



NATIONAL  
STUDENT  
LEADERSHIP  
FOUNDATION

## Guide to Community Fundraising

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## **Introduction**

Community fundraising is an important component of preparing for your conference. Many NSLC Alumni have raised significant portions of their program costs using the ideas in this guide. As you begin raising funds within your community, it is important to keep in mind the following:

1. Be sure to take into account the total cost of your NSLC program (tuition, travel expenses, clothing, souvenirs, etc.).
2. Remember that it is rare for students to raise all of their financial need through one source.
3. Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan and follow it.
4. Begin fundraising from the moment you receive your acceptance packet – do not wait to hear about your scholarship application.
5. Do not get discouraged – persistence will pay off.

## **Determining Your Fundraising Goal**

The first thing you must do is determine your fundraising goal. The amount you will be attempting to raise should include the total cost of attending the NSLC minus any amount you and your family may contribute prior to raising any funds. Your budget should include the following components:

### **Conference Costs:**

- *Tuition* – The total tuition for your program. This number should include the cost of the Student Protection Plan and tuition for the AU College Credit Option if you plan to take advantage of these programs.
- *Travel Expenses* – This should include the total cost of traveling to/from your program. If you are flying this should include airfare as well as the cost of using the NSLC Airport Shuttle. If someone will be driving you to the conference, you should include the cost for gas and tolls.
- *Incidental Expenses* – This should include the total amount of any additional program cost. This may include additional funds for souvenirs, a few off-campus meals, or additional clothing to meet the NSLC attire guideline. NSLC Alumni recommend students bring between \$150-200 for a ten-day program, however \$30-60(approximately) is necessary for two to three off-campus meals.

### **Available Funds:**

- *Student Contribution* – This should include the total amount you contribute to the program cost, for example money from your savings or job you already have.
- *Family Contribution* – This should include the total amount contributed by your family. If you have family members other than your parents such as grandparents who are able to contribute, be sure to include their contributions in this category.

### Sample Fundraising Goal Balance Sheet

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Conference Costs</b>            |      |
| Conference Tuition                 | \$   |
| AU Credit Tuition (optional)       | +    |
| Student Protection Plan (optional) | +    |
| Travel Expenses                    | +    |
| Incidentals (Spending Money)       | +    |
| <i>Total Conference Costs</i>      | = \$ |
| <b>Available Funds</b>             |      |
| Student Contribution               | \$   |
| Family Contribution                | +    |
| <i>Total Available Funds</i>       | = \$ |
| <b>Fundraising Goals</b>           |      |
| Total Conference Costs             | \$   |
| Total Available Funds              | -    |
| <i>Required Fundraising</i>        | = \$ |

*Remember – It is important to be realistic when determining your budget. Consider if you know that you will have to reduce the number of hours, you work at your after-school job in the spring because you will be studying for exams. In addition, keep in mind the NSLF receives more scholarship requests each year than can be awarded. While a few students may receive full scholarships, the vast majority of scholarship recipients receive \$250-750.*

### Developing a Comprehensive Fundraising Plan

Once you have calculated how much money you will need to raise, you should develop a comprehensive fundraising plan. Your plan should take into account both *Sponsorships* and *Fundraising Events*.

- *Develop a timeline:* When do you need to have all your money raised by? When do you have time to devote to your efforts? Are there times that you will be too busy with work or school?
- *Seek advice:* Is there someone in your school or community who can help you with your efforts? Have you talked to friends or other students in your school who were successful raising funds in the past? Have you talked to your principal or guidance counselor?
- *Be creative:* Think about all the different ways you could raise funds for your program. Get friends or family to brainstorm with you. Do not reject an idea just because it seems outrageous – fully investigate all possibilities.

