares, or other invested assets. As Kim Klein, grassroots fundraising guru and renowned writer and trainer on this topic, explains:

For [this group of] people, the recession has not taken a heavy toll. For most of them this year is the same as last year and the year before. They have the same amount of income and a secure job. Anyone in that position, which even today comprises the majority of employed adults, can give this year what they gave last year and the year before.

Grassroots Fundraising and Grassroots Organizing

To do our work well - and to change social, political, and economic structures - we need to mobilize people to give their time and their money to grassroots organizations. This Guide is designed to help you think about activities through which you can raise money. All the fundraising activities in this Guide can be connected to grassroots organizing and all can help organizations reach potential activists, as well as potential donors.

It's Okay to Ask for Money

For the most part, people will not give money unless asked to do so - which means that organizations need to find ways to ask for money face-to-face, over the phone, via a mailing, at an event, or by charging for merchandise or services. Some people feel reticent about asking for money but, in reality, it is both acceptable and essential for community organizations to ask community members to support their vital work.

How to Use this Guide

The Guide describes a series of fundraising activities and some advantages and pitfalls of each. All the material in the Guide, including the Practical Examples (case studies from specific groups), is based on the work of past or present Vanguard grantees. These grantees are listed in the back of the Guide.

Each fundraising activity described in this Guide has the potential to bring in substantial income - or to leave you in the red. Before

embarking on a fundraising activity, make realistic projected expense and income budgets that reflect how much the fundraising activity will cost to organize and how much you think you can raise. The expense side of the budget should incorporate all expenses, staff time, and volunteer time (that is donated by board members or others). It is important to factor in all the time that will be spent on this particular fundraising project - because it is time that cannot then be devoted to other projects, fundraising or otherwise.

The income side of the budget should take into account how many people you can realistically reach through a given activity and what you think their giving capacity is. If you are sending out a mailing, how many people are on your mailing list? Are they people with a history of supporting you financially? If you are organizing an event, what is your outreach plan? How many people can you realistically reach? If you are developing merchandise products, how and where will you sell them? It is crucial to give serious thought to these questions before getting started, so that your grassroots fundraising efforts are efficient and productive. Set income goals before you begin and then assess how well you met your goal. If you plan to repeat the activity in future years, think about whether it will bring in steadily increasing amounts of money.

As you plan your grassroots fundraising strategies, we hope that you find this Guide useful. We extend our sincere thanks to all the groups who participated in the creation of this Guide and wish you fruitful fundraising.

II. Membership Dues

As anyone who has done grassroots fundraising will tell you, a grassroots-oriented approach to fundraising is a good way to raise money and to deepen a group's organizing work. Collecting membership dues as part of your overall organizing strategy is an excellent way to do this - as this Practical Example illustrates.

Practical Example

People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) is a membership-organization of no- and low-wage workers. The organization, which is composed largely of welfare recipients and domestic workers, fights for justice for the most economically marginalized sectors of the workforce. Currently, the group has 150 active members, all of whom meet the threefold membership criteria of attending a membership orientation, paying dues, and participating in at least one activity per month.

POWER did not introduce dues into its membership structure until several years into the organization's development. When the staff began conversations about whether to switch to a dues-paying structure, they worried that they could not ask members - all of whom, at that time, were welfare recipients - to give to POWER a portion of their tiny monthly check. However, when the staff consulted with members, overwhelmingly they responded, "Of course we want a financial stake in the organization! By paying dues, we will have a greater sense of investment in, and ownership over, our organization." Indeed, since the dues structure was introduced, members have been consistently enthusiastic about making financial contributions.

- Setting an Amount:* Following discussions with members about how much disposable income they have and how much they could reasonably give to the organization each month, POWER set the dues at \$24.00 a year.

- Collecting the Dues:* Staff, members, and leaders collect dues at membership meetings and while doing outreach. Before the introduction of dues, outreach sessions were intended to solicit new people's participation in, and membership of, the organization. Now, joining the organization includes paying dues - so outreach trainings include a section that addresses people's fears and concerns about asking for money. The trainings also place dues-collection and dues-paying in their political context: that by contributing to the

organization's finances, people have more say over how the organization operates - which specifically includes voting for and running for the organization's leadership bodies.

- Accountability*: Now that members have a financial stake in the organization, a higher level of financial accountability and transparency is required. Staff provide regular financial updates to the entire membership - so that members know how their money is being spent.

- The Sweat Equity Program*: Because participation in the organization is crucial and is considered to be more important than a financial contribution, POWER set up a system through which members who cannot pay dues instead work six hours each month. Campaign work, such as doing outreach, speaking at a press conference, or coordinating a meeting, does not count toward the Sweat Equity Program. Instead, members must participate in administrative or janitorial work, such as tidying or cleaning the office, filing, or data entry.

Making the Case for Dues: The Automobile Association of America Analogy

POWER's trainings on dues-collection incorporate an analogy about payments to car insurance companies. According to POWER's trainers, we make payments to AAA and, in return, expect that AAA will come to the rescue when our car breaks down. Similarly, by paying dues to POWER each month, members expect something from the organization. Instead of providing services, POWER organizes for economic and political change. So, in exchange for dues, members have a voice in how the organization uses its resources and does its work.

This analogy is incorporated into the "raps" that outreach workers use to encourage people to join the organization.

Other Types of Membership Dues

Membership Dues from Allies

Groups like POWER that organize directly affected communities can also consider creating a membership structure for allies -

members of the community who are not part of the constituency being organized but who care about the issues. These Ally Members could be the people whom you already mobilize to support your actions, press conferences, and other activities.

Advocacy and Research Groups

Membership dues are also a viable option for advocacy and research groups. Consider charging the people on your mailing list a sliding scale fee for your newsletter, urgent action alerts, access to restricted websites, reduced-rate manuals, or other sources of information. In return for an annual investment in your organization, your members receive quality information and resources. As with all types of grassroots fundraising, it is important to strike a good balance between making your services available to the lowest-income sectors of the community, while also giving those who are more affluent the opportunity to support your work at a higher level.



Photo by: Tim McKee

III. Mailings

Mailings are cost-effective and time-effective methods of reaching large numbers of people with your message, an update on your work, and a request for money. This method of fundraising is sometimes referred to as "direct mail."

Writing the Letter

As you prepare to write your letter, keep a file of other groups' letters that you think are particularly effective. (There are some examples at the end of this Guide.) A fundraising letter to individuals should not read like a letter of inquiry or proposal to foundations. It should be much more vivid and attention-grabbing. Avoid long sentences with lots of clauses. Weave in the personal stories of people whose lives have been changed for the better because of your organization's work. Since you obviously cannot send out the same letter year after year, create themes for your letters or link the letter to current events. Write letters to coincide with the launch of a new program, or with an anniversary that is specific to your group or relevant to the whole community.

