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## Raising Funds



A CTA has to have sources of income to support its planned programs and other activities. You don't have to raise a lot of funds just to get your CTA started, but if your programs are going to grow, a plan for fundraising should be in place during your first year of operation. It is wise to recruit people to your board of directors who have an interest in fundraising, experience in that area, and connections in your local community that may open doors. In the final analysis, fundraising requires good people skills and building relationships locally. Also, keep in mind that many organizations will provide grants only to eligible, tax-exempt, not-for-profit corporations. If your association is not an incorporated, tax-exempt organization, you may wish to have it become one.

### Where the Money Comes From

Starting out, a CTA has to have some sources of income to support the budgeted activities. Here are some suggestions on how to get started.

- **User fees, in-kind donations, and memberships.** User fees can be generated from a wide variety of tennis programs your CTA may offer. League and team programs, tournaments, exhibitions, and instructional programs can support the CTA's mission while also providing revenue. If, for example, you want to offer basic instructional sessions for youth and adults to get to your CTA programs off the ground, you can secure the use of tennis courts in your community from the parks and recreation department or the local school system. The value of that court time should be included in your statement or income and expenses as an in-kind donation. The participants should be charged a program or user fee that is moderate but can cover the fee of the instructor, the tennis balls, handout material, and incidental expenses. The funds generated by user fees should also be included in your budget statement as income.

You may wish to generate some money for start-up costs by inviting others to join your CTA as members. There are two different approaches used, and each one has its own merits. First, people who believe in the mission of your CTA, starting with the members of your board of directors, may be willing to donate money to get you started. If you can convince 20 people to donate \$100 each, you will be off to a good start. A second approach is to require each participant in your programs to join the CTA for a modest fee. For example, a \$10 membership fee is added to a program course fee of \$40, making the total fee \$50.

- **Support from your USTA section and the USTA national office.** This financial support may be in the form of grants or some other USTA initiative. To start, contact your USTA section office and ask about financial support for your local CTA. Although support varies from section to section, all USTA sections are anxious to help build community organizations. Once they find out about your plans, programs, and resources, section staff and volunteers will guide you on applying for various grants, provide direction on acquiring free or low-cost supporting materials, and alert you to training opportunities that are available for your leaders or coaches.
- **Special events.** These events can be as simple as a car wash or as ambitious as a formal banquet. Depending on your community, the culture, and the competition for local funds, you need to consider the types of events that will be successful. As your CTA matures, these fundraising events often take on a life of their own, and you can find volunteers who specialize and enjoy working on them. Don't forget to consider tennis fundraisers, too, such as marathons, fun competitions, rally contests, tours of private courts, or other creative formats.
- **Local sponsors.** Start by determining what value you can offer a potential sponsor, such as the sponsor's name on every T-shirt distributed in a USTA League program, recognition on CTA stationery, ads, flyers, and banners at fundraising events. Target your local bank, pizza stand, ice cream store, grocery store, etc.—anyone who values community support. The first ones on your prospect list should be those who have tennis supporters in a decision-making role as president or manager. Don't forget dentists, medical practices, and other professional people who value publicity for their practice or business.
- **Donations from corporations.** Many corporations are interested in giving back and reaching out to their communities. And most have some sort of formal grant process for charitable purposes. You should look for common interests that corporations might share with your organization. You will have to do your research to find out the corporation's policies and procedures for giving. They vary greatly from corporation to corporation.
- **Government and community grants.** Many grants are available from local community governments and state agencies. Enlist the help of knowledgeable grant writers, or consider hiring them to apply on your behalf and compensating them on a contingency basis. Many grant programs are available to support after-school care and academic and recreation programs for youth. Fighting crime, drugs, violence, obesity, and inactivity are all common causes of grant programs. If you can attach an educational component to your tennis programs for kids, the grant options available are multiplied.

## Characteristics of Successful Fundraising

What characteristics make a successful fundraiser? The following is a list from the California Community Foundation's handbook, *Resources for Your Nonprofit Organization: A How-To-Do-It Handbook*. This list represents some requisite qualities for successful resource development.

