

**BASIC GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE
FUNDRAISING FOR A
NAACP BRANCH**

“TO DO THIS WORK YOU’VE GOT TO RAISE THE MONEY, HONEY!”

INTRODUCTION

It is impossible for NAACP Branches to carry out an effective civil rights program without adequate funding. Simply put, if Branches are to do a better job, they must raise more money. Unfortunately, a majority of our Branches don't raise enough money in their local communities. This guide is an effort to present simple, clear and concise strategies for raising money, today.

PLAN OUR WORK AND WORK OUR PLAN

The key to successful fund-raising is planning. A good plan that is properly executed will produce memorable and successful events. Here are some of the basics of fund-raising:

1. A budget is a map to where we are going: The Finance Committee must prepare a budget at the end of each year for the following year. The budget is the basis of the Freedom Fund Committee fund-raising goal for the year. A sample budget is attached to this guide. **Appendix A.**
2. Failure to plan is a plan for failure: Every fund-raising activity must be well planned. The earlier we plan, the better our chance for success. The Freedom Fund Banquet or event must have at least six (6) months of planning.
3. Don't forget to POP: Plan on Paper: The banquet must be planned on paper starting with preparing a budget. See **Appendix B.**
4. No More \$10 Dinners!!: We must charge an appropriate ticket price. There should be no NAACP dinners with less than a \$25 ticket, **\$50** is even better. It is impossible to raise money with cheap tickets and it also cheapens the Association. See **Appendix C.**
5. There must be a division of labor: The Freedom Fund Committee or Banquet Committee must not become a one woman/man show. Everyone can do something and no one can do everything. Appoint sub-committees in charge of **Corporate Solicitations, Logistics, Program, Souvenir Journal Ads, Tickets, Non-profit Solicitations, Church Solicitations, and Public Relations.** The **Finance Committee** must work closely with the Freedom Fund Committee.

6. Big Names attract Big Bucks! Ask corporate and community leaders with credibility to serve as Honorary Chairpersons and Co-Chairpersons. Tell them you want to use their names on the letterhead. Also ask the Honorary Chairs if they will sign letters, make phone calls and assign someone from their company to the corporate sub-committee. **Appendix D.**

7. Get free professional help with marketing and solicitations: Ask Honorary Chairs or other corporate leaders for cooperation of their marketing and publicity departments for help in designing special letterhead and writing effective letters. Make sure to include the local television station owners or general managers among the Honorary Co-chairpersons.

8. The first impression is the lasting impression: Never, ever send a letter or announcement without having it proofed by someone other than the author. Get someone who knows English and grammar (teacher, professor, editor, press person or marketing expert) to review ALL correspondence before it is sent! **Appendix E.**

9. Remember the Blind Bartimaeus Rule: “Ask for what you want!” We must ask the right people for the right amount of money. Solicitation letters must be well written, grammatically correct, and sent in a timely manner to the decision maker in the business, organization or company. Never, ever send a “Dear Sir” or “To whom it may concern” letter.

10. No shortcuts, do the research: Don’t half step, do the necessary research to build a comprehensive data base of companies and individuals to solicit from. Ask corporate friends for their “hot lists” of contributors who give big money. Buy a copy of the chamber directory.

11. Make giving user friendly: Solicitation letters and response form(s) must be designed to be easily used by the recipient and potential contributor. Make sure all necessary information about date, time and place of the event, the amount requested and deadline are included in letters and response form(s). **Appendix F.**

12. Communicate early and often: Solicitation letters must be sent at least ninety (90) days before the event. Follow up letters should be sent 60 days and 30 days out.

13. Outreach means to reach out: We must reach out to businesses, community groups, organizations and individuals to solicit support for the event. Branch officers should make presentations to churches, chamber of commerce, club meetings, and community meetings.
14. Spread the word: The Public Relations committee must set up radio and television interviews at least 30 days out. Public Service Announcements (PSA) and church announcements must be sent at least 30 days out.
15. Program must end the night it starts!: The one NAACP tradition we must end is the all night program! An Awards Reception before the banquet to present the less prestigious awards would make the program shorter. A few major awards could be presented at the end of the dinner hour. No banquet should last more than 2 ½ hours.
16. Only one keynote speaker!: Give every program participant a written script and a time limit. The entire program should be timed from start to finish. Never wait on the speaker to start the program. At the appointed hour, start!
17. Technology makes it look good: If there is a Women of the Year or Mother of the Year contest as part of the banquet, consider having the contestants presented on large screen video.
18. Thank everybody: Within seven (7) days after the banquet, send thank you letters to all participants.
19. A few good fund-raisers is better than many smaller poorly planned ones: We must not nickel and dime the community year round. We are in the civil rights business, not the fund-raising business. Other good fund-raisers are **auctions, celebrity server dinners or luncheons, Life Membership Luncheons or Breakfasts, Tribute to Black Women/Men, private movie screenings and fashion shows.**
20. Our event must become THE event: Whatever fund-raiser we have, it must be so well done that it becomes THE event to attend annually.
21. Our goal is never to “Break even:” If we just want to break even; it would be better to hold a mass meeting!