



Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the State of Illinois

FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES & IDEAS

This document is designed to provide some direction on fundraising that your Chapter can engage in. It encompasses efforts you can do on behalf of your Chapter – either for building funds for operations or non-charitable needs or for local, charities your Chapter wishes to support – as well as for the Grand Chapter's Royal Arch Masons Charitable Foundation.

Why raise funds?

There are many reasons: You Chapter may be in need of operating capital (though it is hoped that the per capita and monetary needs such as this are covered by your Chapter's dues paid by its members). Perhaps there's a need for repairs or upgrades to the Temple you meet in. Maybe your Chapter needs new degree costumes or props, is supporting a widows relief effort or another purpose that is not entirely "charitable," as we know the term.

On the other hand, as Masons, we are taught to be inherently charitable in the truest sense of the word and perhaps your Chapter has chosen a local, regional or national charity to support. You may also wish to support the charitable efforts of the Grand Chapter through the Royal Arch Masons Charitable Foundation.

What is the Royal Arch Masons Charitable Foundation?

The Royal Arch Masons Charitable Foundation or RAMCF is the Grand Chapter's separate charitable 501(c)3 non-profit organization which collects, invests and distributes funds to charitable causes as directed by the sitting Grand High Priest. For the next few years, it is anticipated that the RAMCF will support local Illinois causes affiliated with childhood autism.

General thoughts

So you've decided the reason for raising funds and perhaps even a method to do it (we'll address that later). There are some "keys to success" you should adhere to, no matter what type of fundraising you are doing or who the funds raised will go to:

1. **Have a goal.** Know what you are shooting for, whether that's a monetary goal, a number of people, families or organizations you want involved, and what the timeframe is for attaining the goal. Having a goal that is measurable helps to rally everyone around the efforts and allow you to determine how you are doing/have done.
2. **Have a plan.** The goal is half the battle – having a plan to get to the goal is the next step. Think about how to promote your efforts, communication, logistics and follow-up.



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3. **Have a committee.** While even the simplest of efforts may seem like one person can handle them, remember that a group effort promoted “buy in” from the members. It also eases the work and responsibilities. Determine a committee and let them pick a leader who will present the plan, report on progress and communicate final efforts made.
4. **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** If your efforts never go beyond the committee or those Companions who happened to attend the meetings where it was discussed, don’t be surprised if your goals aren’t met. Most meetings feature only a fraction of the Chapter’s membership – almost every fundraising effort requires the work and participation of many, many people. Communication – complete, informative and frequent – is key to meeting your fundraising goals.
5. **Celebrate success, learn from mistakes.** When all is said and done, if you’ve met your goals, make sure everyone knows it (the membership, the public (if appropriate) and, especially, the Grand Chapter – we can help you publicize your successes and communicate them to other Chapters to try. If you could have done better, no worries. At least now you know what to do different or better the next time!

Some ideas

We’ll forego the pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners here, except to say that meal-based fundraising efforts can be extremely successful if a couple of things are kept in mind:

1. **Look outside the membership.** Even if you have 300 members in your Chapter, you need to target potential customers in the public. Use those 300 members (or even 30) to sell tickets, put up flyers and help get the word out in EVERY way possible.
2. **It’s all about the presales.** If you can, sell tickets or get reservations ahead of time. It will help you to plan and prepare so that you don’t expect 300 and only get 30 (or vice versa).
3. **Publicity.** Get in the local newspaper or on the local radio to publicize your event. Both types of media love to publish these “public service” type announcements. If you can swing it and have local radio, try to get on the air beforehand and even invite the local station out for an “on the spot” event coverage. Same with the newspaper – some pre-event coverage is great (especially if you mix in some history of your Chapter, the Masons and, if applicable, the charity you may be supporting). A well-written press release with dates, times, locations, details, photos, etc. will help ensure your event gets attention.

If you’re working with a local charity or cause, get them involved too. Remember, they have as much to gain from being a part of your effort as your Chapter does. Tap into their resources: members or supporters, “clients,” their social media, web site, email list, etc.



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Need some ideas other than food sales?

- Walkathons or anything-a-thons
- Tournaments: darts, pool or anything where the public will see you
- 50/50 raffles: Though a bit controversial (always check with your DDGHP and MEGHP), if they're done properly and with forthought and good intention, they can be very successful
- Life membership raffles: Again, use some common sense and permission here, but it's a great way to get Masons at all levels involved in your fundraising