FUNDRAISING

ADVANCEMENT PLAN

2026-2028 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

"FUNDRAISING BUILDS POSSIBILITIES OUT OF GENEROSITY."— ANONYMOUS

Fundraising plays a vital role in your efforts to make a difference in your community, club, and with club members. Fundraisers provide an opportunity to work with others in your community to support local projects, charitable causes, affiliate organizations, your club's community service and outreach projects, or GFWC. Successful fundraising can increase your club's visibility in the community, foster cooperation, provide a sense of accomplishment, cultivate pride and ownership in the organization, and create life-long friendships – all while building a stronger and better club.

Inspire and energize your members to choose a fundraising idea, plan a successful event, advance and promote your club and GFWC, and gain recognition for your fundraising efforts. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact any of the Fundraising Committee Members, who are happy to help.

GFWC est. 1890 GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

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2026-2028 UNITY PROJECT

VOICES OF SERVICE

Voices of Service is a community talent showcase project that can translate to GFWC clubs of all sizes through a fun, collaborative, and meaningful community event. By hosting a community talent show in partnership with another local organization or affiliate organization, clubs can celebrate service, showcase local talent, and raise funds for a shared cause that supports community needs. Voices of Service can be executed at the club, district or state level. By hosting a community talent show or showcasing the arts through local singers, dancers, musicians, poets, artists, or other medium, performers of all ages may be featured. The event would celebrate local talent, volunteer spirit, and community unity while raising funds to support a shared cause. Work collaboratively to identify the cause and strengthen the bonds between GFWC and a partner organization.

The goal of your event is to maximize the impact and visibility of each organization. Organizations that could be possible partners for your event could be schools or arts programs, local service groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, or scout troops. Look for groups that align with GFWC's women's empowerment mission. Seek sponsorship and promotion through community foundations and local Chambers of Commerce. Partnership opportunities may include co-branding your event, sharing proceeds, or partner participation, such as judges, emcees, volunteers, or venue donation.

Ask members to assist with all aspects of planning, including ideas for generating maximum income from your event. Income sources may be ticket sales, sponsorships, "vote by donation," silent auction, or raffle (where allowed), and concessions or bake sales at the event. Remember to include voices from all organizations involved and keep community involvement affordable to ensure attendance is boosted.

Consider adding some extra touches, such as "GFWC Spirit of Service Award," to a partner organization or a standout performer. Include a spotlight during the show to highlight GFWC, the partner organization, and the chosen cause. Create a highlight reel or photo showcase for social media sharing. Keep in mind that every event is a potential for membership recruitment.

Projects like Voices of Service create and strengthen bonds within communities. Hands-on projects give members multiple opportunities to connect with each other as they work together on a community-wide fundraiser. It engages members with the broader community in a positive, collaborative way while creating visibility not only for GFWC but for the cause. Collaborative efforts help us educate, energize, and empower not only our members but our community at large, creating a meaningful impact through our shared efforts. Partnership or collaborative fundraisers build bridges between organizations and open doors for membership growth.

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FEATURED PROJECTS

PAINT AND SIP

The GFWC Laytonsville Woman's Club (MD) held a "Paint and Sip" Class. The class was taught by the club's VP who is a local artist with a private studio in town. She provided each participant with a canvas and supplies. Through her instruction, the budding artists painted a simple still life in oil paint choosing a scene to paint from one of several still life vignettes around the room. After hard work, the attendees enjoyed a break of wine and charcuterie prepared by the club members. This was a fun way for the club to interact with community members.

BUNCO NIGHT

The GFWC Florentine Evening Club (MS) held a Bunco Tournament and Silent Auction with the theme "Rolling with My Peeps." Numerous planning meetings were held, and the event was publicized on the community center marquee, Facebook, and through flyers distributed at local businesses. Club members collected items from the community for the silent auction and Bunco prizes. Additionally, club members showed their crafting skills by creating and embellishing items for these uses. Funds were raised through ticket sales, a silent auction, and bake sale at the event. The club also set up a concession stand for food items during the evening.

SPORTS SHOOTING

The GFWC Lake Placid Woman's Club (FL) hosted an inaugural event, "Bustin' Clay for the Vets," to support local veterans' basic needs. Held at a local shooting venue, the event drew 24 shooters and raised more than $5,000 in profit. Many local businesses sponsored or donated funds, gift certificates, merchandise, or baskets for the event. Members donated countless hours securing donations, promoting the event, and planning logistics. This project was done in conjunction with the GFWC Lake Placid Junior Woman's Club.

GHOST HUNTING

Boo! The GFWC Millington Junior Woman's Club (MI) worked with a small business called Abnormal Paranormal, a group of paranormal investigators. Each Saturday in October, Abnormal Paranormal donated their time and equipment to lead a walking tour of locations around the city known for spooky or unexplainable events. At each stop, they used their equipment to attempt to detect unusual phenomena or ghost activity. Through this collaboration, participants learned the history of buildings and businesses in the city, got exercise during their walk, and raised funds for charitable causes the club supports.

