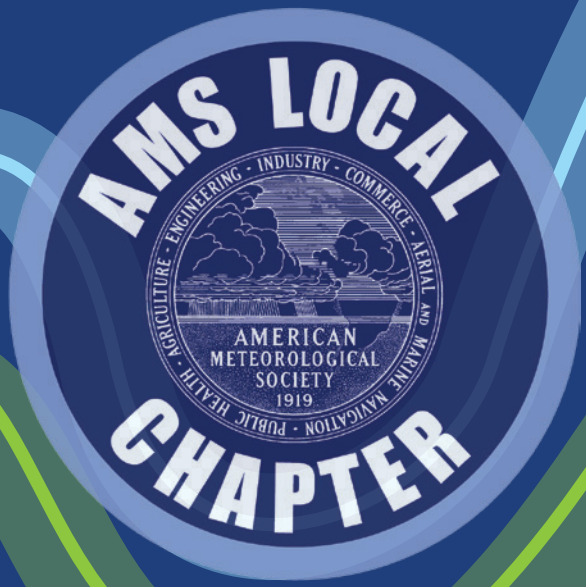


FUNDRAISING

CROWDSOURCED FROM LOCAL CHAPTERS

AMS LOCAL CHAPTER FUNDRAISING

AMS Local Chapters have demonstrated a great amount of ingenuity in handling money and becoming financially self sufficient. This guide presents examples of activities that chapters have used to raise money in the past. You can pick, choose, discard, or tailor each suggestion however works best for your chapter.

Please note that these suggestions are for general guidance only and have been sourced from Local Chapters. The National AMS does not advocate or vouch for any of these activities in particular.

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National AMS does not provide assistance with fundraising for local chapters. This is due to the loose legal relationship between local chapters and the national AMS. Local chapters are autonomous organizations that direct their own legal structure and programming. The tax exempt/nonprofit status of AMS as a professional organization does not extend to local chapters. It is up to each chapter to decide whether they want to handle money and how best to do it.

Before beginning fundraising activities, ask your chapter officers and membership some basic questions:

Does Your Chapter Need Money?

> Chapter funds can be used for food and drink at meetings, for subsidizing travel to annual meetings, paying for a website, printing materials, etc. It's fun to have money, but you can also operate a club without it. Being clear on what you'll do with the money will help you craft a better fundraising plan.

What Will Your Legal Structure Be?

> The structure of local chapters covers a broad range. Some have only a basic cohort of officers and others are large nonprofits. Some chapters raise a lot of money, others don't see the need. Deciding what fits best for you and your members is important. If you are interested in something as formal as a 501(c)(3), then it is worthwhile contacting your local Small Business Development Center or equivalent. These centers are government funded and provide many free services to help individuals start small businesses or organizations. They can help connect you to the legal, accounting, and other advice you'll need for starting a 501(c)(3).

How Is Your Plan Sustainable?

> Chapter membership and energy will wax and wane, so make sure that your chapter is regularly documenting activities and financial information. That way information can be passed on to new officers and the chapter won't lose ground even if it goes through periods of dormancy or becomes less active for a time.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter vs National Dues

Some chapters charge dues and some do not. If local chapter members do pay dues, these are separate from membership in the national AMS.

Dues at the local chapter level normally range from $5-$25 dollars. This is a very traditional way to earn money for a chapter and can be enough for basic needs.

Membership in the National AMS confers separate benefits from being in a local chapter. As far as membership requirements, only the president of the local AMS chapter is required to be a member of the national society. This is so there will be a clear conduit of information from national to Local Chapters. If necessary, chapter members may choose to subsidize the membership fees of the president so it is not a burdensome requirement for becoming an officer. Full members of the National Society pay dues based on that member's annual income. Student and Associate Members have set fees. For more information on AMS membership, visit the website.

It may not be feasible to charge chapter dues at the local level if you are in a less affluent area, if you have a younger audience, etc. As always, work with your members and officers to figure out what is a good fit. Don't be afraid to have the conversation and know that each chapter has a different approach. There is no right or wrong answer. Go with what fits best for your chapter.

