



NORTH CAROLINA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

2023 NC Science Olympiad Fundraising Toolkit

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I. General Donor/Sponsor Cultivation Tasks

The purpose of this plan is to cultivate prospective donors and/or sponsors. Your goal is to collect information on prospects, inspire them to get involved, gauge their interest in NCSO and prep them for a donation/sponsorship ask.

Definitions:

- Prospect: identified as a potential donor or sponsor
- Cultivation: relationship building with potential partners
- Low level donors: \$100 or less
- Mid-level donors: \$100-\$500
- Major donors: \$500+

Getting Started

Task 1: Determine your fundraising needs i.e. money, help, and materials needed.

Task 2: Set a clear and realistic fundraising goal and a hard deadline. For example, \$1,000 by December 31st.

Task 3: Assemble a small team of students, parents, volunteers, community leaders, etc. who can assist with fundraising. Remember fundraising is a difficult task and it helps to have assistance and creative partners to help carry the load.

Task 4: Brainstorm over potential donors/sponsors, these can be previous donors/sponsors, new businesses, parent employers, etc. Assign prospects to volunteers, parents, or other people who will be taking part in fundraising efforts.

Task 5: Provide fundraisers with talking points (see Cultivation Outline pg. 4).

Task 6: Provide any necessary information, handouts, etc. that may be needed.

Remember the NCSO Development Officer is always available to answer questions and offer guidance. Please contact Valerie Bass at vabass@ncsu.edu or 919-515-5020.

II. General Donor/Sponsor Cultivation Outline

Collecting and researching information on organization (if not already known):

- If starting from scratch, Google local businesses that align with STEM i.e. local hospitals, manufacturing businesses, I.T. companies, etc. Also, search your town name with the words “donation request” and/or “sponsorship.” Dig through the results and track what you find that is relevant to you. A lot of local businesses have online donation/sponsorship forms that are easy to fill out.
- Identify a contact and their role at the organization. If overwhelmed, look for job titles such as community relations, development, fundraising, or marketing staff.
- Look over their organizations mission and vision. Is it related to the work you are doing?
- Organization’s commitment to the local community. Are they active in your community?
- Philanthropic giving at their organization. Do they sponsor events, award grants, or make donations?
- Current giving and philanthropic commitments. Do they support similar projects or organizations to NCSO?

Inspire prospects to get involved

- Make initial contact i.e. email, visit to their office, lunch, etc.
- Share what you love about NCSO.
 - Why did you get involved?
 - Share a personal story or experience
- Discuss corporate and organization volunteering (if applicable). Many organizations encourage and even pay for their employees to volunteer in the community.
- Outline NCSO impact on students (see attachment A).
- Invite them to a local Science Olympiad event such as a team practice, tournament or other community event. Nothing inspires donors more than seeing how exciting a tournament actually is. Even if they do not give this year, they will likely give the next.

Gauge their interest in NCSO:

- Have your elevator speech prepared and ready to share.
- Discuss the various programs and activities of NCSO.
 - Biggest K-12 STEM competition in the State

- 18,000+ students participate
- 75 counties participate
- *If there aren't a lot of teams competing in your area, be sure to mention that. STEM learning opportunities are limited in certain areas, mentioning this makes a stronger case for them to support your team.*
- Questions that may provide some guidance on gauging their interest:
 - Is this the first time they have heard of NCSO?
 - Has their organization supported NCSO in the past?
 - Do they seem interested in the conversation?
 - Do they have affinity or warmth toward NCSO's mission/work?
 - Do their organizations community outreach goals align with the NCSO mission?

Making the donation/sponsorship ask

- If the prospect seems interested and inspired by NCSO...
 - Options 1: Discuss potential donation or sponsorship
 - Discuss how past sponsors have made an impact.
 - Mention current donors/sponsors and mention the need for more.
 - If appropriate, ask if they would be interested in learning about giving options.
 - Options 2: Not sure of their interest
 - Ask if they would be interested in attending future events, volunteering, or going to lunch to discuss how NCSO and their organization might partner.
 - It's important to keep the conversation going.

