



AJWS Group Service Programs Fundraising Information

Dear Participants,

We hope all of you are well and that you are preparing for your upcoming service with AJWS. As part of this preparation, we encourage all participants to take an active role in raising funds towards their program cost. The purpose of this packet is to clarify how the funds you raise will be used to support your participation in your upcoming service program and to give you some concrete steps on how to raise those funds.

Fundraising for AJWS' service programs is a commitment that will take time, energy and creativity. Fundraising is also an opportunity for participants to create a meaningful experience for themselves and for their community. As you ask people for support, you will have to articulate what this program is all about and why it is important to you to participate in it. You will be educating your community about the Jewish obligation to pursue justice and real ways that Jews can do this work.

By asking others for a financial contribution, you are not only doing good in the world yourself, you are affording someone else the opportunity to do so by giving *tzedakah*.

Have fun and good luck!

AJWS Group Service Programs Staff

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What am I fundraising for?

Funds you raise will go toward your program fee.

How much money should I raise?

There is no set amount you should fundraise within the program fee, but you should set a personal fundraising goal for yourself, both as a way to track your progress and as motivation for achieving it. Be sure to factor in how much you expect to contribute personally, and any scholarships or financial aid you have received.

Why should I try to fundraise?

You may consider fundraising an important task for any of these reasons:

- Fundraising is not just about raising money. It is a tool for social change. When you raise funds, you will speak to numerous people about your service program and AJWS' work for global justice.
- Fundraising is about involving others in your experience. Most people you encounter while fundraising will be impressed with what you are doing. Giving money is a simple way for them to join in and support your efforts.
- This is an opportunity for skill building, as fundraising experience is a vital (and marketable!) skill in social change work.

The program fee seems like a lot of money. How can I possibly raise that much?

When you break it down, an amount even as large as one thousand dollars is not a lot of money to fundraise. That's 36 people donating \$50 each, or 45 people donating \$40 each. See "Troubleshooting Fundraising" for additional information.

But I don't know anyone with money. What do I do if I don't know a lot of people who are rich?

You can (and should) raise the money in small donations. That way, you involve more people in your work. If \$50 seems like a lot to ask of someone, ask for \$36, or \$18. If you ask for \$18 from your office or class of 30 people, you've already raised \$540! See below for creative ways to raise funds in small doses.

We suggest you start your fundraising effort by sending an appeal letter to your family and friends. This might strike you as peculiar, but if the letter is written in a thoughtful manner, the results can be positive. Ask for an amount you think is appropriate for the individual, and follow up with a phone call. (And of course, write a thank you letter once they donate!)

What if I raise more than the cost of my program?

You may consider any funds raise above your program fee as a donation to AJWS, or we will be happy to refund you if the amount totals over \$100.

IMPORTANT FUNDRAISING DETAILS

Information About Tax Receipts

The full program fee and cost of airfare is tax-deductible for all AJWS Group Service Programs. AJWS **will not** issue tax receipts to participants for program fees. However, if you are audited, AJWS will provide the required documentation to attest to the veracity of the deduction.

You may find it helpful to remind prospective contributors that support for the program is tax-deductible. A tax receipt is not necessary; however, documentation may be provided to contributors in the following ways:

- 1) The contributor writes a check to you. You write a personal receipt for the contributor.
- 2) Alternative Breaks and Delegations only - The contributor writes a check to the partnering organization (e.g. the Hillel, JCC or synagogue). The partnering organization provides a tax-receipt.
- 3) Should a contributor to your fee request a letter of acknowledgment from AJWS, you or your organization may make arrangements with AJWS Group Service staff. NOTE: This letter will acknowledge your participation in the program and the amount of the program fee you paid; it is not a receipt. AJWS cannot acknowledge a contribution for a check not made out to AJWS, and we **cannot** accept checks made out to AJWS from individual contributors to Alternative Breaks/Delegations program fees.

Alternative Breaks & Delegations

The organization coordinating your trip with AJWS will provide you with information about how to turn in your program fee, including all funds raised, since you will not be paying AJWS directly as an individual participant.

Volunteer Summer

People can donate to your program fee in two ways:

- 1) **Online:** direct people to the following link which will take them to the "Support a Volunteer" page: <https://donate.ajws.org/03/service>. Be sure to tell them to complete the sections that specify "Name of Volunteer" (you!) and "AJWS Program Name" (Volunteer Summer Program).
- 2) **By check:** request that all checks be made payable to you. AJWS **cannot** accept checks from your donors. Collect all of the checks, deposit them into your own account and write AJWS a check for the total amount to be sent in by the tuition deadline date. See above for information about tax receipts.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISERS

To Get Started:

Set a Goal: How much money do you plan to fundraise?

Be Creative: Use this list of projects to get you started but don't feel limited by these suggestions.