Creating and Maintaining a Good Database

The twin bedrocks of a successful mailing are a good mailing list and a good database. Your mailing list is the list of people who are interested in your organization and in the issues on which you work. Have a sign-up sheet at all events, maintain good contact information for coalition partners, and keep track of the people whom you serve, mobilize, or organize. Create a system for transferring any information that is on paper into a computer database. Make sure that your database has the capacity to sort your mailing list by various criteria - for example, whether a person is already a donor, the size of their gift, demographic factors, the person's other interests, or whether you met the person at a particular event. You can then tailor mailings to meet the interests and needs of these different groups. Finally, make sure your database has mail merge capacity - meaning you can connect it to your word-processing program and "merge" each name and address into a separate letter - so that letters are

personalized, rather than addressed to "Dear Friend" or some other generic salutation.

Timing

Many people donate in the last two months of the year - in anticipation of tax time - so it is wise to send out letters in November or December, just as the recipients are thinking about their annual contributions. Many organizations also send out a spring mailing. If you are planning a fundraising event, consider sending out the mailing significantly before or after the event, to maximize the likelihood that people will donate in response to both. Alternatively, design the mailing so it highlights the event and maximizes attendance.

Reply Devices

This refers to the donation card and reply envelope that should be sent out with each mailing. The donation card should prompt the donor to fill out his/ her name, address, and other contact information (so you can add a new donor to your database, or update the record of an existing donor). The card should also suggest a range of levels at which the person can give. The trick here is to start the scale low enough that your lowest-income prospects will not be turned off, and go high enough that someone who can give \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, or more will be prompted to do so. Sometimes groups put stamps on the reply envelope but, generally, this is not necessary and is a waste of your resources. If someone wants to give, they will gladly cover the cost of postage.

Building Your Mailing List

The best way to build a mailing list is to ask people who are already invested in your organization to give names of prospective donors. Consider asking your staff, board members, friends, family members, organizational allies, your dentist, and anyone else in your address book if they will share names with you. Letters sent to new prospects (i.e. prospective donors) are most effective if the person who gave you the recipient's name writes a note at the bottom of the letter. (For example: I hope you will consider making a donation to this worthwhile group. They are

really making a difference. Hope to see you soon. -Sergio) It is also very effective for someone who already gives to your group to ask prospects for a donation. (For example: I have supported this group for many years and hope you will consider doing the same. -Maria) An even better approach is for board members and other friends of the organization to write their own letters to their own contacts. A board member, the director, or the development staff person can provide a template letter that the senders then personalize and send out on their own letterhead.

"Renting" or "Buying" Names

Some organizations choose to "rent" or "buy" names from other non-profits' mailing lists. If you "rent" names, you can use them only once and can only add a contact to your database if the person becomes a donor to your organization. If you "buy" names, they become yours: you can add them to your database and use them as many times as you want. The cost of "renting" or "buying" names varies widely but can decrease considerably if you have a strong relationship with the organization. By choosing organizations with a similar constituency to your group, it is theoretically possible to reach new people and encourage them to give. However, the return from a "cold" list of names - a list of people who have no prior connection to your organization and who did not volunteer to be on your mailing list - is notoriously low. A 3% return rate (meaning that 3% of the people to whom you send a letter then send a check) is extremely good.

Mailing Services

If you have a very large mailing, consider making use of a mailing service. Look under Mailing Services in the phone book, or ask colleagues at other non-profits for referrals. Mailing services will take care of every aspect of the process, including folding letters and stuffing envelopes, and will use a reduced non-profit postage rate for groups with 501c(3) status.

Making Use of the Internet

Electronic giving is a relatively new area of fundraising and presents organizations with several options. Probably the simplest

one is to send out an email appeal to people on a pre-existing email list - perhaps the people on your action alert list - who benefit from receiving regular information about the important issues on which you work. An email appeal should be short and snappy because people tend to skim emails. At the end of the appeal, include a "reply device" with all the same information that is on the cards you send out with hard-copy mailings. The recipients of the email will then need to print out the email, fill out the reply device, and mail it back to you with a check.

If you want to include fewer steps in the process - which will increase the likelihood of receiving donations - build a credit card processing function into your website and put a link to this web page in the email appeal. Once your website has this capacity, visitors to your site may make spontaneous decisions to give. You can also use the credit card processing capacity to sell merchandise over the Internet. However, web-based giving will not work without a corresponding promotional campaign to attract people to your website or to advertise some other aspect of your work.

Monthly Giving Programs

These programs, as the name suggests, provide a way for your supporters to become "sustainers" who make monthly donations to your group. Administratively, the easiest way to process these donations is via credit card. Tell people about your monthly giving program in mailings, on your website, in emails, and when you do phone banking (which is described on pp. 9-10). When you advertise monthly giving programs electronically, include a link to your website's credit card processing page if you have one.

•Useful Tip...

If you send out a monthly or quarterly newsletter, or other mailings that do not specifically ask for money, consider enclosing a reply device with each mailing. Many groups report that they receive at least a handful of donations in response to each mailing that includes a reply device. If you are uncertain about whether this will produce much of a response, do a test run. Don't forget to make a small mark on each envelope, in a certain color, so you can track to which piece of mail donors are responding.

IV. Phone Banking

Phone banking refers to gathering together a group of people to make phone calls to people who will potentially give money to your group. There are three different types of people whom you can call:

- Current donors - who have donated to your group recently, say within the last 12 or 18 months.
- Lapsed donors - who have donated to your group in the past but not for the last year or two.
- Prospective donors - who have never previously given to your group but might be interested in doing so if asked. They might be supporters of groups similar to yours, or they might be people who are involved with your group in other capacities.

Phone banking is a fundraising activity that can create a great deal of anxiety. Many a board member, staff member, or volunteer has complained that they do not want to call strangers and ask them for money. The reality, however, is that if you are calling people who are on your mailing list - and who therefore already have an investment, or at least an interest, in your organization - they will mostly be pleased to hear from you.

In this age of rampant spam, junk mail, and unsolicited phone calls, "cold" phone banking (e.g. to another organization's list of names, or to numbers in the phone book) is unlikely to be an effective grassroots fundraising strategy for progressive grassroots organizations, especially ones that work on controversial issues. Instead, consider utilizing a phone banking campaign as a follow-up to a mailing, or in a financial crunch as a one-time special "ask" to loyal donors.

If you have a database that tracks the previous levels at which donors have given, use this information to determine the size of the gift for which you will ask. If you do not yet have a good database, use this phone banking activity to gather information that will go into your improved database. Provide your phone bankers with a form on which they can record to whom they talked, the outcomes of the conversations, and any other notes

about the person's interests or connections. Remind phone bankers that all this information is confidential.

Finally, be sure to have on hand a supply of letters, reply devices, and anything else that will be included in the follow-up mailing, and make sure you have a system to get all of this in the mail within 24 hours of the call.