******Mention your fundraising goal, explain why you need the money and your progress to date.***

Follow-up (the week following your initial discussion)

- Low interest
 - Initial person of contact (parent, volunteer, etc) will send an email thanking them for meeting and link to your or the NCSO website encouraging them to learn more about Science Olympiad. Offer them an opportunity to get involved in volunteer work.

- Medium Interest and/or mid-level prospect
 - Email summarizing your discussion and follow-up with an ask of some kind i.e. to volunteer, to donate, etc. In the email, include a link to the NCSO website, your team page or social media account, a donation page and any other relevant information.

- High Interest and/or major prospect
 - Make an in-person ask
 - Invite them to lunch
 - Schedule a call or visit

In person ask

- Review your initial discussion about potential sponsorship or donation.
- Express your need for support and why their support will make a difference.
- Ask them to join the Science Olympiad community by making a donation/sponsoring for \$XXXX.
- Wait... give them time to reflect and answer. Most of the time if a prospect is quiet it is because they are thinking of how they can say yes.

REMEMBER: The #1 reason people don't give is because no one asked.

If they say no, don't despair. No can mean a lot of things...

- Not now. Ask them if there would be a better time to discuss this in the future.
- You asked for too much. Ask if there is an amount they are more comfortable with.
- They aren't the sole decision maker. This is the most common scenario. This person most likely will need to consult with another person to finalize the decision. If this is the case, ask them when would be a good time to follow-up.

III. Ideas for Local Fundraising and Awareness

Many local businesses are willing to sponsor, donate goods or services to support the local community. Two factors that help motivate a business to donate are a personal connection to the cause as well as recognition within the community for their efforts. The in-kind donations can be used as silent auction items, rewards for contributors, volunteers, or as part of an event.

Step 1 - Create either a printed or softcopy document with your mission and how donations are used with examples of past events or cases for future use.

Step 2 - Keep the message short and to the point. Example – We are looking to increase the skills of students in our community in STEM to help provide a strong workforce for you and other area employers. Would you be willing to donate a gift certificate to support xxx. Be as specific as possible for the event and how the donation will be used. For example, grocery stores can provide snacks, hardware stores can provide building supplies, or you could use the gift certificate as part of a raffle.

Step 3 – Once you receive support, be sure to acknowledge and thank them via social media using their official handle.

Step 4 - Personal thanks via email. For a special touch, have your students make handwritten thank yous. Creating a personal connection is the best way to guarantee future support.

It is easiest to work with a team and target businesses that volunteers already frequent. Organizing a list that has the volunteer name, business, and status/next steps, with donation will avoid multiple people contacting the same business (See example below)

Volunteer Name	Business	Date Contacted	Item	Next Steps	Thanked / Acknowledged

Possible items based on business type:

Restaurants

- Gift certificates
- Coffee or light refreshments for events – sometimes free or deeply discounted for larger events
- Fundraising nights – donating a % of sales – sometimes, one time, or over an extended period of time – we will address how to have a successful fundraising night in another section.
- Items for you to use for fundraising i.e. Krispy Kreme donuts

Retail / Services

- Gift certificates (spa day, movie theater, oil changes, etc)
- Branded items (pens, shirts)
- Items that can be auctioned or used as rewards for volunteers
- Advertising for events

Local radio stations, newspapers, blogs, may be willing to donate air time or space to promote fundraising and other events.

Fundraising Nights at Restaurants – Best Practices

- Allow a minimum of 4-6 weeks for actual event from date of agreement
- Clearly define what is / is not allowed at the restaurant
 - Is a table with materials allowed on site?
 - Can you ask for additional donations – perhaps for branded items?
 - Will you be allowed to advertise in the restaurant?
 - Will they help cross promote on their social media?
 - Will they allow you to have volunteers help?
 - Make sure the date(s) and time(s) makes sense and does not conflict with a major school event.
- Market, market, market the event!
 - Typically, restaurants will allow fundraising on their slower nights – success is up to you.
 - Tap into everyone's social network and start with a save the date and brief advertisement of the restaurant and what they will donate.
 - Ensure all past and present participants know about the event – most families dine out on a regular basis and entice them along the way.
 - Be sure to send reminders as the date gets closer including the day of the event.
 - Leverage local media as much as possible – many have free community event pages or will help promote.
- Volunteers – if you are allowed on site – work with the manager to see how many people are allowed and if they will be helping or just staffing a table promoting the missions of NC Science Olympiad and your team.
- Thank the restaurant manager and owner – they are often asked to give a lot to the community and run on a very slim budget – if it helps them find new

customers – they will be more open for future events and create a win / win partnership.