## Sponsorships

One method for raising funds for your program is to obtain sponsorships. Sponsorships are contributions from local businesses, individuals, or community organizations. Many of these organizations have money set aside to support education or youth development in their community. As you seek sponsorships, you should take the following steps:

### Create a Sponsorship Package

Your sponsorship package lets potential sponsors know who you are, what you are raising money for, and why you will benefit from attending the NSLC. Your sponsorship package should include:

- *Cover Letter* – This letter should introduce you, describe exactly what you are requesting, and provide the reader with all necessary information needed to submit donations. *A sample cover letter is included in this guide.*
- *Biographical page* – This is similar to a résumé and should include educational and work experience, community service and extracurricular activities. It is also a good idea to include your GPA and rank in class (if known).
- *Additional Information* – This should include information on the NSLC program you will be attending such as a copy of your program’s page from the NSLC brochure or a copy of the Press Release included in your Acceptance Packet.
- *Response Card and Self-Addressed Return Envelope* – The response card is a convenient way for readers to respond to your request. Enclosing a self-addressed return envelope is a great way to ensure any donations come back to you and is very convenient for your potential sponsors. *A sample response card is included in this guide.*

### Create a Fundraising Webpage

In the past, several alumni have created a personalized fundraising page. Below are a few (of many) options. However, prior to committing to a webhost we strongly encourage you and your parent to read the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section of each site.

<http://www.youcaring.com/faq>

<http://fundly.com/>

<http://www.gofundme.com/>

***\*The NSLC has no affiliation with any company listed above. If you have a question regarding the use of a fundraising site please contact the company directly.***

### Develop a List of Potential Sponsors

There is a variety of potential sponsors in your community. Sponsors can be individuals, local businesses, community organizations, or school organizations. The local Chamber of Commerce and Visitors' Bureau maintain free directories of businesses and organizations in your community. You should consider any business or organizations that serve and employ residents of your community or students at your school.

People who are active in your community are also a good resource for identifying potential sponsors. It is a good idea to talk to people like your principal, guidance counselor, the president of your school's PTA or your clergy. While these people are not likely to have funds that they can donate, they may know of businesses or organizations that routinely sponsor students for programs like the NSLC.

You should also talk to people that have been successful raising funds in the past. Have any of the clubs at your school held fundraising drives recently? Is there someone on the staff of your school yearbook or newspaper that raises money from the community?

#### Sample List of Sponsors

| <b>Businesses</b>                | <b>Individuals</b>    | <b>Organizations</b>             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Banks                            | Mayor's Office        | Rotary Club                      |
| Supermarkets                     | U.S. Representatives  | Lions Club                       |
| Law Firms                        | U.S. Senator          | American Foreign Legion          |
| Newspapers                       | State Representatives | PTA (Parent Teacher Association) |
| TV and Radio Stations            |                       | Kiwanis Club                     |
| Hotels                           |                       | Moose/Elk Club                   |
| Realty Firms                     |                       | Student Council                  |
| Restaurants                      |                       | Town Council                     |
| Car Dealers                      |                       | Jaycees                          |
| Insurance Companies              |                       | Knights of Columbus              |
| Sporting Goods Stores            |                       | VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars)   |
| Book Stores                      |                       | Masonic Lounge                   |
| Airline, Train, or Bus Companies |                       | Religious Organizations          |
|                                  |                       | Board of Education               |
|                                  |                       | League of Women Voters           |

*Remember: Your parent's employer may be a potential sponsor. Often they have scholarships set aside specifically for the children of their employees.*

### Contact Potential Sponsors

Once you have compiled a list of potential sponsors, you need to contact them to request donations. All potential sponsors should receive your sponsorship packet. It is always a good idea to call all businesses or organizations on your list and ask for the exact name and address of the person who will be responsible for handling your request. This will ensure the appropriate person receives your request in a timely fashion. Be prepared to speak to multiple people in an organization before getting to the appropriate person. A sample dialogue might be:

- Receptionist:* Good afternoon. You've reached XYZ Incorporated, my name is Beth. How may help you?
- You:* Good afternoon, Beth. My name is [your name]. I am a student at [School Name] and I am seeking sponsorship from within our community in order to attend the National Student Leadership Conference. Is there someone specific at XYZ Incorporated that I should contact regarding my request?
- Receptionist:* Well, [Your Name], Laura Jones is in charge of Community Outreach at XYZ Incorporated. You should speak with her. Would you like me to transfer you now?
- You:* No, thank you. I would like to send Ms. Jones a written request before I speak with her. May I confirm the mailing address?

