

Fundraising Tips to Raise Money to Volunteer Abroad

If I had a dime for every person who says they would love to volunteer abroad but can't afford it—well, I'd probably have enough to fund my next home building project to Brazil.

While it may seem like a bit of a paradox, providing free assistance to countries in need will cost you. If you use a volunteer placement agency, they'll usually charge a flat fee to cover the costs. Some of the main expenses include international airfare, lodging once you've reached your destination, and your daily meals and beverages.

Before you write off a prospective trip as too expensive, you might consider fundraising efforts as a way of raising the necessary cash to subsidize your volunteer excursion. Below, we've compiled a listing of some useful fundraising tips to help bring your good intentions to fruition:

Appeal to those closest to you. Friends and family are the first line of support. If they know how important a charitable organization is to you, they'll most likely be delighted to chip in. To help them visualize what their cash will be going towards, request their money for a concrete purpose, such as a new pair of hiking boots or a day's worth of food.

Ask in a unique way. Instead of just picking up the phone or sending a mass email, get creative with your request. For instance, you might try creating a personalized card that explains your passion for the cause, along with photos and personal stories that bring the region to life. Include as much detail as possible to help the recipient understand the importance of the trip and what specific difference their money will be making.

Host a fundraising event. This is one of the most impactful ways to raise a substantial amount of money. Whatever location you choose—recreation center, local tavern, or your own home—be sure to plan the party with creativity and resourcefulness, and try to tie the theme to your aspired destination. Contact local radio stations and newspapers about possible pro bono publicity, and post leaflets on college campus bulletin boards and other public forums. To generate the funds, you can either sell tickets for admission, charge at the door, or just put out donation boxes in prominent spots throughout the venue. You might also consider including a musical act or a raffle.

Break a sweat. Many volunteers raise money by entering a competitive athletic event, such as a road race, bike race, or triathlon, and asking people to sponsor them.

Contact local organizations that support your cause. If you want to travel to volunteer at an orphanage in Peru, try reaching out to a local Peruvian group or community society to see if they'd be interested in working with you. If they agree to provide funds for your excursion, you might offer to come and speak at one of their events upon your return.

No matter what fundraising option you choose, persistence is key. Shrug off the "no's" and don't be ashamed to ask for assistance—after all, you're soliciting donations for a worthwhile cause, not a week at the beach.