Funding Your Volunteer Programs

General Tips on Soliciting Funds or Donations

- Donations can come in many forms: food, money, services. Be creative about what you solicit!
- Utilize the entire Waltham community and surrounding areas.
- Remember Donors give for the following reasons:
  - It is hard to turn down students!
  - Tax-deductions
  - Good publicity
  - They can get rid of items they no longer need
  - They are passionate about your cause or project

How to Solicit Donations

1. Start early; it often takes 2-3 months to arrange for donations, especially from corporations
2. Making your first contact...
   - Call the organization and get a contact name (manager, PR person, owner, etc) and a correct mailing address.
   - Talk to the contact person, introduce yourself, your position and what you are doing, mention why they might be interested in donating (publicity, etc).
   - Tell them you are going to send a formal letter explaining the program and the donation request in detail.
   - If it feels appropriate and they sound interested, ask for a donation then instead of offering to send a letter.
3. Send Formal Letter – Samples letters are available on request from the Department of Community Service.
4. Send Confirmation Letter/ Reminder Call
   - “Hello, my name is _______ and I sent you a letter about a donation 1 week ago. I wanted to follow-up to see if you have had a chance to look at it and if I can answer any questions for you.”
   - Find out if they need any information from you (tax id number, paperwork they need submitted, etc)
5. Send a Thank you letter! Include publicity materials, information about the program or event, photos, etc.

Final Notes on Fundraising...

- The biggest problem in fundraising isn’t getting people to give, but to find the right people to ask.
- People give money because of relationships, neighborhood or religious outlook

*To be eligible for funds available through the Student Union, you must be a Student Union-recognized club.
**The Department of Community Service is a great resource for helping you identify possible sources of grant funding.