Inform potential sponsors of the benefits of contributing to your program. Will the sponsor receive positive publicity in the community because of their sponsorship? Appearing in promotional materials for the business or organization, writing an article for the company newsletter or speaking to an organization's board of directors is a great way for you to "give back" to your sponsor.

### Follow-up with Potential Sponsors

One week after you have mailed your sponsorship packets to your potential sponsors, you should follow-up with a phone call. During this phone call, you should verify that the potential sponsors have received your packet, answer any questions they may have, and offer to meet with them in person to discuss their potential sponsorship further.

If you are able to meet with someone in person, you should fully prepare your presentation ahead of time so that you are comfortable and confident. Be sure to bring the following information with you or be able to speak about the following information:

- Your NSLC acceptance letter
- Information about the NSLC and your program
- Your current biographical page
- Your budget, including any amounts you have already received from sponsors
- Your fundraising plan
- How you plan to benefit from NSLC
- What you plan to do when you return home from NSLC
- How sponsorship can benefit your sponsors

If you are able to speak with a potential sponsor on the phone or meet with a potential sponsor, be sure to follow-up with a letter thanking your potential sponsor for taking time to meet with you. *A sample follow-up note is included in this guide.*

### Send a Thank You Letter

Once you receive a donation, send a thank you letter immediately. Your letter should let sponsors know that you received their donation. You should also remind them when you will be attending your program and promise to send them a report about your experience after your conference. If you have committed to assist with any public relations programs in return for their sponsorship, be sure to follow-up on this as well. *A sample thank you letter is included in this guide.*

Even if you do not receive a donation, it is important to send a thank you letter to a potential sponsor for considering your request. Although they may not be able to support you now, they may be able to offer support in the future. A potential sponsor may also know others in the community you could contact for sponsorship. The more people you speak with, the more successful you will be. *A sample thank you letter is included in this guide.*

### Sample Cover Letter for Sponsorships

Your Name  
Address  
City, State Zip Code  
(555) 555-5555

Mr. John Doe  
Company  
Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. Doe:

My name is [Your Name] and I am a [Year in School] at [School Name]. I have been selected to attend the National Student Leadership Conference (NSLC) on [Name of Program]. This prestigious program selects outstanding high school students from around the world to participate based on academic excellence, extracurricular involvement, and demonstrated leadership potential. It is an honor to be to attend the NSLC, and I am extremely excited about this opportunity. I am writing to request your financial support, which will enable me to attend the Conference.

At the NSLC, I will have the opportunity to participate in leadership development workshops where I will develop skills including effective communication, public speaking, and conflict resolution. In addition, I will participate in lectures and workshops that will give me a better understanding of [Program Academic Focus] and will prepare me for college. I will attend briefings and participate in forum discussions led by National and World leaders in my chosen field. In recent years, NSLC students have met with Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan; Surgeon General Richard Carmona; Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, David Souter, and Anthony Kennedy; as well as many Senators, Representatives, and Ambassadors.

The cost for me to attend the conference will be [Total Conference Cost]. This includes the program, room and board, course materials, program activities, travel to the conference and money for other incidental expenses. Unfortunately my family cannot afford the entire amount; therefore, I am requesting your assistance. So far, I have raised [Amount of money you have raised including contributions from you and your family], but I still need to raise an additional [Total remaining amount].

Your financial support in any amount will make a big difference in helping me attend the NSLC. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope and response card with this letter. If you can help sponsor my participation, **please return the response card with a check payable to the "National Student Leadership Foundation."** Please write my name on the Memo line of the check.

I have enclosed additional information on the NSLC and myself. I would be more than happy to answer any questions or provide additional details for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number listed above, or you can call NSLC directly at (800) 994 - 6752.

I will contact you in a few days to discuss my request. I welcome any suggestions/feedback that will help me in attaining my goal. Again, your assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,  
(Your Signature)  
Your Name

Enclosures: NSLC Information, Response Card, Return Envelope, Biographical Page

### Sample Email for Sponsorships

Dear Mr. Doe:

My name is [Your Name] and I am a [Year in School] at [School Name]. I have been selected to attend the National Student Leadership Conference (NSLC) on [Name of Program]. This prestigious program selects outstanding high school students from around the world to participate based on academic excellence, extracurricular involvement, and demonstrated leadership potential. It is an honor to be to attend the NSLC, and I am extremely excited about this opportunity. I am writing to request your financial support, which will enable me to attend the Conference.