MERCHANDISE SALES

T-Shirts, Stickers, Mugs

Selling T-shirts, stickers, etc. is a great way to improve the comradery of your chapter as well as make some money. One of the most popular websites to do this with is CustomInk.com, which offers very affordable prices on shirts as well as other custom products. You should also check with local screen printing shops, which can probably offer a rate that is competitive with online merchants. Some general tips for selling merchandise:

- Ask for ideas from your group and then vote for the top designs to offer
- Estimate prices based on anticipated sales and subsequent discounts for such quantities
- Order a few extras, which can be sold to members who did not order or offered as prizes at future meetings
- Make sure to plan plenty of lead time for production and shipping before distribution
- For student chapters, get in touch with alumni to offer merchandise in order to increase sales

Weather Calendars

Many chapters sell weather calendars as a fundraiser. This can be done as part of a photography contest that is open to the whole community or can be restricted to photographs of weather phenomena taken by chapter members.

Calendars usually range from $15.00 to $20.00, and all proceeds go to the chapter. Each month features one of the winning photos, and a brief caption of the photo. Holidays and other special events (like World Meteorology Day!) are included in the calendar.

Printing can be done by working with a local company or looking online for different printing options.

Yankee Candles

Several university chapters work with Yankee Candles to create fundraising opportunities. Chapter members receive packets from Yankee Candles for each member to sell a variety of items to their friends, family, and extended networks. The merchandise comes approximately three weeks later for members to pick up and deliver.

Bake Sales

Many chapters host bake sales where members donate time and supplies to bake cookies, brownies, muffins, etc. This can be combined with a tabling or outreach event, or with another fundraiser like a movie night or cornhole tournament where the baked goods can serve as concessions.

Candy Sales

Several university chapters do candy sales as fundraisers. You can look for a nearby candy store or candy maker to partner with, or look for online candy fundraising sets.

You'll have to put down some money to buy the candy initially, but it usually sells quickly. You can go door to door or combine it with another event to sell as concessions or set up a table at a local fair, football game, etc. Tailoring sales to holidays can be especially productive.

For Example

The University of Georgia Student Chapter of the American Meteorological Society was especially notable as they hosted two separate homemade chocolate sales in the Geography Building. UGA AMS partnered with a local chocolatier to make dozens of delectable treats.

From peanut butter clusters to milk chocolate lightning bolts, the sale was a big hit, and many students and faculty enjoyed sweet treats that went for a great cause. UGA AMS sold chocolate in February for Valentine's Day and in March for Easter.

RESTAURANT FUNDRAISERS

Restaurant Partnerships

Local restaurants or some chains such as Red Robin and Panera will sometimes partner with chapters for a fundraiser. The local chapter makes flyers which members hand out to their friends and colleagues to promote this fundraiser. People present the flyer at the restaurant during their meal, and the chapter will receive a percentage of their total bill, not including alcoholic beverages.

Most of the time the flyer must be given to the waiter-waitress in order for the chapter to receive the percentage, and the flyers cannot be handed out directly outside of the restaurant.

Table Tips

Partner with a local restaurant to leave donation envelopes at their tables to get donors to leave a little extra change. This won't garner a ton of donations, but could still raise awareness for your chapter (or for another fundraiser you're running).

Create a nice design for your envelope and a sign that clearly explains why you're looking for donations, so that people will feel more inclined to support you. It's usually easiest to partner with local restaurants, particularly ones that you already have a connection with.

Can at the Register

The can is another classic. Partner with a local grocery store or restaurant to place a can at the checkout register for loose change. You'll need an engaging image that conveys a succinct message to catch customers' eyes and make your message stand out from the crowd.

Pancake Breakfast

A pancake breakfast is relatively easy to pull together and it provides your community with a chance to mingle. Buy some mix, some toppings, and get cooking!

Ask your community members to loan you their griddles and best spatulas to get as many hands moving as possible. Picking a day that's already associated with pancakes, such as Mardi Gras, is a great option.