Training

Before embarking on an evening or weekend of phone banking, be sure that anyone who is new to phone banking (or who has done it before but is feeling shy about asking for money) is adequately trained and has practiced the notes and pointers, referred to as a "script," that guide phone bankers through a call. A sample script is included at the end of this Guide.

Sample Training Outline

- Give your phone bankers the opportunity to discuss any fears about asking for money. Ask people to think about when they have been asked for money and when they have given money. How did it feel? Usually, people are pleased to have the opportunity to support a cause about which they care deeply. Reassure your phone bankers that their fears are unnecessary and explain why this phone banking activity is important for your organization.
- Update phone bankers on new developments in the organization's work. Provide a list of talking points about current activities and recent accomplishments that phone bankers can use to talk enthusiastically to people who want a more comprehensive update on the organization's work.
- Practice doing role-plays and give each other feedback. Be sure to practice difficult scenarios - such as talking to a person who is upset with the organization. In this case, phone bankers should listen respectfully, avoid escalating the conversation, and offer to have a staff or board member call back the next day. Make sure that this information is then conveyed to a staff member so that the phone call happens.
- Remind phone bankers to try to sound natural. Don't just read the script - use it as a guide. And remember to smile and sound relaxed.

V. House Parties

House parties are an excellent way for people who are already invested in (and, preferably, already giving to) your organization to build support among their friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers.

What is a House Party?

Essentially, the host invites his/ her contacts to spend several hours at his/ her home learning about your organization. At some point, when the greatest number of guests is present, someone makes a pitch (an appeal for support) and encourages everyone present to give. People are most likely to give when they are being asked to do so by someone who is their peer. So, in this case, the host ideally makes the pitch, rather than a representative of the organization. Ask the host to consider naming how much s/he is giving to your group and encouraging the guests to match the donation.

Who Can Host a House Party?

Anyone who is invested in your organization! Board members and existing donors are good people- but the only real criteria are (1) the host knows people to invite; (2) the host has access to a space in which to hold the party; and (3) the host is enthusiastic about your group.

The Invitations

The best house parties are the ones that involve the smallest amount of staff/ volunteer time - so you can concentrate on other types of fundraising. However, even if the host designs, prints, and mails the invitations, you will probably need to provide some text that describes the organization's work. This can simply be your mission statement. It is also a good idea to include some text about the fact that the party is a fundraiser, such as "This is a fundraiser so please bring your check book" or "Donations in honor of The Community Group will be gratefully accepted." Remember, also, to ask the host to send an email or make phone calls several days before the event - to remind people to come.

The Host's Mailing List

Make sure that the host gives you permission to add his/her mailing list to your database. Even if not everyone on the mailing list attends the event or becomes a donor as a result of the event, they will now receive your newsletters and other mailings and will perhaps be inspired to make a donation at a later date.

The Program

Work with the host(s) to create a program that strikes a balance between giving the guests enough time to socialize with each other and that educates the guests about your organization's work. Consider the guests' backgrounds (class, ethnicity, religion, political

beliefs, etc.) and gear the program to their interests. If you have video footage, incorporate this into the program. If possible, decorate the room with photographs or posters that illustrate your group's work. Bring literature that people can take home with them. Don't forget to bring donation cards and return envelopes - so people can mail you a check if they choose not to make a donation on the spot.

Refreshments

Usually, the host will cover the costs of any food or drinks that are served at the event. When the host assesses how much money to spend on refreshments, s/he should factor in how much money the event is likely to raise. If 20 guests are each likely to give between \$25 and \$100, do not plan a catered event with caviar-filled finger foods that end up costing \$150 per person.

Sign-up Sheets

Don't forget to put out sign-up sheets to gather guests' contact information to add to your database. Include check boxes to find out if people are interested in getting involved in your work or in hosting future house parties.

Practical Example

Californians for Justice (CFJ) is a statewide grassroots organization working to empower communities that have been pushed to the margins of the political process. When working on electoral campaigns for or against statewide ballot initiatives, CFJ's supporters host house parties to raise both money for CFJ and awareness about the ballot initiative. CFJ has five offices across the state, each of which sets goals for how many house parties to host in the office's region, and how much money to raise from the house parties. These goals vary according to the offices' capacity (the number of contacts in each office's database, the number of staff working in the office, the staff's familiarity with organizing house parties, and the number of people in each region who have previously hosted CFJ parties). After setting goals, the staff identifies a list of potential hosts, sends out a mailing, and then contacts everyone by phone. Once a person agrees to host, they receive CFJ's house party kit, which includes talking points, all the materials necessary to assemble invitations, and a suggested timeline for the project. Ideally, hosts send out the invitation letters themselves, which promotes a greater sense of investment in the project. Hosts sometimes pick creative themes for the parties, such as a pancake breakfast, a happy hour, a games night, or a karaoke night. Because the goal is to raise as much money as possible, the letters ask people to donate even if they cannot be at the party. At the party, a staff person speaks about the ballot initiative and the hosts make a pitch for support, following the principle that people are more likely to give if asked to do so by a peer. An average house party brings in \$1,000 for CFJ.

VI. Events and Dinners

Organizations plan and host numerous types of fundraising events. Those that celebrate the cultural life of the community, or that publicize the group's social change agenda, are especially powerful. Below, we describe three fundraising events that have brought in money, as well as built community, celebrated culture, and raised awareness. Then, we look at some of the pros and cons of events that fall into the general category of Annual Dinners.

Practical Examples

•Fresno Metro Ministry - Annual Thanksgiving Concert

Fresno Metro Ministry is a faith-based group that advocates for progressive health care reform. The group includes advocates, providers and human service agencies. The group also promotes cultural diversity. Each year, on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, the group organizes an interfaith concert that showcases performances by congregational choirs. The concert concludes with the choirs singing an ensemble. In addition to being a multi-cultural event that promotes diversity and understanding, the event is also a fundraiser that usually brings in around \$5,000. Fresno Metro Ministry initially raised money from ticket sales (the cost of which was low, and no one was turned away for lack of funds), but raised more money last year by only asking for an offering at the concert and through donations from Friends of the Concert. Volunteers make calls to prospective Friends to ask for a donation of \$25. Some people choose to give more than this. In exchange for becoming a Friend of the Concert, donors' names are listed in the concert program, with an appropriate notation if the gift was made in honor, or in memory, of another person.

•Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño-Cultural Celebrations

Centro Binacional is an educational organization that promotes the development and well-being of the indigenous people of Oaxaca on both sides of the border. The group organizes an annual event in Fresno that draws the organization's supporters and the general

public, who pay an admission fee. Mexican and indigenous community members who live in the Central Valley perform celebratory dances of Oaxaca's indigenous community. Local grassroots groups sell food at the event, which provides them with an opportunity to make money - and relieve Centro Binational of the responsibility of providing food. This year, Centro Binational is planning a second event in addition to the dance celebration: a dinner and fundraiser with high profile Mexican, Guatemalan, and Mexican-American speakers and performers. The group aims to make money by selling tickets and encouraging organizations and businesses to become sponsors of the event. By buying sponsorships at different levels, organizations will be able to take out advertisements in the program booklet and display banners at the event. The size of the sponsorship will determine the size of the advertisement and the location of the banner.