The key to success is to be clear on how their donations will be used and try to tie back benefits to their business. Keep in mind – many small organizations – especially restaurants – are asked for donations on a regular basis. The key to success is to show the cause and be respectful of their time. Example – do not ask for a donation in the middle of a lunch rush! For larger donations – include their logos on printed or electronic advertising / local web pages.

IV. Peer to Peer Fundraising

Definition: Peer-to-peer fundraising is a multi-tiered approach to crowdfunding. This means individuals can create personal fundraising pages for your cause's behalf. This can feed revenue back to your organization or team as a whole, or to a specific campaign you're running. Either way, the individual shares his or her page with friends, family, and community members for donations (hence "peer-to-peer").

Step 1: Identify people in your circle who would be interested in helping you raise funds. Try to find people with a large social media presence i.e. lots of friends. Make sure that these are people who will portray your cause in a positive manner and not typically post or promote controversial things on their pages.

Step 2: Find a fundraising platform that would help you raise funds

- Facebook
- GoFundMe
- DonorChoose

Step 3: Provide resources for your fundraisers such as talking points for why people should donate, links to any pertinent websites, relevant facts, pictures, etc.

Step 4: Share and promote fundraising pages on social media platforms. Update people on your progress. Thank someone when they donate.

Step 5: Follow-up! Be sure to keep in touch with donors throughout your journey and be sure to thank them after the tournament. These donors will likely give again so be sure to engage with them as often as possible. This is also true for your peer-to-peer fundraisers, be sure to thank them so that they will likely participate again.

V. Grants

Many corporations, foundations, and government organizations provide grant support to individuals, programs, and events that serve their community. Grant support is one of the most stable and sustainable ways to fundraise. Often, when you have been awarded a grant from an organization they are more likely to award you a grant in the future.

Grants, however, can be a more labor-intensive means of fundraising that requires research, top-notch writing, and reporting. But, there are many organizations that offer small grants with minimal work.

Step 1- RESEARCH! The most important step when applying for grants is research.

These are a few things you should be looking for:

- Organizations that align with Education or STEM workforce development.
- Look for what the organization has supported in the past i.e. who are their past recipients? Are the projects or recipients like you?
- Research the qualifications for the grant. Ask yourself if you qualify. Do I have the time to commit to the grant writing process? Is the sum large enough to warrant the amount of effort? Do not waste time applying for grants you are not qualified for. Grants are usually competitive, and organizations do not make exceptions for those who don't qualify.
- Review application guidelines and information needed.
- Know the rules of your grant proposal before beginning. Grantors usually get hundreds of proposals so make sure you aren't tossed aside for missing a key component.

Compile a list of potential grants to apply for with the deadlines, requirements, estimated time commitment, and additional materials. Use this list as a living document that you constantly update and maintain as you research, apply, and receive grants.

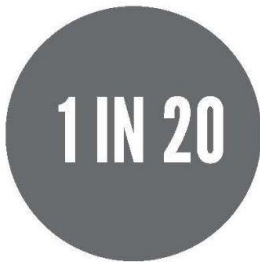
Step 2 – Writing. Funders want to understand your 'story.' It may seem that grant writing is dull and straightforward with just filling in basic facts. But, a real person will be reading your proposal, so it is important to tell a compelling story. The story you should tell should focus on your work, your goals, and how the support of funders will help you achieve those goals. Be sure to pull inspiration from the work that you do. Think about why you care, what is driving you to apply because those same forces that inspire you are likely to inspire the reviewer who will select your grant. Be sure to ALWAYS have someone else review your final draft before submitting it for evaluation. A second set of eyes can help you fix small errors but also help you solidify your story, bring up something that has not occurred to you, or check that you have completed all components.

