

# Creative Fundraising for Senior Nutrition Programs

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by the Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Programs, Administration for Community Living  
(ACL)

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[Go to recording on NRCNA website](#)

People 65 and older are expected to represent 22% of the U.S. population by 2040. Successful senior nutrition programs of the future will seek diverse funding streams that include *but are not limited to* participant contributions and public funding like the Older Americans Act. Senior nutrition programs must explore creative ways to sustain themselves through fundraising efforts.

Resource development requires a shift in perspective away from fundraising and more toward long-term resource development. Board buy-in is a must, and members should actively participate at their comfort level. Focus is required on developing and maintaining relationships based on why and what you do and the value it brings to your community. Find community partners who match your values, vision, and goals.

## Strategies to Diversify

- Grants – Look for matching opportunities at the local and regional level; it's all about the storytelling; create a general grant template you can adapt.
- Private donations – Make it easy for donors (for example, ApplePay, Venmo, Cash App) and tell your “why.”
- Events – Make events enjoyable and memorable; hybrid events are here to stay; for example, include an online version of your in-person event (virtual 5K along with an in-person 5K).
- Campaigns – Allow you to communicate your “why” to donors; maintain a database so you can reach out again; be specific on what the donation will do (\$5 will buy one meal).
- Community connections – Form long-lasting partnerships in your community.
- Client contributions – Variable and dependent upon the client's situation.
- In-kind donations – Don't discount the value of these donations; talk to your city or community about discounting your utility bills.
- Investments – Make your money work for you; do you have a cash policy?

Create a roadmap or a plan to guide you through your resource development activities. Evaluate your goals for each donation category. Think through who are possible champions that can help you achieve your goals. If you have a board of directors, tap into their skill sets and contacts. Be strategic when recruiting new board members and seek candidates to assist with your activities. Develop a cash/investment policy as part of your plan and create specific messaging and strategies for each category.

## Stewardship

Creating a stewardship plan is needed for successful donations. Establish long-term relationships and treat donors with the utmost care. No matter the size of the gift, send a thank you note. Develop policies as to who will be points of contact with donors and the various activities to interact with them at the different levels of giving. Your plan should be year-round,

as donors are your greatest assets. Create unique or special touch points for your largest donors.

### **Build Community Relationships**

- Match up interests.
- Use your board and volunteers as ambassadors at events.

### **Creative Fundraising Ideas**

- Pop-up cafes – Fresh seasonal ingredients and meals and unique experiences, such as musicians and fruit and vegetable trays; examples include seafood spectacular and personal pan meatloaf with macaroni and cheese; concept merges quality, upscale food with the social benefits of congregate dining.
- Pop-up bakeries – Tasty baked goods made from ingredients purchased from local area farms create excitement and encourage new clients to enjoy with friends while generating revenue for the program.
- Farm-to-pantry canning – Selection of local produce not used in preparing congregate lunches is canned and offered for sale.