•Centro La Familia Advocacy Services - Garden Party

This Fresno-based organization, which advocates on behalf of low-income, predominantly immigrant families, has organized an annual garden party fundraiser for the past 12 years. The event is an excellent example of one that costs very little to organize, meaning that almost all the funds raised become profit. The most recent garden party raised \$12,000 for the organization. Centro La Familia has found ways to receive almost everything on either an in-kind or pro bono basis. This includes the garden where the party is held, the food (local businesses donate cheese and vegetables for finger foods), the raffle and auction prizes, portable toilets, and garbage services. Some other equipment is rented at a discount and the musicians provide their services at a reduced rate. Because the event has been running for so many years, local businesses expect to make in-kind donations each year. Board members also donate specific supplies, such as paper plates, plastic cups, or water. Additionally, each board member donates at least \$20.00 to cover the costs of beer and wine. Other expenses are eliminated altogether. For example, there is no need to rent tables and chairs because guests bring blankets or lawn chairs. The result is a casual event that brings in funds, builds community, and is widely anticipated each year.

Annual Dinners: Advantages and Pitfalls

Dinner events have the potential to raise significant amounts of money and to become regular happenings in the community's calendar, drawing a loyal crowd that enjoys attending year after year. Often, dinners are a wonderful celebration of the organization's work and community. Many organizations use the events to honor individuals or organizations that are doing important work in the community.

However, dinners are also renowned for losing money, especially for more grassroots organizations with less affluent donor bases. This is because the costs of putting on such events can be extremely high. If you are considering planning a dinner event, start by asking: Does our organization have a base of mid- and high-range donors who can buy tickets and/or join a host committee with gifts large enough to both cover the costs of putting on the event and make a profit? If the answer is yes, your organization is probably ready to consider doing such an event. If the answer is no, it is probably advisable to implement some other fundraising strategies to build your base of donors and supporters first.

Making Sure Your Event Makes Money

Start by making a realistic assessment of how much the event will cost and how much money you can bring in. Set income goals and set a cap for expenses. Following are some suggestions about how to maximize revenue, and information about the types of costs you can expect to encounter.

Maximizing Revenue

•Set up some type of Host Committee (which can also be called the Honorary Dinner Committee, the Event Committee, etc.) Decide what people need to give in order to be on the committee, and what you will ask them to do. In exchange for being on the Host Committee, people could do some or all of the following: give money, give time, buy tables, and give names of other people who could be on the Host Committee and/or receive invitations to the event. As discussed in other parts of this Guide, by asking people to donate on a sliding scale you can secure donations from both lower-end and higher-end givers. In this spirit, create a donations

scale with different levels for your Host Committee. You can create names for these different levels of giving (e.g. angel, patron, advocate) and link these names to the theme of dinner. Decide whether Host Committee members need to give a minimum amount to be on the committee, or if it is most important simply to be able to use the person's name because they will bring in other people.

- When determining ticket prices, you will need to strike a balance between making a profit and setting aside a certain number of free or reduced-price tickets for lower-income allies. Do you want to provide a certain number of complimentary tickets to honorees? If you are honoring an organization, how many complimentary tickets will that group receive? Will you offer a reduced rate for people who buy a whole table?

- Ask your board members to commit to fill tables. People like to sit with their friends and are less likely to come if they think they will have to sit alone or will not know anyone.

- If you have honoree(s), encourage them to invite friends, family, and work associates to buy tables.

- Ask staff at allied organizations to buy tables.

- Create a program booklet (sometimes called an ad book or journal) in which individuals or groups buy advertising space. Ask corporations, local businesses, foundations, labor unions, organizations, individuals, congregations, hospitals and health centers, elected officials - basically, anyone with whom you have a relationship - to buy an advertisement. Charge a higher fee for larger advertisements. The ads are an opportunity for organizations and individuals to advertise their own work and services and/or to convey messages of congratulations and thanks to the host organization (and honorees, if applicable). The booklet can also contain information about the evening's program, the Host Committee, the honoree(s), staff and board members, and people who should be thanked.

- Consider doing an additional pitch (request for support) at the event. Regardless, make sure there are donation cards, envelopes, and pens on every table.

- Consider selling merchandise at the event. (Refer to the section on Merchandise, pp. 23-24.)

- If you know you will lose money on a full dinner, consider reducing your expenses by hosting a simpler buffet meal.

Factoring in All the Costs

Depending on the scale and details of your event, you may incur some or all of the following costs. Many or all of these costs can be covered with pro bono services or in-kind donations - or by organizing less costly events.

- The caterers' bill. Along with space rental, this tends to be the largest cost associated with dinners. Remember that the bill will not only include the cost of food and drink, but also rental of table cloths, silverware, plates, glasses, and the catering staff's wages. If you have a bar, these costs will also need to be factored in.
- Rental of the space.
- Rental of tables and chairs (which can usually be provided by the caterer).
- Printing costs - for the invitations, tickets, any other mailings associated with the event, posters, name tags, signage, information packets for every seat, envelopes and reply devices for each table, and program booklets.
- Design costs - for all of the above items.
- Postage.
- Gifts or awards for honorees.
- Rental of a sound system, stage, lights, screen for films/ slides, etc.
- Consultant fees - for example, for the fundraising work before and after, and for someone to script and manage the event.
- Musicians and performers.
- Photography.
- Flowers, center pieces for the tables, and other decorations.
- Hotel or other accommodations for out-of-town honorees.
- Your staff's time - which can be considerable!

The Event: The Big Picture

- Pick an auspicious date - such as the anniversary of the organization's founding, the birthday of a significant person, or another date that has meaning for your community.
- If you are honoring community heroes and heroines, pick notable and interesting people who can present the awards to your honorees.
- Be creative as you plan speakers, performances, art shows, silent auctions, and anything else that will make your event appealing without making it too lengthy.

The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) works with young women who have been homeless or incarcerated to help them achieve self-sufficiency and become positively engaged in their communities. At a recent event, CYWD set up a massage area and meditation room in an upstairs area - to provide a peaceful place for attendees to spend some time, and to demonstrate the type of healing work that CYWD promotes. Downstairs, CYWD honored several women who have made significant contributions to the community and guests listened to inspirational speeches by two well-known women of color activists. Instead of doing a full dinner, CYWD offered desserts and snacks, which were served by people walking around the room. CYWD also created and sold merchandise (t-shirts, sweatshirts, and mugs) that had the same "look" as the promotional materials for the event.

