

USTA GEORGIA CTA FUNDRAISING BEST PRACTICES

Fundraising is an important part of sustainability for CTAs, and it is as important as clarity of goals, membership recruitment and management of resources. Fundraising for CTAs can be divided in two categories, as follows:

USTA SOURCES

Grants are some times overlooked as one of the most important source of funds for CTAs. The importance of taking advantage of USTA grants can not be underestimated. Having a skilful grant writer is the key factor of success. Many sources for grant writing help are available within and outside the USTA. In Georgia, some cities have departments within the county or city government that help non profit organizations. The State of Georgia has a non profit office in Atlanta that maintains a library and does workshops for this purpose. The SSTA Executive Director has attended many useful sessions there.

NON USTA SOURCES

This is probably the most over looked area of fundraising. There are two categories:

Public Sources

Connecting with City or County sources for fundraising is of primary importance. Whether a CTA runs leagues or programs oriented towards children, it can be shown that there is a health and wellness component to any tennis activity. One initial step needs to be to establish a partnership with the local Tennis Center. Many CTAs do this as a matter of course.

Secondly, the City or County can be persuaded to increase the playing fee at the tennis facility a nominal amount and the facility can then channel that fee to the CTA in the form of a donation or contribution. How can this be justified? This can be put in place because the CTA will channel business to the Tennis Center by using the pros for Quickstart training in the schools, using the Center for events or simply share and complement the promotion of the Center in the community. The goal is to establish a winning situation for both parties. This is not an easy thing to do but it is totally achievable because the political leadership should be sensitive to what tennis means for the welfare of the community.

Another overlooked area is public grants. For example, HUD grants are available throughout the United States and million of dollars of those grants are not placed every year. There is a Southern CTA that has been able to capture HUD grants for many years and accordingly offers very significant tennis programming. Many other public grants are also available through the non profit centers mentioned above. The USTA is actively participating in the fight against obesity in this country. There is a PSA done by Michelle Obama, Andre and Steffi Agassi that addresses this issue. There will be more emphasis and support for this campaign going forward.

Private Sources

This is probably the most potentially productive area for CTA fundraising. In every community there are a number of corporate citizens that have budgets for local project support. Publix and AT&T have been two corporations that have done that. Usually Publix, through their local stores, can also be an in kind donor for CTA events. This seems to be a corporate policy that can be explored at the local level. Some times the point of contact has to be escalated to the Regional or District office to be successful.

AT&T likewise has local grants that can be reached under the title of health and wellness. Again, the most important factor is the ability to write a proper grant which addresses where the

corporate funds may be fit the CTA. Community tennis offers a rare opportunity to tap into corporate funds to enhance the wellness situation in the country.

Private foundations are another potential area for fundraising. Many communities have local philanthropic entities that are looking for vehicles to make investments in the community. CTAs can offer such vehicles by way of programming for children and adults. Senior citizens, in particular, represent an area attractive to foundations by way of helping them enhance their physical activity and keeping them engaged in other community programs. CTAs can offer volunteer participation in events that keep senior citizens active and healthy. Foundations usually help to write the grants that are required to apply for their funding.

Fund raising events are another important area for CTAs and in many communities, perhaps, the only form of raising funds. One proven format is the Tennis Festival. The structure can vary but one that always seems to be successful is the team tennis competition. One simple way is to have an event where you have 8 or 10 teams of 10 members a piece playing a round robin over a 6 hour period. The entry fee can be \$250 per team, for a goal to raise about to \$2000 per event. Volunteers can run the event and usually food and drink are donated by local vendors. The only expenses should some promotion materials and prizes for the participants. Players can pay for their own entry fee or teams can be sponsored by local businesses. The format can vary to include children competitions, fast serve or other events. Tennis Festivals provide a fun afternoon of tennis and community networking. Festivals can be scheduled at regular intervals during the year and they can become a major factor in the fund raising calendar of a community.

Fund raising takes many forms that some times are not apparent. CTAs are encouraged to come up with creative ideas for fund raising events. One amazing example is where one USTA Section has linked tennis and a rodeo to create a community event. One of the main components is to motivate the volunteer force to participate in every form of fund raising. The secret of fund raising is to identify what works best in every community.