

OA GUIDELINES



Fundraising and Prudent Reserve Guidelines for Groups and Service Bodies

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FUNDRAISING IDEAS

OA events are wonderful for fellowship and recovery, and the funds they generate can help groups and service bodies continue Twelve Step work. Fundraisers that include the use of OA literature reinforce the program and help carry the message.

Suggested fundraisers

Anniversary celebrations Annual OA events such as Overeaters Anonymous' birthday and IDEA, Unity, and Twelfth-Step-Within days may be celebrated with a marathon, banquet, or dance. Hold an OA meeting in conjunction with the social event. National holidays can also be special times for fellow OA members to be together. Valentine's Day dances, Independence Day picnics, Thanksgiving "thankathons," and New Year's Eve balls are examples of events with a holiday theme.

Games and activities A dance or carnival can include games and activities that can be enjoyed for a nominal donation. Examples: photo booths and face- and/or hand-painting stands. Raffles/drawings, 50/50 drawings, or other games of chance may be offered in areas where state and local laws permit. In addition, raffles or games of chance should be conducted in a manner that does not divert from our primary purpose.

Merchandise sales T-shirts, mugs, book bags, and other items can be sold at OA events, and serve as ongoing fundraisers for groups and service bodies. In accordance with OA World Service Business Conference policy, it is suggested that all sale items be approved by group conscience and that sales be conducted in a manner that will not divert attention from OA's primary purpose or endorse an outside enterprise.

Auctions Items or services contributed by OA members can be purchased by the highest bidder.

Boutique Items donated by OA members may be sold to OA members for set prices.

Talent shows Members can show off their creativity and raise money too.

Gratitude pledges Members may choose to make special Seventh Tradition contributions to celebrate OA birthdays, memorials, or other occasions. Pledge envelopes can be made available at meetings.

Contribution jars These could be set out for special causes as well as ongoing needs such as the region representative or World Service Business Conference delegate travel funds, telephone funds, buying office equipment, or scholarships to OA events.

"No Bake" sales Members contribute money they used to spend on snack or junk-food items.

For additional ideas or guidance, contact other service bodies or your region.

THE TRADITION OF SELF-SUPPORT

OA's Seventh Tradition states: "*Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*"

A question groups and service bodies must ask themselves is: "Are we truly self-supporting?"

How can our group increase the Seventh Tradition collection?

Group members may not be aware of how important individual contributions are to OA's continued existence. To bring this point home during meetings, the group treasurer might read aloud OA's Seventh Tradition and its explanation from the pamphlet *The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* as the basket is being passed. Group treasurers can also make monthly reports to their groups and make sure the basket circulates to all members. Virtual meeting members may contribute directly to the WSO. To contribute, go to the Contribute page on oa.org.

How much should our group give to our service body and why?

Many meetings never contribute financially to their service bodies—sometimes because they don't understand the importance of it, sometimes because they don't know how. A good guide for making appropriate financial contributions to service bodies is the pamphlet *Seventh Tradition of O.A.* It explains how contributions support

service body services such as telephone hotlines, meeting lists, public information, and Twelfth-Step-Within activities. Groups and service bodies might consider donating these guidelines to each of their meetings. Virtual services meetings contribute to their service body and the WSO.

What can service bodies do to encourage contributions?

Service body officers may want to attend meetings that haven't contributed to the service body and explain the concept of self-support. Monthly service body newsletters can print service body treasurers' reports to let members know how contributions are being spent. Communications can include the service body, region, and World Service Office addresses to help groups send in their contributions. Service body treasurers should keep in regular contact with group treasurers. Groups that do contribute could be acknowledged through thank-you notes and notices in the service body newsletter.

Am I giving enough?

A personal question members may want to ask themselves is: "Am I still contributing in the same manner as when I first came into the program?" I used to spend many dollars on my binge foods; how much do I donate in gratitude for my recovery? Some individuals make yearly donations to the WSO to express their gratitude for the recovery they have found in OA. Sponsors might share with sponsees the meaning and importance of the Seventh Tradition.

To help OA carry the message of recovery, members may want to give an automated monthly Seventh Tradition contribution. OA accepts contributions from OA members, groups, and service bodies only. An OA member may contribute up to \$5,000 per year to the general fund, up to \$5,000 to any special fund, and up to \$5,000 to honor the memory of a deceased member. To set your monthly contribution, visit the Contribute page on oa.org.

THE PRUDENT RESERVE

What is a prudent reserve?

A prudent reserve is an amount of money set aside to meet an organization's operational expenses in the event that

contributions decrease. For example, the World Service Office has established a policy for its prudent reserve, which calls for a reserve "not to exceed one year's operating budget plus outstanding liabilities plus one-time capital expenditures." Each group or service body should establish its own prudent reserve policy.

How much money should be in the prudent reserve?

The amount may be determined by figuring operational expenses for a given period of time—for example, one to six months. Expenses include such things as rent, telephone, postage, printing, utilities, and salaries, if applicable. The fund should be periodically reviewed to make sure it meets the present and projected needs of the group or service body.

What if our group doesn't have any extra money?

If a service body finds it can't fully fund its prudent reserve all at once, fundraising activities such as those suggested in these guidelines may be undertaken to raise the needed monies. If the meeting or service body cannot consistently maintain its prudent reserve, it may have to consider closing.

GUARDING OUR TRADITIONS

It's the responsibility of all OA members to act as guardians of our Traditions. Not upholding our Traditions often occurs through misunderstanding or misinformation. We need to be constantly alert that we don't inadvertently make a precedent-setting decision that could adversely affect our own and other OA groups and thus OA as a whole.

For more information, see the *OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Service Bodies*; *Guidelines for OA Events*; *Seventh Tradition of OA*; the pamphlet *The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*; and the book *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*.

Note: See *Budget Guidelines for Service Bodies* for help with creating, monitoring and maintaining budgets.

OA Board-approved

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