The Event: The Details

- Make sure you have enough time to plan the event. Most large events take at least four months to plan, and first-time events require about six. If you are hosting an annual event, consider setting the date 9-12 months in advance. This is also important if you are booking a popular venue.
- Allocate enough staff time to the event and decide if you will need to hire consultants for some pieces of the planning and work.
- Prepare your staff, board members, members, and/or lead volunteers before the event. Their role is to be ambassadors for the organization and to talk to guests about the organization's work. They do not need to be able to answer every question; they can take the person's phone number and say that someone else will contact them the next day. They simply need to be enthusiastic and engaging.
- Because your long-term goal is to build your donor base, be sure that you have sign-up sheets or some other mechanism to collect contact information for all attendees.
- At the event, make sure you have enough volunteers to cover these tasks:
 - Working the registration desk.
 - Directing people to the right places, or simply answering questions about what is happening where and when.
 - Taking care of security.
 - Working the coat-check.
 - Assisting with the meal - if you are trying to reduce the catering company's bill.
 - Putting out information packets, donation cards, envelopes, and pens on the tables and chairs.
 - Setting up, breaking down, and cleaning up.

VII. Major Donors

The bulk of this Guide is devoted to activities through which groups can access grassroots donors. Many of these activities are also excellent ways to find, cultivate, and retain higher-end donors, who are often referred to as major donors. Each organization has a different giving level (for example, \$100 or \$1,000) at which a donor is classified as "major." Following are some suggestions for how to incorporate work with major donors into your overall grassroots fundraising strategy.

- Get to know your donors. Because higher-end donors tend to give to organizations not only because they believe in the group's work, but also on the basis of personal relationships, it is important to create opportunities for one-on-one relationship building (also called "cultivation") with major donors. This is also a way to let the donor know that you value his/ her investment in your group. Note at what time of year your donors like to give and be sure to be in touch with them - via phone, email, or letter - at other times of the year, so they do not only hear from you when you are asking for a renewal. Let them know about new initiatives, or call to ask their advice about an area in which they have expertise.

- Do adequate follow-up after events. After any event, especially something along the lines of an annual dinner, follow this advice from the Grassroots Fundraising Journal:

"Take your guest/donor list and sit down with a small group of knowledgeable volunteers (board members or others) to discuss the names, especially those new to your organization. Identify the best prospects for major gifts from among that list. These may be existing donors who have made smaller gifts in the past or individuals new to your organization. Integrate those names into your current list of individuals in your major gifts planning process. That process should include developing a long-term cultivation plan for your best major donors or prospects."

- Involve more people. If you have an executive director or board chair who currently does most of the relationship-building with major donors, start involving program staff, members, and other leaders. This reduces the likelihood that donors will leave the organization when the director or board chair steps down.

- Enlarge the circle. Ask your major donors for their help. Do they know other people who might be interested in your work? Would they host a house party to introduce you to their peers?

Ask board members and other people close to the organization if they know of higher-end givers to whom they could introduce you. When you ask your allies for names to build your mailing list (see the section on Mailings, pp. 7-10), ask them to identify people whom they know have the capacity to be higher-end givers.

- Aim for mutual respect. Establish healthy relationships with your major donors so that you do not regard them merely as walking checkbooks, but as concerned individuals who care very much about the issues on which you work. Sometimes higher-end donors will try to have undue influence over an organization's mission or program. If this happens, be clear about how decision-making happens in your group.

- Acknowledge your major donors. While it is true that all your supporters deserve thanks and acknowledgement, major donors require some extra attention. After you receive a donation, send an email, card, or letter with a hand-written note, or make a phone call. If you produce a newsletter or some other publication, use this to acknowledge your donors. Consider dividing your donors into categories, based on the size of their gift. If, however, a donor requests to remain anonymous, respect his/her wish.



Photo by: Tim McKee

VIII. Merchandise Sales

Creating merchandise - especially if it promotes your organization's visibility, or raises awareness about the issue on which you work - can be a useful way to both raise money and meet program goals. However, many groups have enthusiastically produced hundreds of t-shirts, manuals, mugs, etc., and then found themselves unable to sell more than a handful. As with any other fundraising tactic, the key is to make a plan. In this case the plan should take into account production costs, marketing the product, and realistic income assessments.

Factors to consider:

- How long will it really take to complete the product? If it needs to be ready for sale to coincide with a particular date, make sure your timeline is realistic and sufficient.
- Try to solicit in-kind donations of any supplies that you will use (e.g. blank mugs, blank t-shirts, paper, CDs) and seek pro bono or reduced-cost services for printing, design, etc.
- Weigh the costs and benefits of taking care of pieces of the production in-house. For example, if you photocopy hundreds of copies of a training manual on the office machine, how much staff/volunteer time will this take, and what will be the wear-and-tear on the machine?
- Make a careful decision about how many items to produce. How many can you realistically sell? Base your decision on previous merchandise projects, if any, your group has undertaken and on the experiences of similar groups.
- Set a price that people will be willing to pay but that will ensure that you cover your costs and make a profit. Consider setting a sliding scale price to make your products accessible to a broad cross-section of the community - and to allow wealthier folks to pay more.
- It is sometimes easier to sell merchandise in conjunction with a special event. People are more likely to buy a t-shirt, mug, poster, or other product that reminds them of a celebration, anniversary, or an event with a special theme.

Marketing Plans

The key to success is an effective marketing plan. Where will you sell your product? Who will sell it? Do you have enough staff, volunteers, and/ or members to table at events and conferences? Will you network with other community organizations to sell the

product, and how much time will this take? Do you have an email list through which you can market your product? Can you sell the product, including processing credit card donations, through your website? If you do not currently have a plan for selling your merchandise once you produce it, make one before investing in production!

Practical Example

Underground Railroad is an Oakland-based collective of young people who use hip-hop and other cultural expression to organize for social change. The group produces a number of merchandise items, including a calendar/organizer, t-shirts, and CDs featuring work by local young artists. Underground Railroad produces CDs - of high-quality, youth-produced hip-hop music - as part of its lyric-writing and music production training program for young people. They sell the CDs for \$10 each. The costs related to this project are the staff time spent on the project, which is already factored into the teaching part of the project, and the purchase of CDs, labels, and cases. Instead of paying for duplication, staff and volunteers burn multiple copies of CDs themselves - which is a very time-consuming project but significantly reduces the project's financial inputs.



Photo by: Tim McKee

IX. Fee-for-Service

This can be an important income stream for organizations that offer some type of service - such as counseling, legal advice, or training - to the community. While many organizations may decide that charging clients for services is incompatible with their mission to serve the community, other groups may determine that it is important to provide people with the opportunity to give. As with every type of fundraising, you cannot expect people to give you money if you do not ask them!

Practical Example

The School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) is an organizing training center that aims to develop a new multi-racial generation of young organizers. In exchange for providing high-quality trainings, SOUL has created the following opportunities for community members to support the organization.