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FUNDRAISING AND MEMBERSHIP

Fundraising isn't just about raising money. It's about raising energy, awareness, and community spirit. It's about bonding members to one another and to the causes and community each club supports. When fundraising becomes "fun"-raising, it naturally draws in both existing and new members who are inspired by the joy, purpose, and friendship they see in action. There is great value in the time and effort it takes to execute hands-on fundraising events.

Fundraisers can be friendship builders, transforming events into welcoming, social experiences that showcase the joy of serving together and the importance of members' input and creativity. Encourage members to invite friends, family, and colleagues to experience the energy and synergy of your club. Guests who experience the energy and camaraderie of your group will want to be a part of that themselves.

Membership moments should be created at each event. Include a short presentation on GFWC and the benefits of belonging to attendees, and offer a genuine invitation to become part of our organization. Highlight how service and friendship come together in GFWC. Provide membership materials such as posters of club events with pictures, brochures, interest cards, or even a volunteer sign-up for your next project! Potential members are more inclined to join if they feel connected, and meeting existing members during a service project is a great way to start building those connections.

Fundraising events are the perfect training ground for leadership and teamwork. Engaging members' skills and creativity by delegating tasks and assigning roles helps members find the right fit for their talents within the club, building confidence and securing meaning to their role as a member. Remember to thank, recognize, and celebrate the contributions of members. Recognition strengthens pride and leads to greater retention.

After your event, share the joy! Use media, photos, and social platforms to celebrate the cause and to share the club's spirit of service. Enthusiasm is contagious and provokes those who are not members to investigate how they can be a part of your greater good and join in the fun. Tie membership directly to your fundraising energy while reinforcing the GFWC identity. Fundraising and membership go hand in hand. Both exist to fuel GFWC's scope of service – connecting hearts, hands, and communities. In GFWC, we don't just raise funds – we raise friends, awareness, and hope.

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FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Begin your fundraising process with a brainstorming session for club members. Discuss pros and cons, then make your choice. Here are some ideas to get your brainstorming session started:

COMMUNITY CONTESTS AND EVENTS

- Adult Spelling Bee
- Baby Photo Contest
- Bunco, Bingo, or Card Party
- Children's Puppet Show or Magician
- Dance Off/Dancing with the Stars
- Festival Face Painting or Photo Booth
- Movie-Themed Costume Contest and Sing-Along
- Mother/Daughter Tea
- Paint the Porch Pink (Breast Cancer Walk)
- Pajama Party or Pajama Day
- Rubber Duck Races
- Shredding Events
- Style Show or Fashion Show
- Trivia Night
- Wine, Women, and Purses

DANCES AND DATE NIGHTS

- Casino Night
- Dances/Galas – Daddy/Daughter, Rock and Roll, Line Dancing, Ballroom Dancing
- Kentucky Derby Party – Hats and Bowties
- Mad Hatter's Tea Party
- Murder Mystery Party/Dinner
- Oscar Extravaganza
- Paint Night
- Progressive Dinner – Three Restaurants/ Three Courses

FABULOUS FOODS

- Baked Goods Sale
- Baked Potato Bar
- Chili Supper
- Chocolate and Wine Sale
- Coffee or Brunch Event with Recipes
- Hot, Medium, and Mild Pepper Jelly Sale
- Ice Cream Social
- Kitchen Tour with Host Chefs
- Meat Sale
- Meatballs and Martinis
- Pancake Breakfast
- Restaurant Share Nights (percentage of evening sales)

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

- Christmas Tree Delivery
- Egg My Yard – Easter
- Festival of Trees
- Haunted House or Halloween Party
- Holiday Expo, Festival, or Bazaar
- Holiday Gift Wrapping
- Holiday Open House or House Tour
- July 4th – Fireworks, Flea Market, Parade, or Cookout
- Mardi Gras Party
- Paint a Pallet-Flags, Pumpkins, Snowmen
- Poinsettia and Wreath Sale
- Polar Express Event – PJs, Hot Chocolate, Cookies, and Santa
- Santa or Bunny Breakfast
- Scarecrow Contest/Festivals

HOUSE AND GARDEN GOODIES

- Garden Tour
- Flamingo Flock – Pay for Removal
- Drawing for Truck Load of Gravel or Mulch

PAMPERED PETS

- Dog or Pet Show
- Pet Treat Sale
- Pet Photo Contest

RAFFLES AND SALES

- Art and Craft Auction/Show
- Art in the Park Show and Sale
- Bazaar – Host the Event or a Table
- Book Sale – Used and New, Invite an Author

