

# YOU FEED THEM

## Tips and Ideas for Raising Funds

It is important that a fund raising plan be *prepared* and *followed through with* from the beginning. Keep in mind that raising money will be an ongoing effort. This will not stop once the doors of the food pantry open. In order to keep those doors open, money will need to continue to come in along with the food.

1. Ask anyone and everyone for money for your food pantry. Do not rely solely on your congregation for the financial stability of the food pantry. Go into your community. Ask friends, other congregations, relatives, co-workers, local businesses, elected officials, neighbors, restaurant owners, even strangers! Tell them about what you are doing with excitement! Also, keep in mind that even small donations can make a huge difference when added together.
2. The more that you ask, and the more diverse ways in which you ask will result in more money. In other words, think outside the box every once in a while as to how you are going to ask for money. Do something different such as a *Sit-a-thon* where volunteers offer babysitting services for a designated evening and all the proceeds go to the food pantry. Use social media, Facebook, and Twitter.
3. Vary your funding sources so that no one institution is burdened. If you receive funds or product through a government resource you will *not* want to rely fully on that resource since it could be cut based on the state of the economy.
4. Be personal with your supporters. When they donate food, money or anything else **always** send a thank you card or a letter of thanks. This lets them know that you have received their donation and it also lets them know that it is appreciated. Remember, they are taking time, money, and energy to support your food pantry. The very least you can do (yes, you can certainly do more if you like) is send them a card or a letter.
5. Watch your overhead costs to be sure that you are raising more money than you are spending. If you have an event, such as a dinner, and you charge \$50 per person but the cost to put the event on came to \$40 per person that's only \$10 per person that you are getting for the food pantry. Keep this in mind for *each* event. It is a **fundraiser**, not just a social event!
6. Your group may want to look at a grant as one form of income for the food pantry. A resource for private grants is the Foundation Center at [fdncenter.org](http://fdncenter.org). This website may require a fee. A resource for federal grants is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance at [cfda.gov](http://cfda.gov) and [grants.gov](http://grants.gov). Keep in mind that obtaining a grant will require a lot of "red tape" on your end, but it is worth the extra work and effort.
7. Fundraising ideas: Spaghetti Dinner, Car Wash, Silent Auction, Golf Tournament, 5K Run or Walk, Bowl-A-Thon, Theme Party, Garage Sale, Pancake Breakfast, Wii or Scrabble Tournament, and so on.
8. Consider also putting together a *wish list*. This can be given to your congregation as well as friends, other congregations, relatives, co-workers, local businesses, elected officials, neighbors, restaurant owners, and so on.