



2026 Food from the Bar Fundraising Ideas

FUNdraising in the best of times can be challenging. With this guide, we hope to help you using remote tools to engage your firm, department, or school to raise money for the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and build bonds, too. We'll start with general tips.

Keep the mission front and center.

Raise awareness of the present need and the excellent work done by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. The Food Bank has information that you can use throughout the campaign to raise awareness. Incorporate that into announcements and keep the colorful Food Bank flyers and cards where they can be seen. Keep the campaign on your organizations electronic bulletin board and calendars. Check out the videos!

Start with a committee.

Try to get a variety of people to help drive the campaign and keep it fun. Get input and share ideas. Set the goal for your team contributions. Make a plan that encourages each committee member to spearhead a task or project (or partner-up on big projects) and then support the others and always promote participation. Create a calendar and share it. You need an administrator/liason with the Food Bank. Someone must customize and manage the donations pages after the Foodbank sets it up. The committee monitors progress and shares the status the organization.

Utilize the One-and-Done principle. Spearheading just one project will keep burn-out at bay for the six weeks of the official FFTB campaign and each member can comfortably support the others.

How will YOUR campaign go?

Every organization has its methods. For some it's all about asking for contributions and beating the bushes for checks. For some it's about volunteering at the Food Bank. For some organizations, it's about building morale and strengthening bonds by working together on FUNdraising. This is pro bono work where everyone can participate.

Look to your workplace culture and to your in-house resources for ideas.

Begin with raising awareness of the need in our community and of the impact of the Food Bank. Hold a kickoff event at a time that will engage the most people. State the firm's goals for the campaign, tell people what to expect for activities and tell them how to donate or otherwise participate. If an event is not feasible, make a persuasive opening announcement and follow up with more.

For the ACTIVE PARTICIPATION model...

Monetizing activities is always a challenge. Sales and entry fees are obvious, but you might also offer premiums or privileges. Consider coupons or scrip that can be redeemed when we all return to the office. Match-challenges are fun and enlightening even working remotely. Creating an environment where giving is obvious and reflexive is good methodology. Then monetizing happens.

Starting with SALES and AUCTIONS

- With cooks and eaters on staff, auction a home-cooked and delivered meal or conduct a private or group cooking lesson online via social media. A coupon for an in-home lesson can be redeemed later. Buy a coupon today for a cake/pie/cookies delivered next week or next month.
- If you have artists and crafters in-house, they may create items for online auction, catalog sale or raffle. Again, a lesson maybe the thing (knitting, painting, beading, sculpture, golf).
- The shoppers in your ranks want to source items to bundle into gift baskets for sale and delivery. Think about Mothers' Day, graduation, spa swag, or pet treats.
- In-house FFTB bucks (or scrip) can be sold for future bake sales, art fairs, or burrito breakfasts. Then revive your pending activity as part of the reunion when everyone is back on the premises and ready to redeem their coupons. Additional donations to the Food Bank will be welcome, too.
- Auctions work well with items of universal or targeted appeal and some scarcity. You can offer auctions live or online. In law firms, paid-days-off are a hot ticket.

If your people are competitive (and that's not just lawyers), **opt for GAMES...**

- a Zoom trivia contest organized in-house or through a vendor with team entry fees (maybe offer hints for an extra donation?). Invite families, friends and clients, too. Between questions, mention Food From the Bar and share the donation link. People can pledge in the chat frame.
- Poker is not a good pandemic activity but could you collect an entry fee now for a game night in the future? Build your own poker tourney or call in a vendor. Golf might be the game for your organization – same concept.
- Match-up challenges are entertaining and low-cost and easy to manage remotely. Match colleagues to their pet- or baby-pictures or even their Zoom backdrop. Skip the photos and match colleagues to their favorite food or hometown or favorite team or hobby. The reveal and winning entry can be part of an event or an announcement.

Another sort of competition: **CHALLENGES**

- Like a match grant challenge, an activity challenge will raise money and awareness and maybe fitness. A donor or a group of donors challenges colleagues to walk, run, swim and will donate based of performance. \$1 for every foot mile or lap.
- A fun-loving donor might offer \$5 for each person who wears office attire during a Zoom meeting. Or a fancy hat to the telethon (see below for the telethon).