Make a Plan: Think of different types of fundraisers that will appeal to different audiences and create specific targets for each group. Break down the various tasks of your projects. Create a timeline, remembering that many people will take some time to write and mail checks to you. Have a system for keeping track of donations, checking that checks are submitted correctly and tracking return addresses.

In Your Outreach Efforts:

Budget: Create a budget for everything you do. Make sure you are not spending more on an event than you will make.

Collaborate: If everyone in your group is sending personal letters to friends and family, why not create a template together?

Know Your Audience: Be sure to highlight the aspect of your trip that is interesting to prospective supporters. You may need to create a few versions of your pitch to ensure that it is well-received by all.

Provide Information: Always offer information about the organization you will be supporting. You may wish to refer people to the AJWS website.

Be Specific: Explain why it is important to you to participate in your AJWS service program.

Provide Instructions: Be clear about where to send the check and to whom checks should be made out. Be sure prospective donors have the necessary information to donate on the AJWS website.

Make It Easy: If you are mailing requests, send self-addressed stamped envelopes. If someone expresses an interest in donating online, e-mail him or her the link.

Follow Up: Describe what you plan to do in your community upon your return. Be in touch regarding offers for speaking engagements shortly after your return home.

After People Have Contributed:

Acknowledge Contributions: Thank everyone immediately! Thank those who have made donations as well as anyone who helped you in your fundraising efforts. You may also wish to send another thank you note/e-mail after you start your volunteer placement so that you can share an anecdote from your experience.

Be sure to follow up on offers for speaking engagements shortly after your return home.

WHO SHOULD I ASK?

Friends and Relatives

Send a detailed letter or make personal phone calls explaining the program and what you hope to accomplish to 100 or more people, including friends, relatives, former teachers or professors, former co-workers, etc. Ask for a specific amount of money - \$50 is a nice round figure, but for older, more established relatives or friends \$100 is not too much to ask; for peers and fellow students, perhaps \$10-\$25. You may want to break your potential supporters into two, three or more groups, sending a custom letter to each group, based on your relationship with them or the amount of money you are asking for. Often a few people will be very inspired by what you are doing and many give much more. Certain relatives may be able to loan you more money than they would be willing to just give you, as long as you agree to pay it back at a set time.

Jewish Institutions

Scholarships are often available through your local synagogue, Federation, or Hillel. Even if you haven't seen your Rabbi for many years, he or she should be glad to support you as you reconnect with Jewish community through this program. You might want to ask for a specific amount as an honorarium for an informative presentation about your experience when you return.

Your School

College public service centers and academic departments frequently have fellowship programs that grant money to students participating in innovative study projects or programs abroad, particularly if you are earning academic credit for the program. An announcement in your high school or college alumni associations' newsletter about what you are about to do with a pitch for contributions can be a good way to gain support and touch base with long lost friends.

Community Groups

Civic groups such as B'nai Brith, Rotary, certain unions or special interest groups (like the Sierra Club or Returned Peace Corps Volunteers) might be interested in sponsoring you, especially if you can give them a special presentation when you return from overseas. Or, take up a special collection at one of their general meetings, coordinated with the meeting's events/organizers. It is important to educate the community about what you will be doing before the collection is announced, via written materials in the bulletin or preferably featuring a personal appeal by you during the meeting/event.

Grant Makers

Many foundations, fellowship programs, and government branches offer funds to people to work, study or volunteer abroad. You can research these in The Grants Register, the Directory of Research Grants and The Foundation Directory, all available in most public libraries.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

These ideas can be done either as an individual (for Volunteer Summer) and as a group (for Alternative Breaks and Delegations).

Social Events

There are hundreds of ways to throw a fundraising party – just make sure you end up earning money, not losing! You may want to combine a raffle with the party to earn extra bucks. Sell raffle tickets ahead of time and insist that people show up in order to win. It is usually best to charge a flat fee for the party (\$10-25) and provide free beverages and food. Consider having a theme that attracts people, hosting a speaker, showing a movie/documentary or holding a benefit dinner. Have people RSVP so that you have a good idea of how much you will make before the party starts.

Other suggestions for social events are:

- Shabbat dinner, Sunday brunch or a dinner party
- Art/photo exhibit
- Talent show
- “Band night” – have student bands perform so your friends and friends of band members show up

“Steal the Gate”

Try to get the owner of a hot night spot to give you a certain percentage - or even all - of the cover charges for the night in return for you guaranteeing a larger than usual crowd that will buy drinks, etc. at regular prices. This is best done on conjunction with a popular band, a guest speaker or something to convince the owner that there will indeed be a large turnout. Alternately, approach the sponsoring organization of a successful annual event and ask them to focus on a theme that relates to the work you will be doing overseas. They can then arrange for a portion of the proceeds to go to your trip.