Alternatively, in some areas Applebee's offers a Flapjack Fundraiser option where they will allow you to host a pancake breakfast at one of their restaurants. Applebee's will do all the cooking, but you'll need to have enough volunteers on hand to bus tables and serve pancakes. You can coordinate a day with them https://www.flapjackfunds.com

Food Delivery Service

Create your organization's version of UberEats — get people to order food and then deliver it to them, either for breakfast or for another special occasion.

Decide whether you're going to be preparing the food yourself or partnering with a local restaurant to deliver their food. Either way, you'll need a lot of volunteers to help you deliver and/or prepare it (or get restaurants to help you deliver and share profits).

For Example

MU AMS participates in a yearly fundraiser with a local Millersville restaurant, Sugar Bowl. Millersville AMS members volunteer to make deliveries for Sugar Bowl from approximately 5:00 pm. to 2:00 am. It is broken up into four, two-hour shifts.

Two MU AMS member drivers are assigned to each shift, along with four other members to handle the food and money. These members are split up into two groups for optimal delivery performance. MU AMS receives money through this fundraiser by keeping all tips received from the deliveries in this nine-hour time span.

SOCIAL FUNDRAISERS

Weather Walk

We can all use more fresh air! Take your community members on a hike or nature walk outside your town for a small fee or donation as you introduce them to the weather phenomena and atmospheric science around them.

Hold the walk when it's warm outside (but not too hot!) especially if you live in an area that might have snow long into spring.

Coordinate with the Sierra Club or a geology club to attract more members and hikers and offer even more information about the landscape to attendees.

Weather Film Festival

Host an amateur film festival and have participants enter their own productions. You can even turn it into a contest, where attendees can give $5 in order to cast votes for their favorite films. Leading up to the contest, create an email series with tips to show supporters how to create an impactful video.

Tie-Dye Party

T-shirts that promote your cause are a classic fundraising incentive, but you can take this nonprofit fundraising idea a step further and host a "create your own T-shirt" get-together. Charge an entrance fee, offer to tie-dye personal items for a donation, or enlist local artists to create custom pieces to sell.

Keep costs low by offering white T-shirts and tie-dye materials so that participants can create their own masterpiece on a budget. Making T-shirts isn't a time-consuming activity, so prepare some other family-friendly games, crafts, or activities for the event.

GAMES AND TALENT NIGHTS

Bingo Nights

Several chapters host bingo nights for chapter members and non-chapter members. You can sell bingo cards to participants, charge for entry, and/or sell refreshments. Make sure you have a space to hold the event, dry erase boards, markers, and a bingo cage for the big night. Partnering with schools or churches or gyms are good ways to get what you need. You can ask local businesses to donate small prizes like candy, stuffed animals, gift cards, etc.

Scavenger Hunt

Create a scavenger hunt and charge an entrance fee for each person. Consider reaching out to a local business or restaurant to donate an item or gift card for the grand prize winner.

The scavenger hunt can be done online (through pictures) or offline (in person). Create a list (or riddles) of science related items, weather phenomena, etc. needed to win the hunt.

To spice it up, encourage participants to donate extra money to "unlock" special clues or weather facts.

Weather and Science Trivia Night

Lots of people already pay for trivia at bars and restaurants, so leverage this interest by inviting them to pay an entrance fee to play with your chapter. This is also a fun way to communicate science to a wider audience!

You can usually rent projectors from universities or libraries or entertainment companies if you want to display questions for your participants, otherwise you can keep it very cheap by asking members if they have a portable speaker and recording the questions before hand as voice memos on your phone. Ask local bars and restaurants if they would be willing to host in exchange for a drink minimum for attendees.

Bowling Night

Coordinate with a bowling alley to rent a group of lanes — or the entire building if you know you'll have a lot of participants — and sign up teams. You can make tournament bracket or just have teams compete against one another. Participants can raise pledges per pin, raise teams sponsorships, pay an entrance fee, or just raise donations in general.

Reach out to the bowling alley early to see if you can get a discounted rate for booking multiple lanes or the entire space.

Talent Show

Host a talent show and charge an entrance fee for the audience. You'll need to secure a space to hold the show and decide if you want people to audition or not. Consider reaching out to local elementary and high schools, arts programs, dance studios, singing groups, etc. You'll also need to find volunteer judges and ask local businesses to sponsor prizes or food.

