



FUNDRAISING  
FOR YOUR  
ORGANIC  
SCHOOL GARDEN



# STEP 1

## HOW MUCH MONEY WILL YOU NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR PROJECT ?

### REALISTIC BUDGET

It is very important to set a realistic budget for your project. You want to raise enough money to cover all of the associated costs of your project, but you don't want to overshoot either.

Be sure to include all possible costs for your project in your budget. Think through your project, and incorporate all of the costs associated with the planning, implementation, and maintenance of your new idea.

Also, be sure to think about what special skills the people in your community might be able to contribute. Perhaps rather than having to buy new items, some things could be made inexpensively by a team of volunteers. This can help to build community investment in the garden, and can help you save money!

### START-UP COSTS

How much does an organic school garden cost? GUO's start-up gardens which typically involve raised beds, 3' by 8' made from untreated cedar lumber, can range from \$400.00 to \$600.00, depending on site characteristics, garden size, and in-kind donations from parents or community businesses.

An example of typical "no-frills" garden with three raised beds is outlined below:

START-UP COSTS	
Cedar lumber for 3 new beds	\$230-250
2.5 yards Garden Mix Soil	\$150
Building hardware	\$70
Weed Barrier	\$17
Watering Cans	\$30
Hose	\$50-70

## GARDEN ADDITIONS

Storage	\$100+
Rain Barrels	\$55
Tools	\$25-100
Composter	\$100
Light Table	\$90
Seating	varies

### TIPS

**COMPOSTER** If you have a handy teacher or volunteer at the garden, you can easily build your own composter out of reclaimed lumber or pallets. Contact GUO or your local master gardener association for suggested designs.

**LIGHT TABLE** Similarly, building a light table can be a fun learning opportunity for students in their technology and design classes, with simple instructions existing online.

After you have set your goals and budget, it is time to decide what sort of fundraising strategy you will use.





## STEP 2

# WHO WILL BE THE TARGET OF YOUR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS ?

### BIG DECISIONS

This is one of the biggest decisions you will have to make in your fundraising journey. The type of donor you target can have a huge effect on how you will fundraise, and also the ultimate results of your efforts.

There are a myriad of options for you to choose from. Each has their own benefits and potential drawbacks that you should consider when making your decision.

FUNDING SOURCE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Community Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directly involves people who have an interest or investment in the success of your project.</li><li>• Increases awareness of your garden within the surrounding community.</li></ul>	May be difficult to raise large sums without a significant input of time and resources.
Crowdfunding	Can help increase exposure of your project in the local community.	Can involve a lot of time to reach a large enough network.
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be an excellent way to get a large amount of money by concentrating efforts on one funding source.</li><li>• Can help your garden program build connections with other community organizations and other garden programs.</li><li>• Completing one grant application typically reduces your workload for every subsequent application.</li></ul>	Can be time-consuming, and there is no guarantee of winning a competition

<p>Local Business Donations</p>	<p>Businesses are often willing to donate in-kind, by contributing some of their products to community initiatives. This can be a great way to get new equipment or resources, without having to raise money directly.</p>	<p>As long as you don't mind publicly thanking your sponsors, there aren't many disadvantages to this. Just make sure that you are comfortable with any conditions that accompany the donation.</p>
<p>School Board</p>	<p>Lobbying your school board for funding can be tricky, but it can also help draw attention to the importance of outdoor programming and food education for your students.</p>	<p>There are many great initiatives that are lobbying for more funding from our school boards.</p>

Once you have decided what type of donors you will target, decide how you will reach out to them.



## STEP 3

# WHAT METHODS OF FUNDRAISING WILL YOU USE ?

### RESOURCES

Here is a list of potential ideas and resources for each of the fundraising types discussed above :

### COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

- ◆ Sell produce or flowers from your school garden
- ◆ Host a pay-by-donation potluck to celebrate harvest in the fall
- ◆ Host a food and agriculture movie night (admission by donation)
- ◆ Go door-to-door fundraising
- ◆ Host a walk/run/skateboard/bike ride to benefit your garden
- ◆ Host an evening of games in the garden (e.g. “Name that plant”)
- ◆ Make a snack food (e.g. salsa) with ingredients from the garden, and sell it at lunchtime to students and teachers at the school
- ◆ Sell seedlings (when starting yours for the garden) to teachers, parents and community members

### HOST A RAIN BARREL SALE!

<http://rainbarrel.ca> is an innovative and easy-to-use service for hosting a rain barrel sale for fundraising purposes.

