

THE EVERYDAY *ENTREPRENEUR*

How Do I Fund Thee?

Let Me Count the Ways

by Karen Thickstun, NCTM

*My beloved project.
I envision thee in all thy beauty.
But whereof is the funding?*

Fundraising is not an Elizabethan tragedy. Successful fundraising is a concrete plan of action with specific, targeted and *diversified* activities. Fundraising can be undertaken by a Collegiate Chapter, a non-profit organization, an individual teacher or performer—anyone! Let's count the ways!

Fundraising by a Collegiate Chapter

The following strategies are utilized by the Butler MTNA Collegiate Chapter to fund national conference trips and various outreach projects:

1. Student Government Association (SGA). As a student organization on campus, the Collegiate Chapter is eligible to apply for SGA grants. This has been one of the Chapter's largest funding sources.
2. State Music Teachers Association. Indiana Music Teachers Association offers travel grants for collegiate members.
3. Letter to local associations. Local teachers have been thrilled to help out aspiring young professionals, often donating more than the Chapter asked.
4. School of Music travel grants and University research grants. These are fruitful sources for the years when the Chapter is presenting at a conference.
5. MTNA collegiate travel and/or enrichment grants. Up to \$100 for travel or \$750

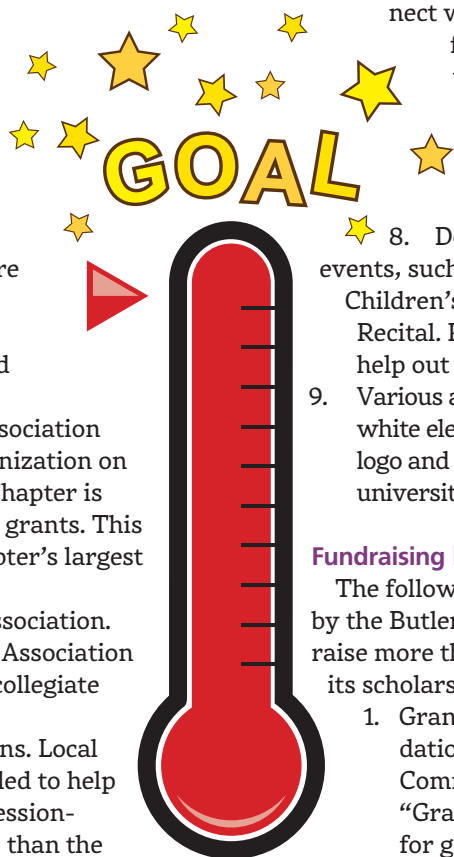
for enrichment is available from MTNA. Deadline is typically in early November.

6. Crowdfunding. The Butler Chapter uses GoFundMe as an easy way to connect with out-of-state friends and family and to manage donations. Learn more at crowdfunding.com
7. Personal letters to family, colleagues and friends.
8. Donation jar at Chapter events, such as the annual Children's Festival or Member Recital. Parents are often willing to help out young teachers.
9. Various activities, such as bake sales, white elephant sale, merchandise with logo and singing Valentines. Check university policies for limitations.

Fundraising by a Non-Profit Organization

The following strategies are utilized by the Butler Community Arts School to raise more than \$100,000 annually for its scholarship fund:

1. Grants from local and state foundations, and the Indiana Arts Commission. A previous column, "Grantwriting 101," is a resource for getting started with grants.¹
2. Surplus revenue from those who can afford to pay full price.
3. Strategic partnerships. Partnerships with community centers, United Way agencies and a local youth orchestra enable everyone to jointly share costs for outreach classes.



4. In-kind (or non-monetary) contributions, such as musical instrument donations and pianos loaned by the local music store.
5. Corporate donations and sponsorships, especially for underwriting special events.
6. Individual donors.
7. City/county government. Check your mayor's office or tourism board for initiatives that align with your organization's mission.
8. Civic groups. In exchange for a short performance by our students, civic clubs and women's groups have made donations.

Other ideas include naming rights, especially if the project is a capital item such as a piano or stage; "selling" the piano keys on a Steinway; and a performance Piano-a-thon. A previous column, "Fundraising: Who Cares?" provides more information.²

Fundraising by an Individual

The following strategies have been utilized by recent graduates to support a performance and/or teaching career:

1. Family and friends.
2. Individual donors who will "build your tribe." Stay in touch through regular communication. Create "perks" that encourage loyalty, such as priority seating or a private reception.
3. Grants for individual artists from a local or state arts council or MTNA. Individuals can apply for MTNA's teacher enrichment and community engagement grants; deadline is typically early May.
4. Strategic partnerships, such as a local music store for a performance venue.
5. In-kind contributions or barter agreements.
6. Corporate donations and sponsorships.
7. Crowdfunding. Jeeyoon Kim used Kickstarter to launch her first CD.



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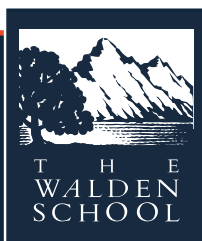
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8. Special events, such as a house concert or CD release party.
9. Sales of CDs and other merchandise.
10. Diversified revenue streams, such as advertising in the program book.

David Cutler's *The Savvy Musician* is a resource for additional strategies for individual artists.

Do I need 501(c)(3) Not-For-Profit Status?

Yes, but only if you expect donors to value the tax-deduction benefit for their contributions. For small scale or local projects, this may not be important to donors.

One solution is fiscal sponsorship—the relationship between a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and an individual or group that has a similar mission, without the individual or group having to file for non-profit status by itself. Fractured Atlas (www.fracturedatlas.org) is a not-for-profit organization that supports artists by serving as the fiscal agent, which allows donors to make tax-deductible contributions.

So now you have a defined project (with goals that align with your mission), a fiscal agent (if needed), and multiple strategies for building a diversified fundraising plan. Time to get started!

Notes

1. Karen Thickstun, "Grantwriting 101: Just the FAQs," *American Music Teacher*, August/September 2017, pp. 42–43.

2. Thickstun, "Fundraising: Who Cares?" *American Music Teacher*, December/January 2017/2018, pp. 37–38.

Karen Thickstun, NCTM, directs the Butler Community Arts School and is co-advisor for the Butler University collegiate chapter. She holds degrees in music, economics and business. Thickstun is MTNA president-elect.



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