



ACS
Chemistry for Life™

2009 Community Outreach Fundraising Guide

American Chemical Society

Office of Community Activities

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2009 COMMUNITY OUTREACH FUNDRAISING GUIDE

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Fundraising Guide Overview

The most important ingredients for successful community outreach programs are good ideas, proper planning, and enthusiastic volunteers. Many creative and successful community outreach events have been held for little or no out-of-pocket expense. However, many events involve a variety of expenses, from purchasing chemical reagents for making slime to distributing information to teachers, section members, and the media. If you want to raise additional funds from outside sources, this section will help you.

While you are looking for outside funds, remember that many contributors are looking for activities like yours to demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and/or to enhance their outreach to the community. This section was designed to maximize funding opportunities by providing fundraising strategies that may be useful in making your community outreach event a success. As described in the introduction, each community outreach event has a mission and vision that define its program — they need to be shared with those whom you ask for support.

If you have questions that are not answered here, contact the Development Office at 1-800-227-5558 x 6210, or 202-872-6210 direct.

1 Ideas for Outside Funding

The most effective and efficient way to raise funds is by capitalizing on existing relationships. Brainstorm with local section volunteers to determine what connections they already have with prospective funders. Be creative in considering organizations you want to approach for funding:

- Consider companies that employ chemists and chemical engineers. Who are the major employers in your community? The ACS Office of Industry Member Programs can help you identify companies in your area (800-227-5558, x 6138 or 202-872-6138). Your local Chamber of Commerce also likely maintains a list of relevant employers.
- Look to companies that provide goods and services to chemists and chemical engineers. For example, instrumentation and chemical supply companies might appreciate the publicity and goodwill of their key customers.
- Try companies and foundations with a strong interest in science education or in improving the public understanding of science and technology. Some companies and foundations have already established partnerships with local schools, museums, and libraries. If you can fit your event under the umbrella of an existing program, it might simplify and speed your request for funds.
- Consider companies with products or services that fit the community outreach theme—for example, if the theme is “Celebrating Chemistry and Art,” contact paint companies, supply companies, or art restoration and conservation companies.
- Don’t overlook universities and colleges. Does the college administration, the chemistry department, or a research institute have any funds for public outreach programs or for recruiting new students?
- Other organizations with similar missions (professional societies, museums, etc.) are also good prospects for partnering.
- Individuals, too, may be interested in supporting a specific activity.

Remember that grants may come from a variety of places in a group’s budget. Be flexible in exploring the options within your targeted groups. Some companies funnel all grant requests through their foundation or community relations department. Some companies have established employee volunteer support programs that make it easy for employees to request small grants for nonprofit organizations in which they are involved. Some companies have established budgets that certain employee groups (e.g., an education committee, a technical forum, or a retiree association) can allocate for worthwhile projects. In other companies, department managers, laboratory directors, or plant managers will have the authority to award grants. At universities and colleges, support might be available from a variety of places, including the dean’s office, the chemistry department, a research institute, or even a research grant that has a public education component. Keep in mind that ACS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and, as such, donations to support local section programs are tax deductible.

Individuals might be eligible to apply for matching funds from their company’s matching gift program. Criteria for matching gift qualifications tend to vary from company to company. Always remind individual donors to check to see if the company they work for has matching funds available, and ask them to provide the company’s form if they do.

2 Companies Provide a Variety of Support Other than Financial

Sometimes called “in-kind support,” non-cash support is often easier to obtain than monetary support, and it can be just as useful. In a recent report from Independent Sector (*Resource Raising—The Role of Non-Cash Assistance in Corporate Philanthropy*), the authors write that “companies are establishing more focused goals and objectives for their giving and recognizing the usefulness of giving through coordinated approaches and packages that include products, services, employee volunteers, and other non-cash resources, as well as cash grants”.

In-kind donations are valuable not only because they free up funds that might otherwise be used to make purchases, they also are often the first step to building a long-term relationship with a corporation or community group. When a corporation or organization has a positive experience in providing an in-kind donation to a local section, they are often receptive to discussing other mutually-beneficial contributions they could make, including cash donations. Thus, it is important that you adequately acknowledge all in-kind donations. At a minimum, send a thank you letter such as the sample provided in Appendix 5. For substantial in-kind donations, acknowledgement can be provided in the event program, a newsletter, an ad in your local media, or other creative means.

To spark your imagination in finding in-kind support, see below for a list of types of products and services that you may find useful for your community outreach event.