Hosting a rain barrel sale in your school’s community increases the visibility of your school garden, helps promote water conservation, and can be lots of fun!

While rain barrels are typically quite expensive, rainbarrel.ca helps lower the cost by re-using food grade materials; barrels sold through their program sell for \$55 each. Pre-ordering through the website they create for your event means there is no risk. Plus, eligible Ottawa residents may apply to the city for a \$50 rebate to help cover the cost of their rain barrel!

## GRANTS

- ◆ Awesome Foundation Ottawa: Supports awesome initiatives in Ottawa (\$1000) - <http://awesomeottawa.ca>
- ◆ Whole Foods WholeKids Foundation : \$2000 to support edible educational gardens on school grounds <https://wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/6747>
- ◆ SpeakUp Projects by the Ontario Ministry of Education: Supports student-led projects to integrate their education into their community lives - <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/projects.html#resource>
- ◆ Learning for a Sustainable Future's EcoLeague: Supports school-based sustainability projects (up to \$400) <http://www.r4r.ca/ecoleague>
- ◆ TD Friends of the Environment Foundation: Supports environmental projects in Canadian communities (needs-based, average \$2500) - <https://fef.td.com/funding/>
- ◆ Metro Green Apple School Program: Supports projects that encourage healthy eating in schools, communities and homes (\$1000) – <http://www.greenapple.metro.ca/home.en.html>
- ◆ Imagineaction Project Subsidies: Supports projects linking communities and schools( \$500 - \$750) - <http://www.imagine-action.ca/members/Login.aspx?lgtype=T&m=I>
- ◆ It's About Time (Ontario Teachers' Federation): Supports 3 days of release time for groups of four teachers for professional learning and discussion - <https://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/>
- ◆ World Wildlife Fund Canada Go Wild School Grants Program: Supports initiatives that connect students with nature, decreases community impacts on the environment, and encourages environmental leadership - [http://www.wwf.ca/what\\_you\\_can\\_do/apply\\_for\\_a\\_grant\\_v2.cfm](http://www.wwf.ca/what_you_can_do/apply_for_a_grant_v2.cfm)

## CROWDSOURCED FUNDRAISING PLATFORMS

'Crowdfunding' sites are an emerging tool through which groups and individuals can post projects online and solicit financial support through the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Some crowdfunding sites (e.g. FundRazr) rely on individuals donating money directly towards your project. Others are sponsored by agencies or companies (e.g. Aviva Community Fund) who donate a given amount to projects receiving the most votes.

- ◆ Aviva Community Fund (Sponsored by Aviva): Supports environmental projects that benefit Canadian communities (\$0 - \$150 000) - [www.avivacommunityfund.org](http://www.avivacommunityfund.org)
- ◆ Lowe's FlipGive: Post your project. When supporters purchase a \$50 gift card for Lowe's, your project receives \$20 - <http://lowescanada.flipgive.com/>
- ◆ Private donation-based: FundRazr - <https://fundrazr.com/>

## LOCAL BUSINESS DONATIONS

Donations from local businesses are a great way to directly receive the tools and resources that you need for your garden. Depending on what your garden needs, the business that you target will differ.

Target businesses with locations in your local community: this will help build connections and open doors for more cooperation in the future. Consider businesses such as local nurseries and greenhouses (who may have extra seedlings or other plant material to donate) and equipment suppliers.

Below is a brief list of ideas for which businesses to target. This is just the beginning though, so don't be afraid to branch out!

- ◆ Nurseries and Garden Centres
- ◆ Hardware Stores
- ◆ Lumber Companies
- ◆ Landscaping Companies
- ◆ Organic Seed Companies
- ◆ Recycled Material Distributors (e.g. Habitat for Humanity Restore, Cohen & Cohen)

Now that you know who you are reaching out to, it's time to start thinking about how you will present your project to them.