- SOUL "passes the hat" after trainings.
- SOUL developed a sliding scale so that organizations whose staff attend trainings know how much they should give to cover their staff members' participation. The sliding scale takes into account the size of the participating organizations' budgets and the costs that went into preparing and running the training. SOUL also specifies the training's cost-per-participant.
- SOUL sends regular mailings to previous participants to give them the opportunity to continue supporting an organization that, in many cases, had a significant impact on their life.

Other Ideas for Technical Assistance Providers

- Consider charging a non-refundable deposit so you do not lose money if the individuals/ groups with whom you are working cancel at the last minute.
- Consider asking foundations to fund their grantees to attend trainings or receive other services from you. Alternatively, foundations can contract directly with you (the technical assistance provider) so that you work directly with their grantees.
- Consider asking foundations to buy bulk orders of training manuals and other resources in order to distribute these resources to grantees.

X. Other Fundraising Activities

Be creative! With a little imagination, almost anything can be turned into a fundraiser. Here is a list of activities that other groups have organized.

- Organize an Anything-A-Thon. Gather sponsors to support you in running a race, swimming a certain number of laps, re-painting a community center, cooking, or anything else. The list is endless!
- Hold a yard sale, garage sale, or rummage sale.
- Sell cookies or lemonade on your stoop.
- Organize a car wash.
- Charge admission to a dance party.
- Organize a raffle or auction.
- Solicit honoraria when staff members or volunteers speak for school or college classes, on panels, at conferences, or at other public events.

Practical Samples

•Californians for Justice - A Campaign-Linked Raffle

Californians for Justice (CFJ) is a statewide grassroots organization working to empower communities that have been pushed to the margins of the political process. In July 2003, CFJ led a state-wide coalition of groups to an important victory when the state pushed back, by two years, the start-date of a discriminatory standardized test known as the California High School Exit Exam. The state made this decision following a very successful Lobby Day, organized by CFJ, that brought 50 organizations and 400 people to Sacramento. To cover the costs of busing all these people to the capitol and housing them once they got there, CFJ organized a raffle. Because all the raffle gifts were donated, CFJ's only expenses were the costs of printing and mailing the tickets. Coalition partners and other allies sold tickets to their members and passed along books of tickets to members who, in turn, sold them to their contacts. CFJ chose to do a raffle, rather than seek a foundation grant to cover these costs, in order to foster a high level of investment in the collective push to get 400 folks to Sacramento.

- Centro La Familia Advocacy Services - Rummage Sale

This Fresno-based organization, which advocates on behalf of low-income, predominantly immigrant families, has organized several rummage sales over the course of its history. Over the course of three days, the organization is usually able to raise \$3,000 from these events. The disadvantage of the rummage sales is that they are very labor-intensive. The most time-consuming activities are recruiting people to make donations, picking up the donations, storing them, setting up the sale and breaking down afterwards, and finding a place to donate the un-sold goods. However, there are minimal costs associated with the events, which means that almost any money made becomes profit.

- Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño - Annual Basketball Game

Centro Binacional is an educational organization that promotes the development and well-being of the indigenous people of Oaxaca on both sides of the border. For many years, the group has organized an annual basketball game. This simple fundraiser involves recruiting teams, many of whom play year after year, and organizing a night-long tournament which raises around \$1,000. The event takes place each year on the birthday of Benito Juarez - a significant date that helps cement the tournament in the community's annual calendar.

- California Latino Civil Rights Network - Casino Night

The California Latino Civil Rights Network is a statewide network that serves as a clearinghouse and resource center to promote issues of civil and human rights for Latinos. The Fresno-based office of this group recently organized a casino night that brought together almost 100 people for a night of cards, dice, and roulette in a staff member's home and backyard. There were few overhead costs because everything was donated, including the labor. By charging for snacks and drinks, as well as gambling chips, the organization was able to bring in income from a number of different sources over the course of the evening, raising a total of \$800.

XI. Final Thoughts

This section includes suggestions about looking for fundraising opportunities in your everyday work and involving as many people as possible in your fundraising efforts. It also discusses the importance of recognizing and thanking donors.

Get Everyone Involved!

Fundraising is not solely the responsibility of the executive director, the development director, the board member who is "good at it," or whoever else currently does the fundraising for your organization. The strongest fundraising programs involve staff, board, members, volunteers, and others. As non-profits grow and hire more staff, the program staff can become particularly disconnected from fundraising work. Following is an excellent example from the DataCenter of how to involve the whole staff in specific fundraising activities.

Practical Example

The DataCenter, which provides social justice advocates with strategic information, analysis, and research skills to help them conduct more effective campaigns, has a strong history of including staff in fundraising work. In this spirit, the Fundraising Committee is currently composed of the Development Director, the two Co-Directors, the Board President, and someone from the program staff. This Committee recently developed a plan to bring the entire staff into the fundraising process. First, all staff members submitted a list of ten contacts. They specified whether they wanted their contacts to receive a mailing, with a hand-written note from the relevant staff member, or an invitation to a house party that was held at the home of a staff member. Program staff took full responsibility for planning and implementing every aspect of the house party, including making the pitch. Because they organized a fundraising event from start to finish, the staff now has a better understanding of the fundraising process.

Everyday Work and Fundraising

One way to get as many people as possible involved in fundraising is to look for fundraising opportunities in your everyday work. At a staff meeting, board meeting, development committee meeting, or action committee meeting make a list of all the activities you do as part of your regular program work and look for fundraising opportunities in this work. This can be a way to increase your income without dramatically increasing the amount of staff time spent on fundraising. It is also a good way to bring a culture of fundraising to every aspect of your organization's work.

Practical Example

The School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) is an organizing training center that aims to develop a new multi-racial generation of young organizers. Each summer, SOUL runs intensive training programs for young people. The graduation ceremonies at the end of the summer have become annual celebrations and fundraising opportunities. Each year's ceremony presents excellent fundraising opportunities because (1) SOUL would organize the graduation ceremony regardless; and (2) the ceremonies bring together a natural base of supporters composed of the graduates' friends and family, past alumni of the program, and the staff of organizations where graduates did internships. SOUL also invites foundation program officers and donors to the graduation ceremonies - so they can see the organization in action and celebrating an important achievement. There are few overhead costs associated with the ceremonies because SOUL uses spaces that are free or very low-cost and staff and volunteers do all the cooking for the event.

Thanking and Recognizing Donors

Donors of all sizes should be adequately thanked for supporting your work. If your group is registered as a 501c(3) organization with the IRS, or if you have a fiscal sponsor, be sure to send all donors a letter that thanks them for their gift and specifies that, because no goods or services were received in exchange for the

gift, it is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Tax law specifies, however, that your supporters cannot take a tax deduction in exchange for buying merchandise or paying for services.

Write personal notes on thank you letters and consider also making a phone call or sending a separate thank you card. Additionally, your newsletter, annual report, or other publication is an excellent place to list donors' names - unless they request anonymity. Finally, keep your donors updated about your work! If you let them know you put their donation to good use, they will likely be inspired to support you again and again.