2.1 Useful Services and Products for Your Outreach Event

Facilities and services

- plant and laboratory tours
- rental space
- dining and meeting facilities
- telecommunications services
- mailing services
- transportation services
- computer services

Products, supplies, and equipment

- chemicals and glassware
- surplus instruments, lab ware, and computers
- food
- mementos, souvenirs, and giveaway items

Public relations services

- printing and duplicating
- audiovisual and graphic arts services
- piggyback advertising
- public service advertising
- plant and laboratory tours
- newsletters and press releases
- media mailing lists and contacts

3 Elements of a Successful Cultivation Strategy and Proposal

Here are some basic guidelines that employees and volunteers can follow when approaching a corporation or community organization for a financial grant or in-kind contribution. *Keep in mind that it is important to begin your fundraising efforts early.* In some organizations, a proposal for financial support will need to be approved by a committee or board that meets on a monthly or quarterly basis. In other organizations, the proposal may need to go through several layers of management for approval.

3.1 Cultivation Strategy

Do homework on the company's priorities, corporate culture, giving practices, contributions cycle, and other involvements.

Every company has its own philosophy and history of the types of projects it will support. Some companies are interested in science and math education; others support environmental education. Some companies want to work with certain partner schools; others work with museums or other organizations. Some companies support only organizations in which their employees are involved. When you find out about a company's priorities, you can tailor your proposal to address its interests.

Use your contacts within the company.

Your chances for success will be enhanced by selecting the right person to make the request. Take full advantage of your company contacts. For example, identify the highest-ranking member of management who is a scientist or engineer and approach them for support and/or assistance in shepherding a request through the company.

Find out if the organization has a specific format or guidelines for a funding request.

Once you find out the appropriate procedure and guidelines for the organization you are approaching, you can tailor your proposal and anticipate their requests for additional information. Many corporations operate on a regular funding cycle in which requests are only considered at certain times of the year. An otherwise strong proposal will be turned down if the timing does not coincide with the company's cycle.

Follow up and report.

Cultivate a relationship with the company. Be sure to call when you promise to call. Check in periodically if you haven't heard anything. If your request is declined, thank them for their consideration and ask for feedback on how you could make the request more effective next time. If your request is funded, make sure to follow up with the donor as outlined in Section 10.4.

3.2 Proposal Components

Many corporations, foundations and community organizations have established guidelines for the submission of funding requests. If so, make sure to follow these guidelines exactly. Use standard application forms if they are provided and don't leave any questions unanswered. If a question is not applicable, state that. Some funding

sources receive hundreds, maybe thousands, of funding requests each year and will readily disqualify an application that does not follow the instructions. When a prospective funding source does not provide a proposal format, the following guidelines can be taken into consideration.

Develop a brief written proposal.

A written proposal will allow you to convey the information the prospective funder is seeking in order to make a funding decision. It will also help you to anticipate questions and concerns. Even if you are meeting face-to-face with someone, a written proposal is a good idea. Make it brief and straightforward. In today's world, where everyone seems pressed for time, brevity is always appreciated.

A suggested method for getting the required information across succinctly and effectively is to submit a short cover letter and attach a one-page fact sheet with the event budget.

State clearly the benefits to the company, its employees, and the community.

Many benefits can be gained from corporate volunteerism and community involvement. Make your proposal benefits-oriented and stress the value that the company will receive from their support. By explicitly stating these benefits and values, you will help the decision-makers reach a favorable decision. They may be able to use these benefits to justify the decisions to their management.

State your expectation about the role of the company.

Be specific and clear about what you are asking from the company in the first paragraph of the request. A vague request for support will often receive a vague answer and a request for additional information.

Stress employee involvement, using specific examples and individuals.

If a company's employees are involved in your community outreach program, as organizers or volunteers, the chances of gaining support from that company are significantly better. Use specific names and examples whenever possible. Be sure to notify the employees whose names you are using - they can be your best references. If they are willing to make the request themselves, write a letter of support, or simply sign a request that you have prepared, make good use of these valuable inside contacts and include them in the proposal process.

Mention the involvement of other groups and companies.

When a program has a broad base of support in the community, it is easier to get new participants. If a major employer is already working with your project, don't hesitate to use their name and clout to gain additional partners. Use discretion, however, if the contributor is a major competitor of the company from whom you are requesting support.

Stress the program's geographic focus.

If you're coordinating a local activity, show how the program will be implemented at the local level, stressing the involvement of local individuals, companies, and other organizations. Show how you have adapted a national program to meet the needs, interests, and special characteristics of your area.

For events that draw national participation, emphasize that sponsors may have the opportunity to be recognized across the country. Or request funding from businesses located in the city where your event will be held, stressing that participants in your event may frequent the sponsors' business locations.

State how you will recognize the companies and volunteers.

