

GUIDES & TOOLKITS

Fundraising Tips for Students

A student-friendly guide to setting a realistic fundraising goal, making a clear ask, and managing support responsibly.

1	Know exactly what you are raising money for before you ask anyone to contribute.
2	Choose fundraising methods that fit your project, school rules, and audience.
3	Make the ask specific: amount, purpose, deadline, and expected impact.
4	Track every contribution and expense clearly.

Use this guide as a working document. Write directly on a printed copy, or use the prompts to build your own project notes.

1. Start with a clear funding need

Fundraising works best when people understand exactly what their support will make possible. Before asking for money, create a basic project budget and decide what is essential.

Build a simple budget

Item	Estimated cost	Must-have?	Possible in-kind source
Example: printing	\$40	Yes	School office / local print shop
Example: snacks	\$60	No	Local grocery sponsor
Example: supplies	\$125	Yes	Community donation

Fundraising target formula

Essential project costs + small contingency - confirmed in-kind support = fundraising target.

Do not inflate the number. A specific and credible target makes it easier for supporters to understand the ask.

Before asking for cash, ask what can be donated

- Space or venue use
- Printing and materials
- Food or refreshments
- Professional services
- Equipment or technology
- Transportation support
- Promotion or outreach help

2. Choose the right fundraising method

Different methods work for different projects. Pick one or two that match your audience and capacity instead of trying everything at once.

Direct donations

Best when you can clearly explain the need to family, friends, community members, or supporters. Keep the ask personal and specific.

School fundraiser

Bake sales, spirit events, performances, or other approved activities can work well when your school allows them and you have enough volunteers.

Local sponsorships

Ask businesses to sponsor a specific cost, provide in-kind support, or contribute toward an event. Offer appropriate recognition, not unrealistic promises.

Microgrants / grants

Useful when your project matches a funder's goals. Follow eligibility rules carefully and answer the actual questions asked.

Crowdfunding

Can reach more people, but may require adult involvement, platform fees, and careful privacy/payment setup.

In-kind support

Often the fastest path. A donated room, printing, food, or supplies can reduce your fundraising need dramatically.

Check the rules first

If your project is school-based or involves minors, confirm school and parent/guardian requirements before collecting money. Use approved payment channels and adult oversight where required. Never pressure students to donate.

3. Make a clear, confident ask

A fundraising message should be short enough to read quickly and specific enough to trust. Most supporters want to know four things: what you are doing, why it matters, what you need, and what their support will make possible.

The 5-part ask

- 1. Introduce yourself and the project. One or two sentences is enough.
- 2. Explain the need. Why does this project matter to the people you hope to serve?
- 3. State the ask. Ask for a specific amount, item, service, or sponsorship.
- 4. Explain the use. Say exactly how the support will be used.
- 5. Close with a clear next step. Include the deadline, contact information, or approved donation method.

30-second pitch example

"Hi, I am a student organizing a free weekend math workshop for local middle school students. We expect about 40 participants and are raising \$250 for printing, supplies, and snacks. A \$50 contribution would cover materials for about eight students. Would your business be interested in supporting the event or donating supplies?"

Sample email to a local supporter

Subject: Student project support request - [Project Name]

Hello [Name],

My name is [Name], and I am a student working on [one-sentence description]. We are organizing [activity] to help [audience] by [purpose].

We are currently seeking [specific amount/item/service] to cover [specific use]. Your support would help us [concrete result].

If you are interested, I would be happy to share our project plan and answer any questions. Thank you for considering supporting a student-led community project.

Best,
[Name]

4. Manage donations responsibly

Trust matters. Keep simple records from the first dollar or donated item to the final expense. If your school, parent organization, nonprofit partner, or another adult is handling funds, follow their process exactly.

Minimum tracking system

Date	Supporter	Cash / item	Amount / value	Purpose / note
_____	_____	_____	\$ _____	_____
_____	_____	_____	\$ _____	_____
_____	_____	_____	\$ _____	_____

- [] Use an approved payment method or organization account; avoid informal personal payment arrangements when possible.
- [] Save receipts and document reimbursements.
- [] Do not publish donor names or personal information without permission.
- [] Thank supporters promptly.
- [] If plans change, keep supporters and the responsible adult/organization informed.
- [] After the project, summarize how funds or donated items were used.

5. Sponsorships and grants: keep it simple

A sponsorship or grant request does not need fancy language. It needs alignment, clarity, and evidence that you can carry out the plan.

For a local business

Explain the community connection, the exact support requested, and appropriate recognition you can offer, such as a thank-you on event materials if permitted.

For a grant

Read eligibility and scoring criteria first. Reuse your project description only after tailoring it to the funder's goals and questions.

For in-kind support

Ask for a concrete item or service: 100 printed flyers, 40 notebooks, a two-hour venue reservation, or donated snacks.

For recurring support

Do not promise a long-term partnership before the first project works. Deliver one strong project, report the results, then discuss what comes next.

What not to promise

Avoid guaranteeing publicity, tax treatment, audience size, media coverage, or other benefits you cannot control. Be accurate about what SHC, your school, or your project can actually provide.

Thank-you message

"Thank you for supporting [Project Name]. Your contribution helped us [specific use/result]. We reached [number/audience] and learned [brief insight]. We appreciate your support of student-led community action."

Fundraising Planning Worksheet

Project / event	What are you raising support for?
Total essential cost	\$
Confirmed in-kind support	What has already been donated or covered?
Fundraising target	\$
Primary method	Donations / fundraiser / sponsor / grant / in-kind / other
Top 5 prospects	Who is most likely to care about this project?
The exact ask	Amount, item, service, or sponsorship level:
Deadline	When do you need support by?
Approved payment process	Who will receive and track funds?