Have a Sale

A bake sale or rummage sale is a good way to show off your skills in the kitchen or sell your possessions and gather support for your cause. You may want to combine a raffle at the site of the sale, or an auction, especially if there is a natural group that would support you in this endeavor (fraternity, workplace, synagogue, club, etc.).

Get a Job

Getting an easy part-time job (like babysitting, dog walking, etc.) can earn you extra money without cutting into your time.

Be Creative!

There are an endless number of possibilities based on who you are reaching out to. Look around and think about what makes the most sense for you. One participant raised over \$200 with friends by having a “Midnight Bake Sale” – baking cookies and selling them late on a Friday night in Washington, D.C. on a corner with a lot of pedestrian traffic. If you are in a large dorm, consider going door-to-door and asking people for loose change, even pennies – it’s a great way to talk to a lot of fellow students about international development and students shouldn’t have trouble parting with a handful of change.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

These are some places to look for text / talking points for your fundraising work.

AJWS Web site (www.ajws.org)

There are several pages here that might be helpful. Recommendations include:

- Mission statement
- Jewish texts that form the basis of our work
- Descriptions of our service programs and their goals
- Explanations of the kinds of projects we fund around the world

Information About the Host NGO

You should have heard or received information about the organization you will be working with for your volunteer service. Make sure that you can describe the work that this organization does and how you will be helping them.

Past Programs

AJWS can provide you with articles, quotes, and photos from past participants and programs.

Donation Information

You can remind people that donations toward your program fee are tax-deductible.

Statistics and Quotes

You may wish to use numbers and thoughts that relate directly to the work you will be doing. For example:

- 1 billion people in the world (one out of every six) live on less than \$1 a day. 70% of them are women.
- 140 million people receive no public education.
- "The numbers are overwhelming but we cannot retreat to the convenience of being overwhelmed," AJWS President Ruth Messinger.

TROUBLESHOOTING FUNDRAISING: COMMON MISTAKES AND HOW YOU CAN SOLVE THEM

(Adapted from Training Materials for 3 Day Breast Cancer Foundation Walk, <http://www.the3day.org>)

Mistake #1: Not sending out enough letters/e-mails

Solution: Figure out how many letters and e-mails you have sent out so far. Subtract that number from 100 and you will be left with the number of additional letters and e-mails that you need to send out. That's right: you should be sending out AT LEAST 100 letters and/or e-mails. Don't know 100 people? Of course you do. You're just not thinking outside of your inner circle of family and friends. What about your dentist? Your mechanic? The manager at your local grocery store? Still think you don't know 100 people? Send an e-mail to everyone in your e-mail address book and ask them to forward it to five or more of their friends. You will be pleasantly surprised to find out how many people you actually know.

Mistake #2: Not following up with potential donors

Solution: Your first round of fundraising letters and e-mails resulted in a number of donations from generous supporters. However, there are still several people who have not yet responded. Oh well, they decided that they don't want to donate and are too embarrassed to tell you, right? WRONG. Just because you have not heard from a potential donor does not mean that he or she does not want to donate. Think about how busy your own life is and how many projects you put off until later. The fundraising letter you sent Aunt Mary might have gotten lost in her stack of bills. The e-mail you sent Cousin Larry might still be sitting in his inbox. Give each potential donor four to six weeks to respond and then follow up with a phone call, letter or e-mail. Give them an update on your fundraising progress and reiterate how much you would appreciate their support.

Mistake #3: Assuming who can afford to donate (and how much)

Solution: People will give you what they can afford to give you. Never cross someone off your list because you think that he cannot afford to donate. By assuming that one person cannot afford to donate, you will lose out on valuable fundraising dollars that someone may be more than willing to give. Ask, ask, ask! The biggest donations often come when you least expect it.

Mistake #4: Ignoring your donors once their check has been cashed

Solution: It's important to thank your donors and to keep them updated on your fundraising efforts. Not only are your donors supporting your personal commitment to participate in your service program, they are also supporting AJWS' mission to eradicate poverty through grassroots change. Once you thank them, you may also find it beneficial to send your donors a monthly e-mail to keep them up to date on your progress. By keeping them informed, you'll make your donors feel more involved and your donors will have a stake in whether or not you achieve your fundraising goal. Perhaps they'll make a second donation later on if they see that you are struggling. Perhaps they'll pass your donation forms along to their friends and family members. You never know. So thank them and keep them involved.

ADDITIONAL LINKS

If you are looking for more ideas, the sites have more specific fundraising ideas that you can adapt for your own use.

www.pacificpridefoundation.org/AIDSWalk/topten.htm

www.aidswalk.net/sanfran/getinvolved/star_fundraising.html

www.grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/index.html

www.idealists.org/tools/fundraising.html

www.crossculturalsolutions.org/Documents/Fundraising%20Guide%20-%202007.pdf

www.womeninprogress.org/student/fundraising.asp

www.worldteach.org/program_information/fundraising.html