At the NSLC, I will have the opportunity to participate in leadership development workshops where I will develop skills including effective communication, public speaking, and conflict resolution. In addition, I will participate in lectures and workshops that will give me a better understanding of [Program Academic Focus] and will prepare me for college. I will attend briefings and participate in forum discussions led by National and World leaders in my chosen field. In recent years, NSLC students have met with Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan; Supreme Court Justices Anthony Kennedy and retired Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and David Souter; as well as many Senators, Representatives, and Ambassadors.

The cost for me to attend the conference will be [Total Conference Cost]. This includes the program, room and board, course materials, program activities, travel to the conference and money for other incidental expenses. Unfortunately my family cannot afford the entire amount; therefore, I am requesting your assistance. So far, I have raised [Amount of money you have raised including contributions from you and your family], but I still need to raise an additional [Total remaining amount].

Your financial support in any amount will make a big difference in helping me attend the NSLC. Please visit my fundraising page [page link] to learn about me, my goals, fundraising progress, and to donate. To learn more about the NSLC please visit [www.nslcleaders.org](http://www.nslcleaders.org).

I have attached additional information about. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number listed above, or you can call NSLC directly at (800) 994 - 6752.

I will contact you in a few days to discuss my request. I welcome any suggestions/feedback that will help me in attaining my goal. Again, your assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Your Full Name

Email:

Phone:

Attached: Biographical Page

### Sample Sponsorship Request Response Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Enclosed please find my sponsorship check made payable to the National Student Leadership Foundation.

\_\_\_ YES! I will help you attend The NSLC. Please give me a call at the following telephone number: (\_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_ Sorry, I can't offer you a contribution, but I suggest you contact the following person(s) who might provide you with assistance:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sample Follow-up Email/Letter

Your Name

Address

City, State Zip Code

(555) 555-5555

Mr. John Doe  
Company  
Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. Doe:

It was a pleasure speaking with you about my efforts to raise support from the community for my participation in the National Student Leadership Conference. As we discussed, this is a very exciting opportunity to further my leadership development and prepare for college.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to speak with me. I hope that I was able to answer all your questions about the NSLC, my plans, and myself. If you have any more questions, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

**Sample Thank You Email/Letter (if someone has agreed to sponsor you)**

|  |
|--|
| Your Name  |
| Address  |
| City, State Zip Code   |
| (555) 555-5555   |
| Mr. John Doe<br>Company<br>Address<br>City, State Zip Code   |
| Dear Mr. Doe:  |
| Thank you for generous support and sponsorship for my attendance at the National Student Leadership Conference. Your donation will make it possible for me to be a part of this amazing experience.          |
| Once I return from the conference, I will send you a report on my experience. I look forward to gaining an insight into [career or academic focus of conference] as well as developing my leadership skills. |
| Thank you again for supporting what I am sure will be a life-changing experience for me.   |
| Sincerely,   |
| [Your Name]  |

**Sample Thank You Email/Letter (if someone has not agreed to sponsor you)**

|  |
|--|
| Your Name  |
| Address  |
| City, State Zip Code   |
| (555) 555-5555   |
| Mr. John Doe<br>Company<br>Address<br>City, State Zip Code   |
| Dear Mr. Doe:  |
| Thank you for considering my sponsorship request to attend the National Student Leadership Conference. I understand that you cannot donate at this time; however, I appreciate you taking the time to review my request.   |
| Although you are not able to provide a donation at this time, I consider you a leader in our community and I ask that you think about people or organizations that you work with who might be able to support my attendance. If you have anyone, I might be able to contact, please let me know. |
| Thank you for any guidance you are able to provide.  |
| Sincerely,   |
| [Your Name]  |

## Fundraising Events

Another method of raising money for your conference is to conduct fundraising events. Fundraising events are ways to trade products or services for money that you will put towards your conference costs. To be successful, fundraising events must be well-planned and well-executed.