You can **charge ADMISSION...**

- Host remote yoga session or a Taiichi lesson? Maybe even a spinning session. Negotiate with the instructor for donated service or split fees. They could leave with new clients.
- If you have performers on staff or "in the family" (and who doesn't in Los Angeles), get those comedians, musicians, singers, poets, actors, and jugglers virtually together to "stage" a telethon. I bet your organization has an emcee who will keep things rolling and, in the gaps between acts, describe the work of the Foodbank and pitch volunteer sessions, ask for donations. Share the donation link frequently. Zoom chat makes a dandy tote board... Allan Smith pledges \$100, The Addams Family pledges \$200, Mack Black challenges Sue Blue to match his \$50 pledge, a partner offers to match all pledges in the next 10 minutes up to \$5,000.

Below are some specific items/activities that have worked in the past. Feel free to copy or take inspiration. Please, if you hit upon a remarkably effective activity, pass that along to the Food Bank! We'll spread the news around for the benefit of all our campaigns.

This is a list of sample activities from past campaigns.

SALES and AUCTIONS

First a few tips: Look for items that have low or no actual cost but great intrinsic value. Live auctions can generate super-competitive bidding, but the goods must be rare or limited. You can double the impact if you offer a [surprise] duplicate to the runner up bidder.

Advertise your silent auction (where appropriate) to a wider audience via social media. Take bids in tiered rounds submitted via email.

FFTB Bucks or coupons may be the thing to make a sales event work during the pandemic.

- Paid-Says-Off work well in the auction format and it doesn't have to be a full day - half days work too! Bosses will vie for the benefit for their assistant. Staff will bid on their own behalf. Some firms will offer separate auctions to level the playing field.
- Food is classic:
 - Break treats like lemonade or smoothies, cookies & milk. Make refreshments in-house or ask a vendor to cater and donate a portion of sales. This might be a coffee cart or ice cream sundaes.
 - Bake sales – Besides just selling baked sweets, try Including savory items (bread, quiche, soup, popcorn, trail mix). Remember to include items for known dietary restrictions: halal, kosher, plant-based, gluten-free, lactose-intolerant, nut-allergic. Be sure to label those items and let your restricted people know you thought of them.
 - Daily or weekly treat stations – homemade and packaged cookies, candies or other snacks can be positioned at traffic points with donation cans. Enlist a few people per floor if you can. Mix it up so you get the peanut butter-lovers as well as the chocoholics (see the dietary restriction above). Home-grown fruit will please the more disciplined of us, too.
 - At Munger, a sweet-toothed partner buys a sort of treat license, putting \$100 in the FFTB can early on so he can indulge in the cookies and candies all month long as they are staged for sale near his office.
 - Door-delivery of fruit snacks! Picture a cigarette-tray like in an old night club. But instead of cigarettes, fruit cups. What if the “vendor” was a partner or executive pushing a fruit cart? And what if boss wore a fruit-of-the-loom type costume or a fruit decorated hat?
 - Auction or raffle whole cakes or batches of baked goods made-to-order by a renowned office baker for a future date (bidders can secure a wonderful dessert for a dinner party next month).
 - Campaign breakfast or lunch coupons - feature the culinary (or shopping) skills in your office.
 - One husband-wife team offered Burrito Breakfast Club (breakfast burritos, fruit, sweet rolls and juice). The burritos came from a restaurant the rest from the grocery store. Fifty meals sold-out at \$5 each.
 - Chili Lunch (bowl of chili, cornbread, green salad) – the renowned Turkey Chili made by a paralegal launched this as recurring event.
 - Tamale plates (tamale, beans and rice) anchored by family-made tamales. Also tamales for sale by the half dozen.
 - Potluck Lunch – Make it a true potluck where people bring a dish or donate to FFTB to share the meal. Or enlist a few noted cooks and organize dishes in advance with a theme Around the World.

