

Fund Raising Tips

Participants of AIBL leadership conference raise their own expenses or have them paid partially or in full by a single benefactor or a combination of several sponsors. The majority of this funding comes from within their community, college, university, local business and private or corporate foundations.

SIX STEP APPROACH

STEP 1 | Prepare a Budget

When planning your sponsorship effort think about the expenses:

- ✓ Conference fee
- ✓ Travel cost (Airfare, hotel, food, Ground Transportation)
- ✓ Other miscellaneous and overhead expenses

Before you start fundraising, prepare a detailed budget and outline the costs in each of these categories. Think of what expenses you may encounter and identify those expenses that you are unable to cover personally. It is a good idea to divide the total cost into several groups (equal amounts or by category), as you have higher chances of finding several smaller contributors ready to sponsor only a part of your expenses. Make sure to let your potential sponsors know what your total budget is, what percentage of it you contribute yourself, and which share of it you expect them to contribute. Despite of the amount they contribute, each sponsor will be recognized equally.

It is very important to start your fundraising with a positive and ambitious mindset. You have to realize that there are companies and organizations who are interested in supporting youth/student initiatives, and it is only a matter of approaching the right sponsors. By sponsoring you, these entities are not making you a favor, but rather pursuing certain goals to fulfill their policies and missions. It is therefore very important to emphasize that you are supporting their activities as much as they support you.

STEP 2 | Gain knowledge of Conference

Before starting any fundraising activities, it is important that you know what the AIBL Leadership Conference is. Browse through our web-site to find more information that will support your applications and requests.

You need to understand what you will gain by attending the AIBL Leadership Conference: will the conference support your academic or professional career, will it help you become more experienced in certain fields, will it help you with your research or other projects etc. You need to justify why attending the AIBL Leadership Conference is important to you, and more importantly what you think you will gain as a result of it and how this new experience will help you give back to your community.

Brainstorm to identify how the AIBL Leadership Conference will benefit various aspects of your life, and have this list ready when approaching different sponsors - there should be something on this list to appeal to them.

STEP 3 | Identify potential sponsors

Starting your fundraising is easy if you have a clear view of who you want to approach.

It is best to start by identifying the industries that are supportive of the goals you are pursuing and are interested in youth projects and initiatives. These may include: gaming, tribal councils, tobacco and alcohol manufacturing, sporting, automotive etc.

You may then narrow down your list of potential sponsors by doing an online research and identifying which of these support particular fields of concern to the AIBL: leadership, sustainable development, human rights, intercultural communication, human rights, peace and justice etc.

The better you know your potential sponsors, the more you can address their particular "needs". Make sure you know the terms they are using - by using these their terms you can better relate to them.

Chambers of Commerce, Visitors' Bureaus, various Ministries usually have public listings (books of lists), which profile businesses and community organizations with their contact information. Other places that might provide these listings may include local media outlets, prominent businesses, investment firms etc.

STEP 4 | Approach potential sponsors

The people you will be dealing with are extremely busy! It is therefore very important that you have everything ready when you approach them. By the time you make a contact you should know precisely:

- What the organization does
- What values and goals it pursues
- What policies it has in place, if any
- What funding/scholarship resources it offers, if any
- Who the right person to contact is (these are usually CEOs, marketing, advertising, public relations or other departments)

Phone

There is nothing better than a personal contact. You should therefore start with a phone call to the organization. Be prepared to answer the three basics that people will want to know immediately:

- ✓ Who are you
- ✓ What you are doing
- ✓ Why are you approaching them

This is a fact-finding endeavor for you as much as making a personal impression. After introducing yourself, you need to find out who your contact will be in the organization. If you can't speak directly to them talk to their personal assistant (Personal Assistants are extremely valuable!). Be honest in your dedication, polite and pleasant when interacting, provide information when they request it – be professional.

Sending the Information

Most organization will ask you to provide something in writing. Have a package prepared, ready to go out, that includes some or all of the following:

- ✓ Cover letter
- ✓ Copy of your acceptance letter
- ✓ Your budget
- ✓ Letter from AIBL National Office to your sponsor
- ✓ AIBL Chapter sponsorship package
- ✓ AIBL Leadership Conference schedule of events
- ✓ Your resume/CV
- ✓ Reference(s) from university staff
- ✓ Reference(s) from an employer
- ✓ Promotional materials

A good cover letter is one of the most valuable ways to communicate your need. It should clearly outline everything that has been presented in the introductory phone call. It as well gives you a chance to show something a little more personal, like: why is it so important for you to participate in the conference, what do you hope to achieve or how will you use what you have learned to improve your community. However, it must remain professional. Keep it simple and concise.

If you need a letter addressed to a potential sponsor on your behalf signed by AIBL National Office, please email us at aibl@info.org

Follow up

Never let too much time lapse between the receipt of your package - whether by post or fax - and your follow up phone call. If they do not hear from you in a reasonable amount of time they will simply remove your information from their desks.

Again here is another chance to make a personal contact. This is where you want to begin the push for a meeting, if not with the original contact (“he’s too busy”) that with whoever you think is the best choice instead? Would the original contact be willing to speak over the phone if he/she can’t set up a full meeting?