Study after study shows that recognition is one of the keys to successful volunteer and nonprofit programs. Recognition does not need to be elaborate. Be creative and look for opportunities to say "thank you". Find out how the company would like to be recognized. Maybe it wants media attention. Maybe it wants its employees to know what it is doing. Maybe it wants to become more involved in other outreach and education activities. However you recognize your donors and volunteers, make sure that the attention is in keeping with their wishes. Some may prefer to remain anonymous, in which case a private thank you would be more appropriate.

Address your local section's nonprofit status.

Some donors may be interested in your proposal but want to see proof of your 501(c)(3) status. Upon request, the Tax Compliance and Reporting Office of the ACS National Headquarters can provide you with a signed copy of a letter certifying your local section's tax-exempt status. This letter, in conjunction with the downloadable IRS determination letter certifying the American Chemical Society's 501(c)3 status, will provide a potential donor with the necessary proof of your local section's tax-exempt status. The signed letter and the downloadable IRS determination letter may both be copied and distributed to as many donors as necessary. The letter certifying your section's tax-exempt status may be obtained from the Tax Compliance and Reporting Office by contacting:

Leila Hoen (202) 872-6027 or l_hoen@acs.org

Maurice Stutchman (202) 872-6306 or m_stutchman@acs.org

Larry Rogers (202) 872-6177 or l_rogers@acs.org

3.3 Most Important: Communicate Regularly with the Donor

Regular communication is always appreciated and will help you build a good long-term relationship with a donor. Progress reports do not need to be elaborate but they must accurately reflect accomplishments.

Keep good records. In volunteer programs, there can be frequent turnover in leadership. By keeping good written records of correspondence, gifts, and program details, you will make the job of the next coordinator much easier.

4 Okay, You Have the Gift. What Comes Next?

Spend the money as promised to the donor. Sound simple? Not always. Difficulties can arise from conflicting or changing priorities, budget shuffling, and so forth. Many donors are adaptable to changing needs, but it is important to secure their permission to use their contribution in any way that is different than your original agreement. This is part of maintaining a good donor relationship. Finally, send a thank you letter that states the use of the gift, and inform the ACS Office of Community Activities, so that the donor can be recognized on the appropriate program website.

5 Keep Records of Financial Grants and In-Kind Support

With financial grants, it is especially important to keep good records and to provide a letter acknowledging receipt of the grant. The IRS requires a receipt if the gift is \$250 or more. However, taking a few minutes to send a thank you letter acknowledging a cash donation of any amount is important to creating goodwill and future funding possibilities with a funding source.

If a donor makes a contribution but receives a benefit in exchange (a free dinner, free registration, etc.), then only the portion of the gift for which no benefit is received is tax-deductible. A great deal has been written on gift substantiation. A source is the IRS and its charitable contributions publication (IRS Publication 526-Charitable Contributions). This publication can be found on the IRS web site: <http://www.irs.gov/>.

An important point to remember with in-kind support is that recipients should not attempt to place a monetary value on a non-cash gift when preparing receipts or other documents for a donor company. Thus, letters acknowledging and documenting a gift should not name a dollar figure but instead can include a description of the quantity and kinds of products and services provided. Responsibility for applying a dollar amount lies with the donor, not the recipient.

6 Appendices

6.1 Generic Fundraising Letter

[date]

[name]
[title]
[organization]
[address]

Dear [Mr./Ms./Dr.] [name]:

The [name of section] Local Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS) would like to invite you to partner with us by providing a donation of \$[amount] to support one of our most exciting projects: [insert event name].

This event is one of the cornerstone activities of ACS, the world's largest scientific association, with a membership of more than 154,000 chemists, chemical engineers and others in related professions. Our mission is to encourage the advancement of the chemical enterprise and its practitioners through information dissemination, educational programs, and member and public services. By actively working with communities to create a positive public perception of chemistry, ACS members and supporters help to build a more scientifically literate society that understands and appreciates the vital contributions of the chemical enterprise.

The enclosed fact sheet provides more information about this important event, local activities, and how your donation will be used. The American Chemical Society, its local sections and divisions are tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Upon request, we will provide you with a copy of our IRS determination letter for your records.

Should you need additional information, please contact me at [phone number]. If I haven't heard from you, I will contact you in two weeks to discuss this potential partnership in more detail. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[local section contact name]
[title]

Enclosure: Fact Sheet
Local Event Budget

6.2 Sample Acknowledgement Letter for Cash Donations

[name]
[title]
[organization]
[address]

Dear [Mr./Ms./Dr.] [name]:

Thank you for your donation of \$[amount] to the [name of section] Local Section to support [insert event name]. Your gift was received on [date].

Please keep this letter as a receipt for your gift. ACS, its local sections, and divisions are designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as tax-exempt as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and, as such, contributions to [name of section] are tax-deductible. Upon request, we will provide you with a copy of our IRS determination letter for your records. This letter confirms that no goods or services were provided in exchange for this charitable contribution.