- “Thanks-a-Latte” – More than just coffee, sell thank-you notes to accompany a hand-delivered latte giving colleagues a fun way to express appreciation for their teammates help.
Make the coffees in-house (get syrups from Smart & Final or Cost Plus) or hire a barista (negotiate for one paid hour and one donated hour).
People will appreciate the opportunity to thank co-workers and friends. Bosses may treat departments or teams.
If your FFTB committee members are game to deliver the beverages and cards it’s all the more fun and appreciated (stimulating sales and building awareness).
- Collect recipes for a firm cookbook or ask your potluck, cook-off and bake sale folks to give up their best recipes. Everyone is cooking these days!
Print and sell your book in-house (spiral-bound) or publish a PDF e-book.
- Look for Partners in Your Community or Neighborhood. CPK and other vendors like to support the good causes their customers care about. Ask the local manager to donate a portion of their sales one day to FFTB. Set dates and create FFTB coupons. You could choose a day when your organization caters a lunch – even your kickoff event.
- Craft and art fair with hand-made or assembled items featured in a breakroom or common area or make a catalog on your office’s virtual bulletin board.
- Rummage sale – second-hand goods can be useful or campy. Make a catalog or post sale items on your electronic bulletin board. Be sure to make a splashy announcement of the event. One firm sold surplus couches, computers, printers. Old too-big couch no partner wanted in their office went to a new associate for his new apartment and a donation to the food bank! Take delivery now or later.
- Poem Store! Poems on-the-spot for a donation. The donor names the topic.
If you have no in-house poet maybe there is another hidden talent in your office who would like to make a unique contribution. Caricatures, maybe silhouettes. I’m thinking of latent skills from amusement park jobs.
- Jeans Days. Contributors buy the privilege of wearing jeans on designated days. Or Auction a full month of jeans privileges to the highest bidder. Jeans day contributors display a FFTB card on their desk or wear a paper badge for the day.
- Office swap for a day (when the partner with the snazzy office is away, a lucky bidder gets to use their office). Or maybe they can use one of the visiting window offices for a day or a week.
- Premium office parking (donated by the firm, building or parking manager for a day, week or a month)
- Donated services and creations of co-workers (a horseback riding or skate-boarding lesson, a musical serenade, a drawing or a photograph, home tech service, scrapbooking of pictures, etc.)
A member of an exclusive and renowned boxing gym (and a fine boxer) once offered beginner lessons and doubled the donation when he agreed to take the last two bidders. A good time was had by all.
- Firm tickets to sports or other events – and they can be a date and team determined at a later date.
- Lunch and selfie with a partner or principal. A partner might take a group of three to a restaurant. Friends can form a bidding block. Even a relaxed, catered lunch with a partner could be special for staff members that would otherwise not have an opportunity to chat and pick the boss’s brain.
- Pub crawl with your in-house beer/wine/cocktail connoisseur . Three bidders make a block and the foursome stops at three local joints. The expert picks up the tab and car service. Bid now...crawl later.
- Substitute tacos for alcohol in the above.

- Wine-tasting hosted by an office collector or two. Charge an entry fee based on the number of samples. If the tasting is designed for a group of 16, it becomes a pricier ticket and may be more cost effective.
- Same as above but substitute sake, scotch or tequila for the wine.
- If you have the connections...celebrity autographed items. For example, one FFTB committee bought an “inexpensive” guitar that was then inscribed by the celebrity guitarist who happens to be someone’s brother-in-law. The auction was promoted beyond the firm via word of mouth and social media. A lucky kid got not just a guitar for his birthday but one signed by his favorite player.
Basketballs and footballs would work, too.
- Vacation timeshares are popular auction items.
- Specialty items that relate to your firm or a client could be a gold mine. One firm found rubber duckies made to resemble an admired client – a small investment reaped hundreds of dollars at auction and a certain status for the winning bidder.
Hint – don’t flood the market! And make it a live auction for real competition.
- “Bring Your Pet to Work” day. Not sure that has the same appeal as before working-at-home for a year.
- Wines donated from those in the office with notable cellars.
- Firm “Fast Pass” – the holder gets to cut in line at firm luncheons. Make a FFTB Fast Pass Photo Badge (like a backstage pass on a lanyard) and don’t forget to date it.
- Gift baskets: shoppers source items (Volume discount? Wholesale? Liquidations?) and assemble them appealingly. For sale or auction. Mothers Day is in May, pet treats are popular, spa swag is a sweet. Candy and packaged snacks work, too. You need good shoppers. Local retail establishments might donate a gift card or goods for an auction or raffle.

A word about RAFFLES

Many of the items listed above work well as raffle prizes – as long as there is enough general appeal.