## STEP 4

# HOW WILL YOU PRESENT YOUR PROJECT TO POTENTIAL DONORS ?

### PREPARATIONS

Before you are ready to start asking for donations, either from community members, businesses or granting organizations, you need to prepare some information about your proposed project. Write a clear mission statement that states the mission and goals of your school garden program, and how it serves your school community.

Depending on the nature of your fundraising campaign, and who you are targeting in your campaign, your fundraising materials will look different.

**WHO** is holding the fundraiser?

**WHY** are you fundraising?

**WHAT** kind of event is it?

**WHEN** is the event?

**WHERE** are you holding the event?

### COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

If you are going to undertake a community-based fundraising campaign, your campaign materials will differ depending on your fundraising method. If you are going to be holding a special event (ex. potluck, movie night, etc), you need to create promotional materials such as posters, flyers, or radio announcements. Tailor your promotional materials to your community, your garden, and the atmosphere you wish to create at your event. Regardless of the type of promotional material you use, you should utilize your mission statement and the purpose of your project, and you need to include a few basic pieces of information.

### GRANT APPLICATIONS

Every grant that you apply for will have different application documents and processes, and it is very important to read the directions carefully. Granting organizations often get flooded with applications, and small mistakes could take your project out of the running.

Although every grant application is different, here are some simple do's and don'ts throughout the application process:

DO	DON'T
Read criteria and application procedures carefully and follow all instructions.	Stray from the stated application process – each organization streamlines their application process to suit their needs, and you will improve your chances of getting funded if you follow their rules
Include a clear mission statement for your school garden program.	Use general terms to describe your project – the power of your application will be in the specifics: what are you doing, and how will it improve your school?
Set your project apart from other similar projects – what is unique about your school/garden/student population?	Make a budget that is unrealistically small or large – your budget should be well researched to show the granter that you can pull off the organization of your project.
Talk about past successes in your garden – what impact has your garden had on your school already?	
Contact the granting organization before submitting your application for any additional advice they might have.	

## BUSINESS DONATIONS

Often, the first step in reaching out to local businesses is writing them a letter. The letter should include

- 1) your mission statement
- 2) a brief description of your proposed project
- 3) what you are asking for in donations

The more specific you are, the easier it is for a business to approve your application. Your letter should be simple, straightforward, and to the point.

On the next page is an example of a general fundraising letter that can easily be modified depending on the type of business you are writing to, and what sort of donations you are hoping for. You can use this as a template for your own letter.

{Business Contact Name} {Business Name} {Business Address}

{School Name}

{School Address} {School Phone Number}

{Insert Date}

Dear {Insert Business Name or Contact Person},

For the past {Insert age of garden} years, the students, teachers, and parents at {Insert School Name} have been growing a special program at our school. With the help of the Growing Up Organic Program of Canadian Organic Growers' Ottawa-St Lawrence-Outaouais Chapter, we have built an organic vegetable and herb garden on our campus!

Since its inception, the school garden at our school has provided many meaningful learning opportunities for our students. The garden is used in subjects across the curriculum, from learning about fractions in math, writing projects in English, and learning about soil biology in science. Additionally, by encouraging learning outside the classroom, the garden helps to promote healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and an appreciation for the natural world.

We are writing to you to ask for donations of {Insert wish here eg. lumber, hand tools, compost, etc}. We are reaching out to local businesses in the hope that it will help to create local networks of people who are interested and invested in creating opportunities for students to learn about their food and where it comes from.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider our request, and we look forward to cultivating a fruitful relationship together. Please contact me if you have any questions about our program or about how to make a donation.

Thank you,

{Insert Name}

{Insert Position and School} {Insert Phone Number}

Once you've been successful in your fundraising campaign, it is important to send updates to all of your donors on the successful completion of your project.



## STEP 5

### HOW WILL YOU SHARE YOUR SUCCESS WITH DONORS ?

#### GRATITUDE

This is an important part of the fundraising process. After your project is successful, you need to share your success with your donors. This allows them to see how their money was spent, and hopefully inspires them to donate to your program again in the future.

Your communication style will vary depending on the method of fundraising you used :

- ◆ If you raised money within your community, thank you notes or a special event for donors can be a great way to say thank you and share your success.
- ◆ If you have been given a grant or a business donation, a letter with pictures showing the results of your project is a great way to show your gratitude.

