



FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Let's face it: many organizers and activists can't just shell out money from our own pockets for extended car trips, plane tickets and hotel reservations! Making the trip to Fort Benning is a big commitment, including a financial one.

We are thankful for the sacrifices and energy you put into getting yourselves, and others, to Columbus, Georgia to strengthen our movement. We are stronger when we refuse to allow finances to be anyone's roadblock on our collective journey to close the SOA, and stronger when we invite others to "travel along" by providing financial support.

Therefore, raising funds for your trip is most likely an important part of your organizing endeavors. It can seem daunting at times, but fundraising is beneficial in many ways...and it's not just about the end total! Raising funds as an individual or group is a great outreach opportunity. View it as a way to get your family, friends, and community to share in your experience. Many times, circumstances do not allow for folks to get to out of town events, even if it means a great deal to them. In this case, it is a great way to contribute oneself to the movement and participate in this work! Following are some fundraising tips suggested by our colleagues at Witness for Peace:

Where to Start?

- **Begin with a goal in mind.** How much do you want to raise? 50 percent? 100 percent? Knowing what you are personally able to put into the event will help determine how much others will need to help you.
- **Know the reasons why you are raising funds.** Before asking anyone for anything, first answer the question: Why are we making this trip? Make a list of the three or four most compelling reasons for going to the School of the Americas Watch mobilization. These reasons should also include why people will want to help your cause, which helps to you to...
- **Develop a "rap".** This will help you communicate clearly and concisely the reasons why it is important for others to support your trip. Does your uncle have a special place in his heart for children? Talk about the scarring realities children face every day in the war-torn country of Colombia, a situation which only exacerbated by US funding and SOA training. Is your next-door neighbor part of a labor union? Talk about how SOA grads are known as "the ultimate union busters." Is your great-grandma a raging anti-capitalist street activist? Talk about the way the SOA trains the military-muscle to enforce damaging free-trade agreements and corporate agendas.
- **Identify who to ask.** Make a list, dividing it up into two columns: individuals in one column and places of worship and other organizations in another column. Then set priorities. Start fund raising with the strongest possibilities.



What's Next?

- **Write to close family, friends, professors, and co-workers about your trip and ask them to make a contribution.** Try to tailor your letter according to the audience you are targeting. You may have two or three different versions of your letter that you send out. Also, it is helpful to suggest a dollar amount—perhaps each contribution could cover the expense of one meal during your trip, or one night at the motel/campground, or one fill-up of gas for your vehicle. However, let people know that any amount they can afford to give will be helpful.
- **Ask a place of worship to make a special appeal a couple of months before the trip to cover part of the traveling cost.** Usually an announcement can be made before or after a religious service. It is helpful for someone from your group to be present when this appeal is made. It can be beneficial to speak to the group about what it is that you are doing, why you are doing it, and how they are able to be part of the larger struggle for justice. Also, try different community organizations that would be sympathetic to the cause.
- **Hold a yard sale.** Get family and friends to donate unneeded furniture, appliances, books, albums, and other items to go towards the cost of the trip. Make sure to publicize the purpose of the sale! Reduce, reuse, recycle!! ♻️
- **Host a dinner party, potluck, or anything with food!** Identify different groups to invite for a gathering around food and conversation. Ask guests to in advance to bring a contribution if possible. Show one of the informative videos available from the SOA Watch office, or have speakers, a slide show, or presentation from someone in your group. For videos available from SOA Watch, consult the included resource list, visit our webpage at www.soaw.org or call 202-234-3440.

During your fundraising efforts, remember the national office! Try to raise extra money to use as a donation to the movement.

Other Fundraising Resources:



An on-line treasure trove of fundraising ideas is available at www.grassrootsfundraising.org.

The Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (GIFT) is a multiracial organization that promotes the connection between fundraising, social justice and movement building. In 2008, GIFT merged with the venerable *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, bringing together generations of commitment and a wealth of experience, energy and enthusiasm.

Their website, listed above, offers how to's and analysis, free articles and a free monthly e-newsletter. You will also find opportunities for subscribing to the print *Journal* and participating in GIFT training and webinars.

Reading (and discussing!) their Mission, Vision, History and "How We Make Change" ~ all found on the website (*see "About Us"*) is a lesson in itself.

Also, the related Chardon Press website www.chardonpress.com offers books on fundraising and organizing for social change, worthy additions to your group's library.

Best of Luck with your Fundraising!

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