XII. Acknowledgments

We thank the following people and organizations for generously sharing information and ideas about their organizations' grassroots fundraising work.

- Lisa De Castro, Asian Pacific Environmental Network
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510-834-8920
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- Harmony Goldberg, School of Unity and Liberation
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510-451-5466
www.youthec.org
- Priscilla Hung, DataCenter
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510-835-4692
www.datacenter.org
- Omana Imani, Underground Railroad
1770 8th Street, Oakland, CA 94607
510-451-5466
www.youthec.org
- Dani Montgomery, Center for Young Women's Development
1550 Bryant Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94103
415-703-8800
www.cywd.org
- Walt Perry, Fresno Metro Ministry
1055 Van Ness Avenue, Suite H, Fresno, CA 93728
559-485-1416
www.fresnometroministry.org
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www.caljustice.org
- Joe Rocha, California Latino Civil Rights Network
2115 Kern Street, Suite 103, Fresno, CA 93721
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- Leoncio Vasquez, Centro Binational para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño
2014 Tulare St., Suite 223, Fresno, CA 93721,
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rdominguez@sbcglobal.net
- Steve Williams, People Organized to Win Employment Rights
32 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103
415-864-8372
www.unite-to-fight.org

Appendix 1.1

Sample Phone Banking Script

The script is the guide you follow as you talk to the person on the phone.

The phone-banker's part of the conversation is in bold type.

Notes to the phone-banker are in italic type.

IF SOMEONE ANSWERS THE PHONE:

Hello. My name is Claudia and I'm calling you from Parents Against Toxic Waste. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

If no: Ask if there is another time you can call back. If they request to receive the information by mail, do this.

If yes: As you know, Parents Against Toxic Waste is committed to pressuring Large Corporation, which dumped toxins into Lake Beautiful, to clean up the lake so that it is safe again for swimming and fishing. We are about to enter a new stage in our campaign. We are filing a class action suit against Large Corporation and also doing a series of direct actions in front of their headquarters on Main Street. We already won an important victory last month when Large Corporation's CEO agreed to meet with people who have gotten sick after eating fish caught in Lake Beautiful.

The goal here is to provide a concise, compelling update on the organization's work. Highlight victories and upcoming activities. The person on the other end of the phone line has only limited time so do not go into great detail unless the s/he asks questions. Be prepared with sufficient information so that you can answer general questions. If you are asked something you cannot answer, don't make up something. Instead, make a note of the question and say that someone else from the organization will call back the next day with more information. If you are calling to follow up on a mailing, ask if the person received the letter. If they did not get the letter, or have no recollection of it, offer to re-send it.

After giving an update, you can move into the "ask." Be clear about the need.

As you know, we cannot do this important work without support from the community. We are especially turning to our grassroots supporters in this tough economic climate because our foundation supporters have had to cut back this year. We are calling tonight to ask if you can make a donation of \$50 toward this new phase of our campaign work that will make Lake Beautiful beautiful again.

Stop after making the "ask" to give people time to respond.

If yes: Thank you so much for your support. I will mail you an envelope and donation card. Thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

If no: Our campaign is really at a critical stage. We are very likely to win this class action suit, which would have great significance for people in our community. Donations of any size help. Could you give a smaller gift?

Try to determine whether the person to whom you are talking is a "no" or a "maybe." If the person is a "maybe," try to move them to a "yes." Don't be pushy but be persuasive. Be ready to talk about the aspects of the group's work that are most compelling to you. Share how enthusiastic you are about the fact that the group exists and is making a difference in the community.

If the person is a "no," make some effort to move them to a "maybe" or "yes" - but don't waste time if they are solidly a "no." Focus the most time on the people who are excited about your group and who want to lend their support to your efforts.

IF YOU GET AN ANSWERING MACHINE OR VOICE MAIL:

Hello. My name is Claudia and I'm calling from Parents Against Toxic Waste to update you on our work to protect Lake Beautiful. We will try you again at another time and look forward to talking to you soon.

Appendix 1.2

Sample Fundraising Letter

April 25, 2003

Dear Friend,

Thank you for supporting APEN and API community organizing. I hope this letter finds you well. In these challenging political and economic times, we know that part of the long-term solution to the problems our communities face is to build progressive power from the grassroots. At APEN, we are continuing to do this by launching new housing justice campaigns in Oakland and Richmond, CA for affordable, healthy housing and tenants' rights! I am writing to ask you to join us in our struggle for housing justice.

Housing is a basic right.

Even though housing prices in the San Francisco Bay Area have come down in the last year, housing remains a crisis for the overwhelming majority of working and poor folk that make up our communities. In order to afford a 2-bedroom apartment, you still have to earn \$27.36/hour, well above the minimum wage. I continue to hear from members that they are being forced to make choices between rent and other basic needs such as health care, nutritious foods and clothing. Many of our families continue to leave the area because of the high cost of housing. Housing conditions also remain poor for the majority of our members who complain of problems with mold, mice, cockroaches and general disrepair.

Launching Campaigns in Richmond & Oakland

In Richmond, where 88% of the Laotian community are renters and 62% pay more than they can afford on housing, we at the Laotian Organizing Project (LOP) will work with a multi-racial coalition to push a Just Cause ordinance similar to the one APEN helped to pass in Oakland this past November to protect renters from unfair evictions. In Oakland, Power in Asians Organizing (PAO) members face similar circumstances to that of LOP members. PAO members are almost entirely renters and 30% have been served a 30-day

notice or have been evicted in the past three years. In May, PAO will embark on a "Voices for Housing Justice" postcard campaign to engage Oakland elected officials on the need for affordable housing.

Without housing justice, communities cannot be healthy and sustainable.

In the Laotian community in Richmond, as refugees, we were displaced from Laos because of the US war in Vietnam. We lived with uncertainty about our future and our children's future after the war. Our families were separated and put into refugee camps in Thailand until we were moved to the US. We thought we would have a better life in America, but here we're experiencing a different kind of war, a war against the poor and people of color. In the US, money is everything, but we don't have access to good jobs. We have language barriers and we live where no one else will live, but the rents are still high. Back home in Laos, we at least had land to build on. With the high cost of living, we are forced to move in with family members and overcrowding is very common. Many of our folks are leaving the area, separating and displacing our community yet again.

Profit is driving the US government's priorities at the expense of the poor. Too much money is spent on war outside the country to detract attention from growing needs at home for jobs, housing, health care and education, and the poor and new immigrants suffer the most. This is why APEN's community organizing and environmental and social justice movement building work is more critical than ever.

Join us in our campaigns for affordable housing and tenants' rights to build equitable and sustainable communities. Building power from the ground up is what's going to make a difference in the long term, and we invite you to continue to support the movement for environmental and social justice.

In Peace & Justice,

LOP Organizer

P.S. Please don't wait to make your contribution to APEN's Housing Justice Campaigns!