Thank you, again, for partnering with us on this important project.

Sincerely,

[local section contact name]
[title]

6.3 Sample Acknowledgement Letter for In-Kind Donations

[name]
[title]
[organization]
[address]

Dear [Mr./Ms./Dr.] [name]:

Thank you for your in-kind donation of [list] to the [name of section] Local Section. Your gift was received on [date].

Please keep this letter as a receipt for your gift. ACS, its local sections, and divisions are designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as tax-exempt as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and, as such, contributions to ACS are tax-deductible. Upon request, we will provide you with a copy of our IRS determination letter for your records. This letter confirms that no goods or services were provided in exchange for this charitable contribution.

Please be aware that IRS regulations prohibit charitable organizations from assigning a monetary value to in-kind donations. For your convenience, you may list the estimated value of your gift in the space below for your records.

Thank you, again, for partnering with us on this important project.

Sincerely,

[local section contact name]
[title]

Donated Item(s):

Donor's Estimated Value:

6.4 FACT SHEET TEMPLATE: National Chemistry Week

“Chemistry—It’s Elemental!”

Purpose: National Chemistry Week (NCW) was created by the American Chemical Society (ACS) in 1987 to draw attention to the positive contributions chemistry makes to our everyday lives. These contributions include helping feed, house, and clothe the world’s population; tapping new energy sources; providing renewable substitutes for limited materials; improving public health; strengthening our national security; and protecting our environment.

Scope: With assistance from ACS staff, thousands of volunteers from local sections across the country conduct hands-on science activities in their communities, with a focus on elementary and secondary school children. Chemists, chemical engineers, teachers, and students volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to present chemistry demonstrations, and also put together contests for children, conduct workshops, visit classrooms, and host open houses. These programs and activities have been held in venues as diverse as science museums, shopping malls, hospitals, libraries, classrooms, and chemical companies.

Reach: ACS members dedicate more than 17,000 volunteer hours each year to celebrating National Chemistry Week and engaging in community outreach. This program garners national media coverage, highlighting positive messages about chemistry. Media highlights include:

- Articles in publications like *C & EN*
- Recognition by congresspersons in the *Congressional Record*
- News features in local broadcasting markets
- Appearance in the syndicated children’s feature, “Mini-Page”
- Presidential Message in honor of this special week

Local Impact: October 18-24, 2009 will be a special week as it marks the 22nd anniversary of the National Chemistry Week program. With the 2009 theme, “Chemistry—It’s Elemental,” events will celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Periodic Table of Elements and the opportunity to investigate and appreciate the discovery and use of the elements in every aspect of our lives. Activities will include a national poster contest for kindergarten through 12th grade, a “Chemvention” contest for college students, and [list local events].

How You Can Help: A contribution of \$[amount] to support the National Chemistry Week program of the [name of section] Local Section will guarantee the continued growth and quality of this program and enable us to reach more people with the message that chemistry is critical to everyday life. This contribution will support the attached local budget, and will be acknowledged by [list local recognition methods]. [Develop and attach a local project budget.]

6.5 FACT SHEET TEMPLATE: Chemists Celebrate Earth Day

“Air—The Sky’s the Limit”

Purpose: Chemists Celebrate Earth Day is a public awareness campaign organized by the American Chemical Society, which is designed to enhance national appreciation of the many important contributions made through chemistry to preserving our planet and improving our environment.

Scope: With assistance from ACS staff, volunteers from local sections across the country will be involved in activities that highlight the important role chemistry plays in our lives. These nationally reaching activities include:

- Illustrated Haiku Contest for students in kindergarten through 12th grade in which participants write and illustrate a haiku using the yearly theme
- Community outreach contest in which undergraduate college students compete for the most outstanding community outreach project relevant to the theme
- Hands-on activities, a web-based interactive game, and resource lists available at chemistry.org/earthday
- February issue of the *Journal of Chemical Education* dedicated to the celebration of Earth Day, green chemistry, and environmental chemistry

Local Impact: The theme of Chemists Celebrate Earth Day on April 22, 2009 is: “Air—The Sky’s the Limit”. In addition to the national events noted above, local events will be scheduled to celebrate the theme in our community. The [name of local section] will be organizing [list local events].

How You Can Help: A contribution of \$[amount] to support the Chemists Celebrate Earth Day program of the [name of section] Local Section will guarantee the continued growth and quality of this program and enable us to reach more people with the message that chemistry is critical to preserving our planet and improving our environment. This contribution will support the attached local budget, and will be acknowledged by [list local recognition methods]. [Develop and attach a local project budget.]