The Meeting

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You must always be prepared when you walk into that meeting – this is your chance. Have all the materials you need or that they have requested, dress professionally, be on time, but most importantly it is your presentation that will sell the sponsorship. Have a clear plan of presenting your case to the decision maker:

- ✓ Introduce yourself again – briefly, if they are already familiar with your case
- ✓ Description of the conference
- ✓ What you see as the benefit of attending for yourself
- ✓ What you propose to give them back in return for sponsorship
- ✓ What are their benefits from sponsoring you
- ✓ Facts and figures on costs
- ✓ Have deadlines handy

STEP 5 | Approach potential sponsors

Once you've received a sponsorship it is very important that you fulfill all the obligations you've undertaken. You need to make sure you inform us about the sponsorship and send us your sponsors' logos on time, so that their support is acknowledged. You also need to send a thank you note to your sponsor; describing how much you value their contribution and what impact it had on your professional and academic career. Send those links to web-site pages where their logos are placed, and any other materials that mention their support to you.

CATEGORIES OF SPONSORS

Your College University

Your School, Tribal College/University is the best place to start your fundraising. While businesses are going to be more concerned with the bottom line and how their sponsorship will provide an added benefit for them, the university's job is to ensure the success of their students.

Every school, college or university is different, and as a first step you should approach your financial aid office for the best advice. Most schools have funds set aside for academic endeavors such as the AIBL Leadership Conference and your office can direct you to the departments that receive such funds and who is responsible for allocating them.

Once you know who to talk to, simply explain the nature of the AIBL Leadership Conference and the type of funding that you seek, and they will hopefully be able to construct for you the best plan of action. Different schools, colleges and university departments may have scholarships or special grants that you may qualify for by attending the AIBL Leadership Conference as a representative of your school.

As an added incentive to the school, college, or university to support your trip, tell them about the AIBL sponsorship package and the benefits they will receive. Offer to act as an "ambassador" for the school and by simply talking to other students can promote the school.

The best thing you can do is be honest - that you really want to participate in this educational experience, and you would like their assistance. You could offer to give a speech upon your return about what you experienced and what the conference was like. This national forum is extremely unique and you will have much to say, considering you will be surrounded by other students from around the country, representing various communities and tribes.

In addition, if your school themselves cannot fund your trip, at least partially, they will have a network of contacts who might. Ask them for all advice they can give you regarding outside sources for funding. Additionally they may provide you with reference letters and other documents that may support your fundraising activities elsewhere.

Your Tribe

For Example,

Dear Chairman/Governor/Chairwoman:

I am writing to request your assistance in providing a financial support of funds to support my effort to attend the 2010 AIBL National Leadership Conference in Carlton, Minnesota.

NPOs

A number of local and non-governmental and non-profit organizations support youth initiatives, and might have resources to fund your attendance in the AIBL. By doing a simple online search, you can find numerous foundations and grant-makers, which can potentially support you financially or offer help in your fundraising efforts.

Dealing with such organizations however may be a time-consuming process. You might need to submit an official application form, and then wait for months before you find out their decision. If you decide to pursue this opportunity, you need to start early.

Private Business

Several of our past participants have received funding from private businesses (corporations as well as small businesses in their country or local community). The student has many things to offer the business in return for their financial contribution. At the AIBL conference, each business gets their name and/or company logo on the official conference textbook and official conference itinerary, as well as on the web site (please see our sponsorship package for more details).

When dealing with private businesses, it is very important to use figures to illustrate your points. Businesses are usually concerned with ROI (return on investment), which is very hard to calculate, and therefore providing them with the figures ahead of time will support your application greatly.

To show you are proactive, offer to write a press release or an article and host a press conference for the local media that will announce the company's community service and dedication to the future of young leaders. If agreed upon your sponsors will want you to work closely with their Public Relations or Marketing departments to approve the message being sent, but they also are invaluable in giving you advice on the process and contacts in the field. Some of the key media outlets you should involve:

- ✓ Local television affiliates
- ✓ Newspapers for your area
- ✓ Your campus newspaper
- ✓ Your tribal newspaper
- ✓ Radio stations

REDUCING TRAVEL COSTS

One of the biggest hindrances to attendance – especially from certain areas of the country– are travel costs. However, creativity and research can reduce the burden tremendously.

There is a number of web-sites that allow you to find affordable fares from anywhere in the world to Prague. We suggest www.cheaptickets.com as a starting point for your research. Make sure to consider different travel dates, as well as different destination airports (Duluth, Minneapolis, etc.)

Another great website for locating discounted airline tickets is www.studentuniverse.com, which specializes in student travel. There are some limitations on who can use their discounted rates, so please check the website to see if it applies to you.

It is important to remember that there is definitely money out there to help finance your attendance of educational forums like the AIBL Leadership Conference. The money is being put to good use--financiers are investing in the future leaders of the modern world— and this gives you some excellent starting points.

We wish you the best of luck on your quest for financial aid and look forward to seeing you in Minnesota at the Black Bear Casino Resort and the Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College.