Appendix 1.3

Sample Fundraising Letter

September 25, 2002

Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you well as we enter the final stretch of 2002. It has been a busy year for APEN, and the fall will be no exception. As many of you know, APEN will be targeting a new area of environmental justice: **healthy and affordable housing. I am writing to ask for your support.**

With the Bay Area expected to grow by one million additional residents by the year 2020, housing will continue to be a key challenge that impacts the quality of life in our communities.

For members of APEN's Laotian Organizing Project (LOP), rising rents and real estate have forced residents to stay in substandard apartments and homes. Some are returning to subsistence fishing in polluted Bay Area waters to supplement incomes, an issue APEN has worked with the Laotian community in the past to address. Members such as Nita Sisamouth have documented their concerns, highlighting issues such as recurring mold problems in their apartments that landlords do nothing about and multiple family members having to crowd into smaller spaces to afford the rent.

APEN's Oakland organizer, Amber Chan, has also been hearing numerous concerns from the community about the housing crisis, but has been heartened by the tremendous response Power in Asians Organizing (PAO) has been receiving from residents wanting to take action. "At the last meeting in August, over 50 people came,

and we conducted the meeting in Cantonese, Mandarin and English. I was so excited that 49 committed to getting more involved with PAO by signing action cards!" **With APEN's organizing projects ready to take on housing, both PAO and LOP will be mobilizing voters around two critical housing initiatives, Proposition 46, the California statewide Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund and Proposition EE, the Oakland Just Cause initiative.**

Proposition 46 would create 16,000 permanently-affordable rental units in California, subsidies to allow 65,000 families to purchase homes, housing assistance for farmworkers and subsidies for emergency homeless shelters. The Just Cause initiative, or Proposition EE, is a measure that will put in place basic renter protections against unfair evictions, requiring landlords to have a "just cause" in order to evict tenants.

The issue of safe, healthy affordable housing affects us all. **I hope you will support APEN's efforts to organize API communities to fight for improved living conditions and affordable housing. APEN's work in the November elections will help lay the groundwork to launch our regional campaign in 2003 to tackle housing issues in low-income Asian Pacific Islander communities.** We invite you to join us.

In Peace and Unity,

Executive Director

P.S. We recognize this past year has been tough economically for all of us, and we appreciate your generosity even more at this time. Please fill out the enclosed reply card and make your donation today!

Sample Annual Event Invitation

Sisters Rising

A DECADE OF STRUGGLE, SURVIVAL, AND STRENGTH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2002 2PM
THE WOMEN'S BUILDING
3543 18TH STREET (NEAR VALENCIA)
SAN FRANCISCO

YES! I WILL JOIN YOU IN CELEBRATION ON FEBRUARY 9, 2003.

TICKET LEVELS:

\$100

\$150

\$250 AND ABOVE *Honorary Members*

HONORARY MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO A PRE-RECEPTION.
AN INTIMATE CONVERSATION ON ACTIVISM AND WOMEN'S ISSUES
WITH ANGELA DAVIS AND ASHA BANDELE FROM 1-2PM.

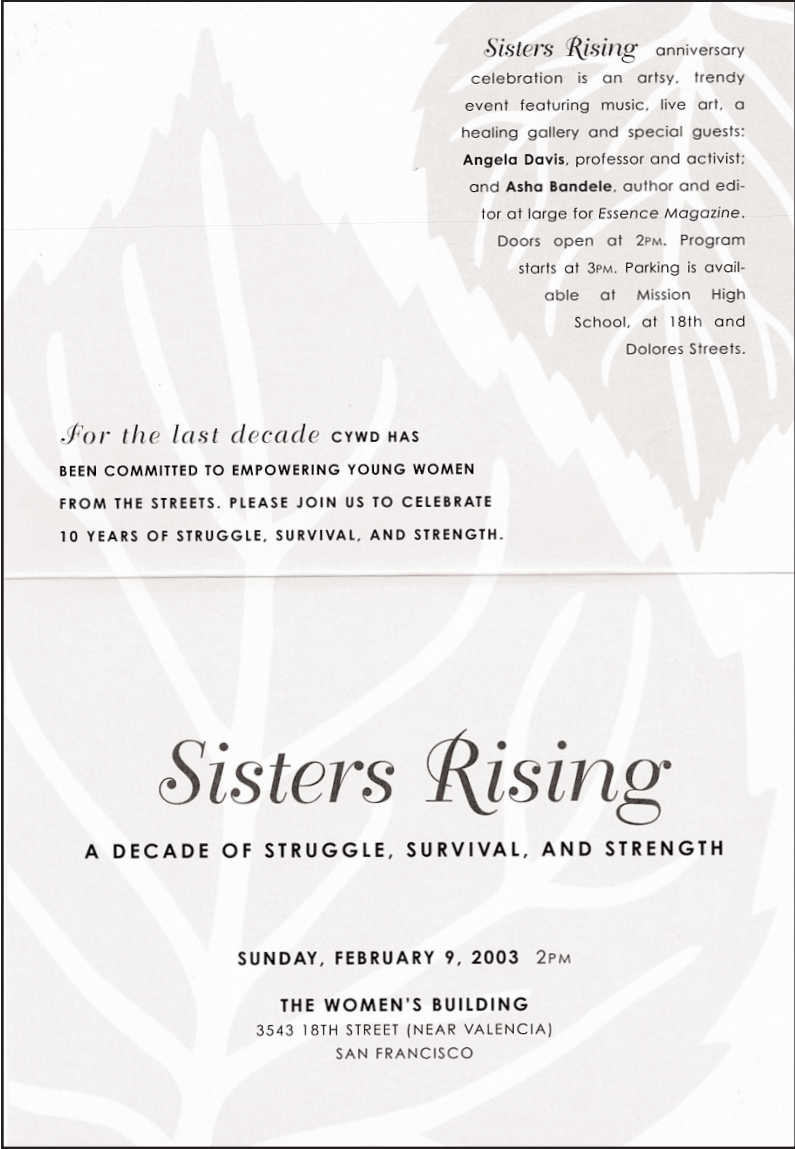
UNFORTUNATELY I AM NOT ABLE TO ATTEND, BUT PLEASE ACCEPT
MY DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____



Sisters Rising anniversary celebration is an artsy, trendy event featuring music, live art, a healing gallery and special guests: **Angela Davis**, professor and activist; and **Asha Bandele**, author and editor at large for *Essence Magazine*. Doors open at 2PM. Program starts at 3PM. Parking is available at Mission High School, at 18th and Dolores Streets.

For the last decade CYWD HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN FROM THE STREETS. PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF STRUGGLE, SURVIVAL, AND STRENGTH.

Sisters Rising

A DECADE OF STRUGGLE, SURVIVAL, AND STRENGTH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2003 2PM

THE WOMEN'S BUILDING
3543 18TH STREET (NEAR VALENCIA)
SAN FRANCISCO