- **Be enthusiastic** in your research and development of funding opportunities. If you approach fundraising with a sense of dread, you're not likely to be successful.
- **Be passionate** in supporting your organization. If you aren't, there isn't a grant-maker in the world who won't see through you. No passion, no money.
- **Be persistent.** If you understand that there are more askers than givers, you'll understand why this is a virtue. You'll hear "no" far more than "yes." Reasonable persistence may turn a "no" into a "yes."
- **Try not to personalize your results.** Remember, being told "no" is the worst thing that can happen to you in raising funds. You don't have to enjoy it, but you can get over it. Remember also, the real work in carrying out a project starts after you get a "yes."
- **Try to be tolerant about ambiguity.** Little other than change is assured in the grant-seeking arena. Guidelines change; so can priorities. People may come and go. So if you are going to succeed in seeking support, you have to be flexible.
- Make sure your association is **eligible to receive grant support.** You must secure nonprofit, tax-exempt status.
- Be sure your organization has a **clearly defined purpose** or mission. Specific objectives and program plans directly related to accomplishing them should be evident.
- **A track record or some history of activities and accomplishments** tends to comfort many potential funding sources. New organizations may run into difficulty for this reason. A successful model for first-time grant-seekers seems to be one in which volunteers have come together to initiate development of the organization's programs for a period of time before trying for funding.
- Remember the **importance of volunteers.** Evidence of support by volunteers indicates community backing and conveys organizational credibility to potential funders.
- Because nonprofit status necessitates the existence of a board of directors, make sure that your **board that operates with a well-defined set of responsibilities.** The board should take an active role in your fundraising activities. There is potential for significant impact on funders if non-compensated board volunteers work hard to advance the organization's mission. And as for the importance of their own donations to the organization, external sources might hesitate to support your efforts if your own board won't do the same.

## Example of Balanced Funding Sources

Few funders will want to be the only source of support to your organization, so you should develop a broad base of financial support and/or resources. Listed below are some potential sources of funding. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but it is a starting point to get you on your way to generating financial resources.

- **USTA.** The USTA (district, section, and national) has money available to support CTAs and programs. You may contact your USTA section office for details. See Appendix E for contact information.
- **Government grants.** Your association may wish to research the arena of government grants. You'll find grants available at the federal, state, and local levels. See Appendix A for additional resources to begin your research.
- **Foundations.** Foundations are created to give money out to charitable organizations. There are more than 90,000 foundations nationwide granting money to organizations. The Foundation Center is an outstanding resource to begin your research on foundations. See Appendix A for more.
- **Special events.** Special events can be as simple as a car wash or as extravagant as a formal banquet. The bottom line is that special events raise money for your organization. The key to a special event is to minimize the actual expenses of the event so that you may bring in more money. There are hundreds of books on hosting special events. You'll have to take a look at a few to generate some good ideas. There is a list of titles in Appendix A to get you started.
- **Corporations.** Many corporations are interested in giving back and reaching out to their communities. And most have some sort of formal grant process for charitable purposes. You should look for common interests the corporation may share with your organization. Again, you'll have to do your research to find out the corporation's policies and procedures for giving. They vary greatly from corporation to corporation.
- **Participant fees.** Not-for-profit does not imply that the programs and service you offer must be free or that your organization cannot make money. A benefit of charging fees for programs and services is that people being charged take the programs more seriously. Not everyone has to pay the same fee. Your association should take into account low-income participants.
- **Membership.** Membership to your association allows you to offer increased benefits to your members while generating additional funds. You should consider youth, adult, and family memberships. Talk to other organizations like yours to find out what their membership structure is.
- **Individual gifts.** In the world of fundraising, you will find that approximately 80 percent of funding comes from individuals—people willing to support your association's activities personally. Getting individuals to give money to your association means someone in your organization needs to ask for money, which is not always an easy thing to do (and is often most successful when done one-on-one and face-to-face). Who should do the asking? It should probably be someone on your board of directors or someone else connected with and knowledgeable about the association. Who should be asked? You should begin with friends, family, and program participants—those who have an interest in seeing your association succeed. Also, some companies may have a corporate matching program that matches employee contributions to certain charities and organizations, so ask your employer if this exists.

- **In-Kind support.** Cash is not the only source of support for your association’s activities. Products and/or services are just as beneficial. It may not be cash, but you save money by not having to purchase these items. Almost any service or good that is not cash can be considered a form of in-kind support. A few examples of in-kind support are volunteers from a corporation, surplus equipment or supplies, assistance with publicity, development of promotional material, computer services, legal and tax advice, printing, and facilities.
- **Sponsorships.** Generating sponsorships for programs and/or services will not only result in increased revenue but will result in increased awareness and participation in your programs. Your local USTA section’s marketing staff can assist your association and facilitate your local sponsorship efforts.

## Funding Priorities

We’ve emphasized the importance of diversifying your funding sources. Your association may run into funding challenges if you are relying on one source of funding to keep your operations going. Funders are more likely to support your association when you are able to show they are not and will not be the sole source of funding. Below you will find what we consider to be a balanced source of funding. It’s a guideline to get you started. As your association matures, your percentages and sources may change, but the important thing to remember is to diversify.

Some CTAs have become self-funding, with little reliance on outside organizations for financial support. These CTAs may be funded by endowments, regular donations, membership dues, or user fees. A CTA that is funded as a direct result of its own activities will have a more predictable revenue stream. This will make it easier to plan for the future and may result in a more stable organization.

## Proposed Funding Percentages

User fees	30%
In-kind support	20%
Special events	15%
Third party grants	20%
Sponsorship	10%
Memberships	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>