### Determine the What, Where, and When

Determining the what, where, and when about your fundraising events means deciding what event you plan to do, where the event will be held and when you will hold the event. A fundraising event will take time and effort to plan, be sure to give yourself plenty of time and stick to your schedule.

*What:* There are many different types of fundraising events. As you think about what event(s) you want to pursue, consider asking family, friends, teachers or other students at your school for ideas. They may have a great idea you never considered. Think about your school and community. What services or products would people in your community be interested in receiving? Do you have any hobbies that you can translate into a fundraising business? Will your event(s) make enough money? Do you have the resources necessary to make your event successful?

### **Sample Fundraising Events**

|               |                   |             |                |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Candy Sale    | Bake Sale         | Car Wash    | Recycling      |
| Raffle        | Garden Sale       | Yard work   | Pet Sitting    |
| House Sitting | Baby Sitting      | Dog Walking | Fish Fry       |
| Yard Sale     | Cleaning Services | Run Errands | Tutoring       |
| Talent Show   | Craft Sale        | "A-thon"    | Silent Auction |

***\*Need more ideas? Call our Fundraising Coordinator at (800) 994-6752 x 6207***

*Where:* Deciding where you will hold your fundraising event is just as important as deciding what you will do. Will the location hold the people you plan on attending? Do you need special permission or permits to hold an event in a particular location? If you are providing services as your fundraiser, have you chosen a neighborhood or group of people that will be interested?

*When:* When selecting a date consider how the date will fit your schedule and the schedule of the participants. When considering your schedule, think about the time you will need to prepare for the event. When creating the schedule take into consideration events held in your school or community. You should also consider the time of year when determining the appropriate timing of your event.

### Create a Plan of Action for your Event

Once you have determined the basic components of your event, create a plan of action.

Your plan of action should include:

- Obtain any necessary authorization or permit for your event (principal at your school, manager of a local business, etc.)
- Recruit help from friends or family members
- Determine how money will be collected
- Create a timeline and determining important dates
- Decide how you will publicize your event (fliers, school newspaper, phone calls, etc.)
- Obtain resources you will need.

### Follow-up after your Event

Once you have held your fundraising event, be sure to thank everyone who supported your effort. It is important to send thank you letters to all who helped. Also, communicate your experiences at the NSLC once you return home.

*Remember: Someone who participates in your fundraising event may also be interested in being a sponsor. Be sure to have information about sponsorships available at your event and follow-up on any leads you receive.*

### **Important Tips to Remember**

1. Organization and planning are a must. The more time you spend on your fundraising effort, the more successful you will be.
2. Be prepared to talk about your efforts at any time – you never know when you may meet someone who will be able to assist you.
3. Be creative when seeking sponsorships. A clothing company may be willing to donate professional attire instead of money. An airline may be willing to donate a plane ticket. Someone who travels frequently may be willing to give you frequent flyer miles to use for a plane ticket. Local businesses may be willing to donate products or services to a silent auction or raffle.
4. Always be polite. A business or organization that is unable to sponsor you may have contacts with other organizations that are able to offer sponsorships.
5. Don't get discouraged. Remember that persistence pays off. Just because one person tells you "No" does not mean the next person will not say "Yes!"
6. Have fun and use your fundraising experience as a great opportunity to learn. You will develop confidence and skills that will be incredibly beneficial throughout your life.

**Alumni Testimonials and Advice**

“Start as soon as you receive your invite!”

“Explore all fundraising opportunities. The smallest amount should be appreciated.”

“Be persistent and ask people to sponsor you because you will be surprised how many people would love to help.”

“I suggest that they must be persistent and not give up. I was rejected about ten times before I was finally accepted. Also, have a big picture! You don’t need to only fundraise locally. I’m from southern California and received money from somebody in Utah.”

“I’d tell them not to be ashamed first and foremost. When I got there, I thought I would be the poorest person there. When in fact only half of the people I met had the money to fund themselves. Trust that people in your community care and love you, and they’d pay for you to be successful”

“Any idea can be useful and don’t ever think an idea won’t work. Think outside the box. You may surprise yourself.”