



Troop Fundraising 101

Our goal is to impact the lives of boys! Most families that drop out do so because their Troop failed to “keep the promise” of providing a program full of trips and outdoor experiences for their son.

As we have looked at retention of families and asked why some have left, one of the biggest reasons is “we didn’t do what we expected”. Usually that’s because of limited resources—a Troop hopes to do a variety of fun, adventurous activities, but a lack of funds prevents it. Don’t let that be your story!

Don’t just fundraise. Help parents *see the need for fundraising* as a means for keeping the promise of fun and adventure! It all starts with planning a great program. Hold an annual Planning session involving all “stakeholders” in the Troop. The purpose is to help parents understand and feel a part of (and buy into) the process; but it’s not just for parents—it’s also for leaders and the boys, too. It’s best to conduct this session over the summer, but you could hold it as early as May. The point is: don’t start your fall program before you hold this vital planning session!

Program Planning

Troop Leaders (Committee Chair, Treasurer, Troopmaster) plan the meeting (you’ll see how to carry it out below) and send a notice out. A week later, you’ll gather those folks together—parents, leaders, and Trailmen. Take out a big flip chart and start the brainstorming. Ask these people:

What does everyone really **want** to do this year? Have them suggest activities one month at a time, starting with August or September, while you write them on the flip chart. There are no bad ideas, so challenge them to think big! You will soon have a full, year-round calendar of activities listed on the paper.

Next, add what you **need** to do to this year. Probably no one will have mentioned completing the re-charter, sending in the annual program fee, sending leaders to training, or buying uniforms, advancements, handbooks, standards, or Troop equipment—but it’s vital. Go back and add all this in on your monthly planning chart.

Budgeting

Once you have completed those two steps, you’ll know what the people in the Troop want to do, and you’ll know they’ll attend *because it’s their plan*; and you’ll know the things you have to do. But there’s one looming problem: MONEY! How will you pay for all of this? Let the boys go outside for an activity, but keep parents and most of the leaders in the room to discuss costs. Show them the SIZE of this problem by quickly attaching a cost to each activity. Estimate the number of Trailmen and leaders affected by each item on your flip chart, and the resulting costs (for example, sending 20 Navigators and Adventurers to a Summer Adventure week costing \$200 each =

\$4,000). Finally, total the chart and the crowd will be shocked! A Troops' annual program might cost \$7,500...or \$15,000...or even more!"

So now we know the **what**—what we will do (offer a full, dynamic program), and what it will cost (lots of \$). Now the only question to answer is: **how?** Here are some options:

- #1: Have parents pay...charge a huge joining/activity fee—\$300 or more—or “nickel-and-dime” them to death with dues and fees every time you want to do something (and hope they don't notice how much this is costing). **NO!**
- #2: Ask parents to spend every other weekend doing car washes, bake sales, holiday fundraisers, etc. to get enough cash to cover the next event. **NO!**
- #3: Ask families to dedicate 4-5 days over a few weeks on one fundraiser that will cover most of the costs of the program we described. **YES!**

Which fundraiser you select is not important—but do choose one that meets the objective: doing just *one* fundraiser that pays for most or all of your Troop's costs. Working together as a team (rather than making each family bear the financial burden themselves), leads to a thriving, growing Troop—every time.

FUNDRAISING POLICY (updated 11/14/16)

1. All Troop fundraisers must be approved by the Chartering Organization.
2. All fundraisers must be in keeping with the aims and goals of Trail Life USA as expressed in the motto, “Walk Worthy!”, the Mission, and the Trailmen Oath.
3. In addition, if use of Trail Life USA official logo is desired on a product, fundraisers must be approved by Trail Life USA's Home Office and may require a license agreement. Please email TLUSA License Application which can be found online to Branding@TrailLifeUSA.com and allow sufficient time for a resolution before products are needed, at least three weeks.

Include details of the fundraiser including:

- a. Complete Troop number XX-####
 - b. Your contact information including name and phone.
 - c. Duration
 - d. Product description (incl. website reference or mockup of product, if applicable)
 - e. Cost of product and sale price
4. Approved fundraisers may be done in an official Trail Life USA uniform.
 5. Three Troop fundraisers per year maximum are allowed.
 6. Fundraiser participation is voluntary by the youth and families and all families must be informed of planned fundraising activities.

7. No solicitation of donations is allowed.
8. Except where a raffle “prize” has been specifically donated, any fundraising project designed to raise money on behalf of, to benefit, or for the use of Trail Life USA, a Trail Life USA Troop or a member of Trail Life USA which involves games of chance, lotteries, bingo, or which could be construed as a gambling activity, is not permitted. The sale of raffle tickets is authorized, provided it is consistent with the practices and beliefs of the Charter Organization’s faith, it must be conducted in compliance with all applicable local, state and/or federal laws.

Nothing herein shall be deemed a restriction on the fundraising activities of a Charter Organization to financially support its non-Trail Life ministries, provided it does not suggest authorization by Trail Life USA or TLUSA Troops. Nor shall the fact that a Charter Organization engages in such fundraising activities for non-Trail Life ministries that are in compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and whose specific Christian doctrine allows such activities be deemed to be in violation of the Trail Life USA Statement of Faith and Values or in violation of Trail Life USA policies.

9. You may be contacted by outside organizations about fundraisers. Please keep in mind, official Trail Life USA national sanctioned fundraisers will be communicated to you from a Trail Life USA employee with a @TrailLifeUSA or @trooptrack.com email address.
10. Two-deep leadership must be maintained at all times during a fundraising activity and activities must comply with Trail Life USA Health and Safety guidelines.