Fundraising and Prudent Reserve

Guidelines for Groups and Service Bodies

- Fundraising Ideas
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FUNDRAISING IDEAS

OA events are wonderful for fellowship and recovery, and the funds they generate can help groups and service bodies continue Twelve Step work. Fundraisers that include the use of OA literature reinforce the program and help carry the message.

Suggested fundraisers

Anniversary celebrations
- Annual OA events such as Overeaters Anonymous’ birthday and IDEA, Unity, and Twelfth-Step-Within days may be celebrated with a marathon, banquet, or dance. Hold an OA meeting in conjunction with the social event. National holidays can also be special times for fellow OA members to be together. Valentine’s Day dances, Independence Day picnics, Thanksgiving “thankathons,” and New Year’s Eve balls are examples of events with a holiday theme.

Games and activities
- A dance or carnival can include games and activities that can be enjoyed for a nominal donation. Examples: photo booths and face- and/or hand-painting stands. Raffles/drawings, 50/50 drawings, or other games of chance may be offered in areas where state and local laws permit. In addition, raffles or games of chance should be conducted in a manner that does not divert from our primary purpose.

Merchandise sales
- T-shirts, mugs, book bags, and other items can be sold at OA events, and serve as ongoing fundraisers for groups and service bodies. In accordance with OA World Service Business Conference policy, it is suggested that all sale items be approved by group conscience and that sales be conducted in a manner that will not divert attention from OA’s primary purpose or endorse an outside enterprise.

Auctions
- Items or services contributed by OA members can be purchased by the highest bidder.

Boutique
- Items donated by OA members may be sold to OA members for set prices.

Talent shows
- Members can show off their creativity and raise money too.

Gratitude pledges
- Members may choose to make special Seventh Tradition contributions to celebrate OA birthdays, memorials, or other occasions. Pledge envelopes can be made available at meetings.

Contribution jars
- These could be set out for special causes as well as ongoing needs such as the region representative or World Service Business Conference delegate travel funds, telephone funds, buying office equipment, or scholarships to OA events.

“No Bake” sales
- Members contribute money they used to spend on snack or junk food items.

For additional ideas or guidance, contact other service bodies or your region.

THE TRADITION OF SELF-SUPPORT

OA’s Seventh Tradition states: “Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

A question groups and service bodies must ask themselves is: “Are we truly self-supporting?”

How can our group increase the Seventh Tradition collection?

Group members may not be aware of how important individual contributions are to OA’s continued existence. To bring this point home during meetings, the group treasurer might read aloud OA’s Seventh Tradition and its explanation from the pamphlet The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous as the basket is being passed. Group treasurers can also make monthly reports to their groups and make sure the basket circulates to all members. Virtual meeting members may contribute directly to the WSO. To contribute, go to the Contribute page on oa.org.

How much should our group give to our service body and why?

Many meetings never contribute financially to their service bodies—sometimes because they don’t understand the importance of it, sometimes because they don’t know how. A good guide for making appropriate financial contributions to service bodies is the pamphlet Seventh Tradition of OA. It explains how contributions support
service body services such as telephone hotlines, meeting
lists, public information, and Twelfth-Step-Within activities.
Groups and service bodies might consider donating these
guidelines to each of their meetings. Virtual services
meetings contribute to their service body and the WSO.

What can service bodies do to encourage contributions?

Service body officers may want to attend meetings that
haven’t contributed to the service body and explain the
concept of self-support. Monthly service body newsletters can
print service body treasurers’ reports to let members know
how contributions are being spent. Communications can
include the service body, region, and World Service Office
addresses to help groups send in their contributions. Service
body treasurers should keep in regular contact with group
treasurers. Groups that do contribute could be acknowledged
through thank-you notes and notices in the service body
newsletter.

Am I giving enough?

A personal question members may want to ask themselves
is: “Am I still contributing in the same manner as when I
first came into the program?” I used to spend many dollars
on my binge foods; how much do I donate in gratitude for
my recovery? Some individuals make yearly donations to
the WSO to express their gratitude for the recovery they
have found in OA. Sponsors might share with sponsees the
meaning and importance of the Seventh Tradition.

To help OA carry the message of recovery, members
may want to give an automated monthly Seventh Tradition
contribution. OA accepts contributions from OA members,
groups, and service bodies only. An OA member may
contribute up to $5,000 per year to the general fund, up
to $5,000 to any special fund, and up to $5,000 to honor
the memory of a deceased member. To set your monthly
contribution, visit the Contribute page on oa.org.

THE PRUDENT RESERVE

What is a prudent reserve?

A prudent reserve is an amount of money set aside to
provide a source of funds for situations such as a sudden
increase in expenses or an unanticipated loss in contributions
with the intention of reserves being used and replenished
within a reasonably short period of time. Each group or
service body should establish its own prudent reserve policy.

How much money should be in the prudent reserve?

The amount may be determined by figuring operational
expenses for a given period of time—for example, the
World Service Office has selected three months to calculate
its reserve funds. Expenses include such things as rent,
telephone, postage, printing, utilities, and salaries, if
applicable. The fund should be periodically reviewed to
make sure it meets the present and projected needs of the
group or service body.

What if our group doesn’t have any extra money?

If a service body finds it can’t fully fund its prudent
reserve all at once, fundraising activities such as those
suggested in these guidelines may be undertaken to raise
the needed monies.

GUARDING OUR TRADITIONS

It’s the responsibility of all OA members to act as
guardians of our Traditions. Not upholding our Traditions
often occurs through misunderstanding or misinformation.
We need to be constantly alert that we don’t inadvertently
make a precedent-setting decision that could adversely affect
our own and other OA groups and thus OA as a whole.

For more information, see the OA Handbook for
Members, Groups and Service Bodies; Guidelines for OA
Events; Seventh Tradition of OA; the pamphlet The Twelve
Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous; and the book
The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters

Note: See Budget Guidelines for Service Bodies for help with
creating, monitoring and maintaining budgets.