



## ***November Funding Tip***

The Finance Project is pleased to announce the next installment in a series of [monthly funding tips](#) for youth programs. These tips cover different financing strategies to help programs finance and sustain their work.

### **Tip: *Conducting Community Fundraising to Generate Revenue for Mentoring Programs***

Mentoring organizations can use fundraising as a critical means by which to achieve sustainability. In addition to increasing revenue and in-kind support, successful community fundraising can bring in new volunteers, community partners, board members, and, perhaps most importantly, stronger community commitment to the organization's mission and the young people being served. While fundraising can lead to additional revenue and opportunities for organizations, it can also impose significant costs (e.g., time, resources, staff expertise, organizational capacity, etc.) This may be especially true for mentoring programs. According to a [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org) survey, 78 percent of program coordinators found fundraising to be "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult."

To overcome these barriers and facilitate the fundraising process, several steps can be taken, including:

- identifying programs gaps;
- having justification for holding a fundraiser in the first place;
- identifying a target audience;
- identifying costs and benefits;
- generating board members' interest and commitment to fundraising goals;
- cultivating and nurturing relationships with current and potential donors;
- developing staff and administrative capacity;
- building a volunteer base;
- and aligning fundraising strategies with available organizational resources.

**Example from the Field: Accessing Funds at the Local Level to Support School-to-Work Activities**

Friends of the Children (FOC), a Portland, Oregon-based nonprofit organization, has provided mentoring to at-risk youth for the past 15 years. With a unique staffing structure supporting paid and professionally trained mentors, the organization makes 13-year commitments to each child from the start of kindergarten to high school graduation. In close partnership with the school district, FOC serves more than 300 youth in more than 100 schools in five counties throughout the metropolitan area.

With more than one-third of its revenue coming from fundraisers, FOC has created multiple avenues by which individuals, corporations, and foundations can support the organization. The organization's 9<sup>th</sup> annual Friend Raiser, for example, generated more than \$1 million, with more than 700 of Portland's business and community leaders donating food and drinks, bidding on silent auction items, and watching live concerts, performed by youth within the program. A combination of small and large annual events has helped generate vast corporate and community support and has raised the organization's visibility within the city's many professional and social circles. For more information, visit <http://www.friendsofthechildren.org/aboutus.html>.

For more information on this financing strategy and the various strategies that can be used to support mentoring programs, see the Finance Project's publication, *Finding Resources to Support Mentoring Programs and Services for Youth*, <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/FindingResources-MentoringPrograms.pdf>.

Within the [Youth Programs Resource Center](#) you will also find an [online clearinghouse](#), jointly developed by The Finance Project and The Forum for Youth Investment. The clearinghouse contains a wealth of information and resources for supporting and sustaining youth programs and initiatives. It is designed to help you learn about data, tools, policies, practices, financing strategies, coordination efforts and technical assistance resources developed by organizations in the field that aim to improve the lives of youth.