You can decide whether to make it science themed or not, but this is a great way to reach out to a wide audience and raise awareness of your chapter.

For Example

One of the most popular and attended events on the Lyndon State Campus is the annual Talent Show, put on by our student chapter. The talent show is usually held in the middle of December, with auditions held in early December.

Past judges have included the college President and Provost, an Atmospheric Sciences department professor, the student body president, and the student chapter president and vice president. Prizes are donated by local businesses.

CONTESTS

Guess the Precipitation Contest

Most chapters hold an annual contest of some sort. The "Predict the Precipitation Level" is one of the most popular. Choose a span of time (some do an annual guess, others designate a few months) and a location where the precipitation will be measured (designate an airport or other place where regular measurements happen). Then charge a nominal fee for guesses. Winners take some of the entry money or a donated prize.

Another variant is guess the first snowfall, the first tornado, etc. Tailor it to your local weather season and don't forget to update your social media channels with results.

Penny Wars

Several university chapters have held a "Penny Wars" fundraiser. The chapter is divided into teams and four jugs are placed in a chapter controlled location or Weather Center for approximately one month.

The objective is for each team to get as many points as possible. Pennies represent positive points, while all other forms of change and dollar bills represent negative points. Members can fill their jugs with as many pennies much as possible, while sabotaging other teams by putting dollar bills and other change into their jars as well. The team with the most points (or the fewest negative points) wins free pizza at the next meeting.

Weather Pet Photo Contest

Invite the photographers in your networks to submit photos of their pets enjoying all types of weather. If you're displaying the photos in a physical location, then ask attendees to pay an entrance fee and vote on their favorite piece. For a more low-impact version, hold it online and get users to submit using a hashtag!

Promote the contest well in advance so you get a lot of entries, and get permission from top entries to use them in your marketing materials.

Dance-a-thon

Participants collect donations from sponsors to take part in your dance-a-thon, with the last dancer standing (or anyone who makes it through the whole 24 hours) winning a prize. You'll need a large venue (maybe a school hall), refreshments, a team of volunteers, and maybe a DJ. Theme your playlist with weather related music. The cheesier the better!

This is a long event, so it will take several volunteers to keep it running smoothly, particularly since you'll need to ensure your dancers are sticking to the rules.

Book Swap

Hold a weather and science book swap and charge a small amount for entry and/or per book exchanged or hold a used book sale.

Collect books by asking family and friends, colleagues, school libraries, or setting up boxes at local grocery stores, coffee shops, etc and advertise the date of your swap/sale. You'll need lots of volunteers to sort books and a big space to display them where people can browse through on the day of your fundraiser. Talk to your local library about resources they have to assist you with your swap/sale.

BONUS
Recycling Wars

Millersville University AMS held a "Recycling Wars" fundraiser for the first time in 2013. Four Recycling bins were placed outside the Weather Center- one for each class. A points system was created for various sizes and types of recyclables. Members had to wash the recyclables before they were placed in the bin.

The contest ran for approximately one month. AMS officers emptied the bins as they got full and calculated each class's points. The winning class received free pizza at the next chapter meeting.

SEASONAL FUNDRAISERS

SPRING

Mother's Day Breakfast

Partner with a local restaurant or set up your own pancake breakfast for Mother's Day and sell tickets ahead of time. Most people like to take their mothers out to eat and give them a break from cooking for others, so restaurants can be crowded. Take advantage of the busyness and make this a fun, laid back mother's day event.

Flower Delivery

Celebrate the spring spirit and help people shake off the winter doldrums by delivering flowers. Partner with a local florist and sell flowers for pick-up and delivery. Valentine's Day, Easter, and early May are good times for this fundraiser. Mother's Day especially is the biggest holiday for the floral industry.

Farmer's Market Booth

Reach out to local farmers' markets for the opportunity to host a booth at one of their events. As diverse crowds come to get their spring and summer produce, this could increase your exposure and give you a chance to engage with your community face to face. Promote upcoming events, distribute materials, and collect donations as you educate shoppers on your programs.

