

6.8 CORPORATE FUNDRAISING

Getting started

This information aims to help you get started with applying to local businesses for small amounts of money or items that are useful to your group, such as raffle prizes or equipment you need for an activity.

General tips and ideas

Use your Local Network.

Businesses are more likely to give to people they know. Some companies like to encourage their staff to get involved in community activity, so may be more likely to donate to a project that is recommended by someone who works for them.

Do not be shy about using any connections you have. If you are approaching local shops it is worth going in person, especially if they know you. Take a letter saying what you want, printed on your organisation's headed notepaper so you can give this to them to back up your request.

Try your local businesses

Most businesses prefer to support groups in their immediate area. Small businesses, such as greengrocers or local convenience stores, may want to support their local community. They are less likely to be interested in donating to a group that is not very close by. Even some chain stores and supermarkets prefer to donate to groups based very near one of their branches.

Look for businesses that are relevant

Some shops are keen to support projects that involve an activity or event that particularly requires the kinds of things they sell. For example, a gardening shop might like to donate to a gardening group, or a cookware shop might donate to a group that runs cookery classes. Use the internet or local business directory to find relevant local businesses. You could ask them for donations of items rather than money – for example, if you need spades, ask your local garden shop to donate the spades, rather than the cash to buy them.

Offer something in return

One reason local business may donate to your group is if they think this will lead to them getting more business. Offering them publicity in return for their donation will help encourage them to support you. If you are making printed publicity, or have a website or Facebook page, offer to include their logo or a sentence saying that they have supported you. If you are running an event, offer to announce their support at the event so that everyone knows that they donated.

Ask in person

A small business is more likely to donate to your group if they have spoken to you in person. While sending a letter is a useful way of giving information about your group, it is important to also visit the business, or phone them up, to explain who you are and why you would like them to donate. This makes it more personal and gives you a better chance of persuading the business that your group is important and needs their support.

Put your request in writing

When you go into a shop or phone up a business, you may find that the person who makes decisions about donations is not available to speak to. They may also be too busy to consider your request right then and there. It is a good idea to have a letter that you can give or send to them, to follow up your request. This should:

- Be on headed paper
- Be no longer than one side of A4 if possible
- Be addressed specifically to the person you are writing to – try to find out their name before sending the letter.
- Include details of what you want the money for, how much you need and who it will benefit

If you don't hear back after sending your letter, follow it up with another phone call or visit. People running businesses can be very busy, and may need reminding about the donation you have asked for.

Use any established donation programmes

Some big companies have established donation programmes in which the company gives grants to community groups and charities. In order to apply for these you usually have to fill in an application form. Companies that have this types of grant program is probably less likely to make an on the spot donation to your group – instead they will suggest that you apply for one of their grants. You can use our Funding database to find out more information on this.

Tell businesses how their donation was spent

If you have received a donation once, the same business may be interested in donating again in future. They are more likely to do this if you write to them, thanking them for their support and letting them know how your event or project. went. Send a short report, saying what you did and how many people took part Include photos and any press cuttings if you have them. Keep a record of the businesses that have donated to you, and the contact's name you have, so that you can write to them again in future.



Factsheet **6.8**