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- Children's Consignment Sale
- Furniture Upscale and Resale
- It's in the Bag! (Brown Bag Auction)
- Kitchen Utensil Demo and Sale
- Make It, Bake It, or Fake It! (Arts, Crafts, Foods)
- White Elephant/Re-Gift Auction
- Vintage Jewelry and/or Accessories Sale

VIRTUAL IDEAS

- Bingo
- Drive-by Decorated House Tour
- Online Auctions
- Online Gift Card Sales
- See and Sell
- Spin it to Win it
- Trivia Night

WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS

- Baseball or Softball Tournament
- Bowling Tournament/Candlelight Bowl
- Cornhole Tournament
- Fishing Tournament
- Golf Tournament
- Kickball Tournament
- Pickleball Tournament
- Walk or Race

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

RESEARCH AND FOLLOW THE APPLICABLE LAWS

Charitable fundraising is regulated in most states. Nonprofit organizations are usually required to register with the state PRIOR to fundraising or soliciting donations and to renew or update that registration periodically. The government official responsible for processing charitable solicitation registrations varies (e.g., Attorney General, Secretary of State, or others). Some states do not allow certain types of fundraisers, raffles, or contests. Some have reporting requirements after the fundraisers. It is important to know and follow the law that applies to your fundraising efforts. Consider organizing a program or workshop and inviting speakers to explain the relevant regulations.

APPOINT A CAPABLE FUNDRAISING CHAIRMAN

Appoint a talented Fundraising Chairman to organize your fundraising. A team effort is required for successful fundraising, and the Chairman is the leader of that team. The Fundraising Chairman should be:

- Energetic and enthusiastic.
- Organized.
- Experienced at setting and meeting goals and objectives.
- Skilled at delegating tasks and monitoring progress on projects.
- Responsible for matching the many tasks to be accomplished with the skills, interests, and comfort level of each member.

SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A great fundraising program can have boundless outcomes for your club and its mission, including increased public awareness, goodwill, and membership. Fundraisers are excellent publicity, networking, and membership recruitment opportunities. Set goals for maximum impact.

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- Evaluate your financial needs.
- Establish your ongoing and specific projects.
- Estimate expected earnings/outcome of the fundraiser.
- Define the desired impact for the community.

PLAN ALL ASPECTS AND FACETS OF YOUR FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

Once your research is done, your leader is in place, and your goals and objectives are set, it is time for your members to brainstorm and plan every detail of how you will conduct the fundraising needed to sustain your club, State Federation/District of Columbia Federation and those causes that are a priority for your members.,

- What type of fundraising?
- Which chairmen and committees are needed?
- What is the budget?
- What type of cooperation is needed from local leaders, businesses, and civic groups?
- What is the timeline?
- What is the plan for Marketing and Publicity?

EVALUATE YOUR EFFORTS

After any fundraiser, take time to evaluate what worked and what did not. The chairman should prepare a written report on the success of the fundraiser. The report should detail the expenses and income. In addition, the chairman should distribute a survey to the members and compile the results in the report. The survey and report should address the following questions:

- Were the goals realistic and achievable?
- Was the budget adequate?
- Was the cooperation with all entities beneficial and constructive?
- Were the publicity/marketing strategies effective?
- Was the fundraiser well-received by the community?
- Were members assigned to tasks that matched their skills and interests?
- Is this same fundraiser recommended for the future? If so, what adjustments need to be made for greater success? If not, did this fundraiser spark interest in other or similar fundraisers that might be more successful?

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SHOW APPRECIATION TO YOUR MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Remember to maintain the friendly and positive tone of your fundraising efforts until the last expression of gratitude is conveyed. All donations should be acknowledged in a gracious and timely manner and all funds used efficiently for the cause for which they were solicited. Be sure to communicate the successful results of your fundraising project with all those who supported your efforts and with the public. Build on your success to realize an even more successful project in the future.

After evaluating your effectiveness, thanking the members of the community for supporting your efforts, and writing a comprehensive report, it is time to celebrate your success.

There are endless ways to show your appreciation to community entities and your members:

- A small bottle of hand soap or sanitizer with a note that reads, "Thanks for getting your hands dirty!"
- A cute tin of candy with a note that says, "Thank you for being so sweet!"
- An article, picture, or some other recognition on social media.
- A handwritten thank-you note.
- A small award or certificate.
- Small get-togethers, such as an ice cream social or happy hour.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State/District of Columbia Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Fundraising projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- **Certificate to one State/District of Columbia Federations in each membership category**
- **$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity**

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State/District of Columbia Federations may submit one State/District of Columbia Federation Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Fundraising projects. **Entries should be submitted to the State/District of Columbia Federation Fundraising Chairman.** Forms are accessible to the State/District of Columbia Federation Presidents in the Member Portal.

Note: Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC or GFWC Chairmen.

Refer to the Deadlines for GFWC Awards and Contests sections of the Club Manual for more information.

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