SUMMER

Tornado Obstacle Race

Have your friends and community members create teams and pay an entrance fee. Each team will create a tornado using soda bottles and then race their tornadoes around an obstacle course. The first team to the finish line with their tornado intact wins a prize.

Do this in the summer or early fall when people are ready to run outside. Make sure you have a wide open space available so you can lay out a good tornado obstacle track and you've got a good weather forecast. Ask local businesses to donate materials for the tornadoes or prizes for the winner.

Car Wash

A good old-fashioned car wash is a classic summer fundraising idea. Advertise your event ahead of time on social media to let the local community know what hours your staff and volunteers will be accepting customers. Request a suggested donation and offer different levels of service, such as wax or a towel-dry.

Cornhole Tournament

Cornhole is a great summer activity to design an event around because it's affordable to host and easy to scale. Depending on your budget, you can purchase, build, or ask your community to loan you Cornhole sets (made up of two boards and two sets of bags). You can hold the event in a backyard, in a park, a baseball field, etc.

Make a bracket sheet for your participants so you can keep track of who has been eliminated. Don't forget to provide food and drinks and offer a series of prizes for participants who make it to each bracket, with a grand prize at the end. Advertise at schools, gyms, YMCAs, etc. in addition to chapter members friends and families and charge a minimal fee for entrance or ask for donations. You can also ask local businesses to donate food and drinks or prizes.

FALL

Haunted House

Transform an old house, a school, or even your office into a haunted house. Work with your chapters friends, families, etc. to advertise well in advance of Hallowe'en and to recruit volunteers. Gather decorations and prepare the site the morning of the event. Make sure you have sound effects, candy, and enough volunteers to help with the "haunting" activities. Charge a small fee for entrance to the Haunted House.

Pumpkin Carving Contest

Invite people to pay a small fee to come carve a pumpkin and enter it into the competition. You could give them a limited time to challenge their skills, or take entries all day to encourage as many people as possible to take part. Set a selection of categories or awards for people to win, from Best Pumpkin Carved by a Child, to Scariest Pumpkin, or Most Original Design.

Make sure you have enough pumpkins, and that children have adequate supervision.

Diorama / Craft Contest

There are bound to be some creative members in your community, so give them a chance to show off their skills by advertising a weather or other science diorama, knitting, quilting (lots of people do temperature graph quilting and knitting projects) or other craft contest. Give participants a few weeks to prepare, and then have a day to show off their creations and judge the winner. You could charge for entries, and also a small entry fee for people wanting to come look at the finished results, or combine it with a bake sale to provide refreshments.

This is an activity that's great for kids, too... and if you make the theme of the contest about weather, science, etc. then it will provide great content for your chapter publicity.

This is a good one for fall or winter, when people are likely to spend more time at home doing crafts.

WINTER

Gift Wrapping Table

Set up a gift-wrapping table in your school or office or in a mall and ask for a donation per package wrapped. Chapter members can donate extra wrapping paper they have at home to save on expenses. Make you've got tape, scissors, paper, a table, a sign to advertise and that your volunteers have at least minimum wrapping skills before starting.

Hot Cocoa Booth

Does your community host a holiday festival, winter farmer's market, or similar event that brings people together? If so, help community members get into the holiday spirit and stay warm by selling hot cocoa. Borrow or rent an insulated beverage dispenser (or two) from a local restaurant or catering company that holds the hot water. You can premake the cocoa or create specialty mixes so people can choose their flavors on site.

Cookie Swap

The idea is to have people bring in several dozens of their favorite homemade Christmas cookies. Everyone takes one of each, and then every participant leaves with a box of a dozen of each cookie to take home.

You can charge a small fee for entering the cookie swap and this event can be combined with a lot of other fundraising activities: selling warm winter drinks, inviting a celebrity baker (cookbook author or food columnist) to demonstrate some tricks, selling baking supplies etc.

You could even partner with local businesses such as specialty wine shops, delis, bakeries, to offer even more food-related items for sale. You can charge a stand fee or just get a percentage of the profits.