- Line up a few items of different appeal for first, second, and third prizes.
- Sell tickets but also award tickets for participation in other fundraising and volunteer activities. Giving tickets encourages participation (example – one ticket for a pound of food brought in or five tickets for volunteering at the food bank).
- Host a closing raffle event where you can pull the tickets and sell a snack (lemonade and popcorn, etc.) in the last-minute push for donations. Friends and family can buy tickets, too. Be sure to include name and contact information on the stub going into the hopper!

Games, Contests and Competitions

- Make it a cupcake-baking contest. The first-place cupcakes are then priced at \$10 each, second- and third-place at \$7.50 each, all others \$5 each. Works with cookies, too. Maybe a chili cook-off?
- Less competition but maybe more engaging: Powerwalks – one day a week, a fitness-minded partner/staff member leads a refreshing 20-minute walk or stair stomp in the neighborhood. Make it a series. Bring along a donation can or ask for online donations.
- Food Bank bingo! It’s BINGO...with food icons! Or just plain bingo with proceeds going to FFTB. You can do it over a lunch hour. Make it a series.

- Karaoke happy hour. Cover charge to attend. Will there be challenges? How large a donation pool will it take to get a reluctant participant to sing or get a persistent singer to hand over the mic?
- Office Olympics. Team events might include mail-cart races, coffee-cup relays, paperclip field goals.
- Donut-hole eating competition. Or what have you to eat?

Issue Fun CHALLENGES!

- Encourage or organize competition between departments, practice groups, or floors for the most volunteer shifts or donations. A department head may offer to match contributions by staff members.
- The fitness-minded partner or your wellness committee might want to offset all the indulgent food-related activities by offering a FFTB donation based on swimming, running or cycling. (\$1 per lap or mile or \$10 per hour peddling)
- Team jersey swap - how much would the Dodgers fans in your office pay to see an stand-out Giants fan wear Dodger Blue? And vice versa!
- A partner who dislikes jeans day may propose a "Formal Friday" challenge and donate for "Formal Attire" on a jeans Friday - say \$10 per person in formal attire, with a \$20 premium for tiaras.
- Kentucky Derby Hat Day – do you have a donor who will contribute to see people wear stylish or funny hats on the Friday before the running of the Kentucky Derby? Zoom Hats?
- Matching challenges - If you have a big donor, ask that person to make it a matching challenge to encourage others to participate.
Keep these challenges peer to peer with partners challenging partners; associates challenging associates. Staff members might challenge one another, too.
- Challenge volunteer shifts - meet me at the Food Bank on Saturday?

Keeping the message up front with awareness-building!

- Food Bank posters and coin cans for spare change should be on display around the office.
- Be sure FFTB appears on your e-bulletin board.
- Supporters can add a signature line that says "I'm a hunger fighter! I support Food From The Bar".
- Kid-created coin cans or posters are eye-catching and effective.
FFTB is an opportunity for parents to teach children about hunger in the community and charitable giving. Invite parents help their kids to decorate an oatmeal cylinder, shoe box or other container with FFTB slogans and food photos or drawings to make an eye-catching device in which to collect spare change and small bills. Bring that container to the office and see how much attention and money it attracts.
Likewise, handmade posters can keep the campaign in everyone's consciousness and charm everyone in the office. These can be done on 'Bring Your Child To Work Day'.
Be sure to give each child-creator an achievement certificate or other reward.
- If your organization collects food donations, display some of the collected food to attract more. Food displays can be assembled with props like lunch boxes - and maybe a Kid created coin can. Food bins are available from the Food Bank. They can be customized too.
- Give special acknowledgement to previous donors to FFTB campaigns to encourage giving again. Remind big donors of previous generosity with handmade thank-you notes or treats.

- Create buttons or tags or desk displays to identify participants: “I gave to FFTB” or “Ask me about FFTB” or “I volunteered”.
- Display a meter or graph to chart your campaign progress on your organization’s electronic billboard and in the office.
- Spread the word!
 - Encourage co-counsel and opposing counsel to participate, enhance camaraderie or feed a rivalry.
 - Look for co-counsel or clients at FFTB volunteer activities and connect. Plan joint volunteer days.

REMEMBER – Submit your best ideas for the Most Creative Fundraising award!