



# FACT SHEET

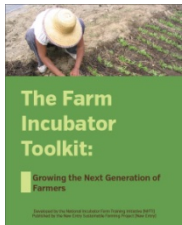
## Fundraising Tips for Incubators

Farm incubator projects raise money for their operational expenses in a number of ways. Funding varies in size and source, and a wide range of fundraising strategies reflects these differences. Based on a survey conducted by NIFTI in April, 2013, 76% of incubator projects responded that federal grants were very important funding sources, while 69% reported foundation grants as significantly important. Respondents also stated that they raise additional funds through farmer fees, farm product revenue, and university funding. In addition to these more traditional funding sources, sustaining your program requires creativity and innovation. Incubators can utilize strategies that not only raise funds, but also awareness, public involvement, and the opportunity for partnerships. The tools and strategies listed below were shared by incubator projects on the [NIFTI list serve](#) in 2012 - 2013.

- **CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGNS** – Online fundraising platforms like Kickstarter can reach supporters beyond your traditional networks. Crowdfunding is especially effective for specific, tangible projects such as greenhouses, tractors, and other infrastructural needs. Keep in mind that these campaigns can require significant staff time to manage, and often require aptitude in social media and video to launch successfully. Click for a list of online [crowdfunding platforms](#).
- **VENDOR SPONSORED EVENTS** – Some projects organize regular (weekly or monthly) events during the growing season on the farm that are open to the public and boast live music and food/drink vendors. These vendors donate a portion of their profits from the event back to the incubator. Events can also be sponsored by local businesses for additional income and partnership opportunities.
- **FARM PICNICS** - Incubators can host “farm to fork” picnics, in which they pair up local farmers with chefs and then sell tickets to the public for the event.
- **SPONSORSHIPS** – Find companies and local businesses with similar missions (sustainability, health, community development, etc.) and reach out for grant support. A sponsorship implies that you will provide some type of exposure for a company to their potential customer base, so think about ways that your program reaches the public (newsletters, farm tours) and promote those to your sponsorship prospects.
- **ONLINE AUCTIONS** - Organizations have solicited items from local businesses, artists, and farmers and then held online auctions to raise money for their programs. This approach requires significant software savvy and staff time.
- **ORGANIZE A RACE** – “Fun runs” are a great way to raise awareness in the community and bring in funds through registration fees.

# More Fundraising Tips

- **DIVERSIFY**– A variety of funding sources can hedge you against disaster when one or more avenues for funding dries up.
- **GET SPECIFIC**– Donors like to know that their funds are going to support tangible goals, so make sure you get specific and descriptive when sharing your future plans and needs.
- **NETWORK**- You never know when a supporter could turn into a donor, so expanding the network of individuals involved in your work opens the door for more fundraising down the road.
- **PERSONALIZE**– Individualized notes, calls, or visits that put a face to your program and the people who benefit from it will strengthen your appeals.
- **START TALKING**- Word of mouth is the best way to spread news about the good work you do and that buzz can often lead to increased financial support.
- **BEYOND FUNDRAISING**– Find companies or individuals that are willing to support your efforts by donating seeds, tools, or other “in-kind” good and services. Make lists of what you need and distribute widely!



*Information for this fact sheet was collected from our NIFTI community of practice on the [Incubator Farm Programs list serve](#) and was compiled by Alyssa Charney, NIFTI Program Associate. For additional guidance on fundraising for your project, see Section 3.3 of the “Farm Incubator Toolkit”, available as a free download at <http://nesfp.org/nifti/toolkit>.*

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) is a program of the [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#), which has trained and assisted the next generation of beginning farmers in Massachusetts since 1998. NIFTI provides comprehensive one-on-one consulting, educational resources, and professional development opportunities for dozens of organizations that run land-based beginning farmer training programs throughout the U. S. To find out more about NIFTI, visit us at <http://nesfp.org/nifti>.