Step 3 – Accounting. Funders want to make a good investment meaning they want to fund projects that have a clear and reasonable budget. When requesting funds, be sure to be clear about how grant support will be used and how you will report on how funding is spent (if applicable). Funds should only be used for furthering the project and should be clearly stated.

Step 4 – Creating a System- Once you have started the grant writing process you will see what works and what doesn't. Keep track of what you learn and update your grant list. Be sure to save old proposals so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel each time you apply to something new. Recycle proposals that were successful, reread unsuccessful ones to see what went wrong, and most importantly ask for feedback where appropriate. Some organizations will provide you with a reason you weren't funded or even provide specific feedback about the proposal. Feedback is a great way to learn what went wrong and provide tips on how to improve.

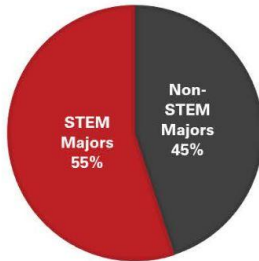
See Attachment B for a list of Grantors to get you started.

THE INFLUENCE OF NCSO

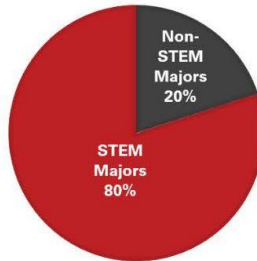


North Carolina State University undergraduate students listed participation in Science Olympiad on their college applications.

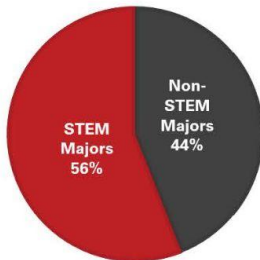
NC STATE STUDENTS



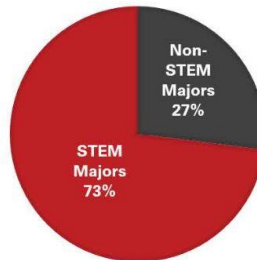
NC STATE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN SCIENCE OLYMPIAD



WOMEN AT NC STATE



WOMEN AT NC STATE WHO PARTICIPATED IN SCIENCE OLYMPIAD



Research team: Dr. Audrey J. Jaeger, Professor & Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor, and Executive Director of the National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness. Katie Smith, Ph.D. Student in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development. Dana Thomas, Ph.D. Student in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development

WHAT STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY...

"I learned that I really like entomology. It's not really an exaggeration to say that Science Olympiad is the reason why I'm at this university and pursuing a career in entomology."

"I always knew I wanted to be some sort of engineer, however, the experience I gained with the Bridge, and other building-centric events made me come to the conclusion that I wanted to be a Civil Engineer. Science Olympiad was the primary factor in me choosing my specific major."

"Science Olympiad pushed me into a field of science, and seeing how supportive NCSU was of this program that I fell in love with, I felt compelled to attend the university."

Attachment B: Resources

- Website: ncscienceolympiad.ncsu.edu. Great source for news, resources and information about the mission of NCSO.
- Development Officer Contact Information: Valerie Bass 919-515-5020 or vabass@ncsu.edu
- [NCSO Journey Booklet](#). Tells the story of 5 NCSO alumni who went on to do great things.
- [Corporate Sponsor Webpage](#)
- [Volunteer Page](#)

Grant Opportunities:

- [Burroughs Wellcome Fund](#)
- [Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro](#)
- [Community Foundation of NC East](#)
- [Community Foundation of Western North Carolina](#)
- [Golden Leaf Foundation](#)
- Great Resource for Finding Grants-[Foundation Center](#) PS: most libraries offer a free version
- [High Point Community Foundation](#)
- [North Carolina Community Foundation](#)
- Great source for finding grants- [NC Biotechnology Center](#)
- [The Triangle Community Foundation](#)
- [Winston-Salem Foundation](#)
- [More sources](#)