

YMT's Guide to Successful Fundraising

1. Check if you are eligible for YMT's Bursary Scheme.

2. Start Early

Fundraising takes time. The people you write to will need time to come to a decision, and it could take two-three months from the time you write the letter to the time you hear about the result. If you're serious about fundraising for your course fee, you need to start NOW. Consider the first day of your project as your absolute deadline for hearing from your applications.

3. Make a budget

You know how much your course fee is, but have you thought about travel costs? Or spending money once you get there? Writing a budget really helps to give you a clear idea of how much money you really need to fundraise.

It will also help potential funders see that you're serious about your fundraising, and make them more likely to help.

See the example budget in Section 5 for more help.

4. Make a plan

Be realistic about how long it will take to get things done; don't expect to be running a major event within two weeks! Things you should include in your plan:

A clear timeline of your fundraising, including time for researching, writing and sending letters and following up. Important dates in your fundraising, such as the start of your project, dates on which your course fee payments are due and any exams or days out when you know you CAN'T be doing any fundraising.

A list of all the fundraising activities you are going to do, and how much you hope to raise from them.

Remember: not every approach you make will be successful, so your plan should include more approaches than you need to meet your budget. If you only ask for as much money as you need, then just one rejection will mean you miss your target!

Remember: Make sure that when you are fundraising you tell people that you have got into a national company.

Everyone will fundraise in different ways, but we've found that it's best to start your fundraising with these steps:

i. Ask your school

The first thing you should do, as soon as you get your place, is **go to see your form tutor, drama/music/dance teacher, School Secretary**, or someone else in your school. Ask if there are funds available for things like YMT (like Gifted & Talented). If you go to an extra-curricular drama, music or dance school ask them too. They'll probably be very proud that you're doing YMT and might want to help out!

ii. Ask your local Councillor

You can find out who your councillors are by visiting www.writetothem.com

Each district councillor often has a budget for supporting local community members, so it's definitely worth writing to them and asking for their support.

iii. Set up an online individual giving page

Here are the best ones:

www.gofundme.com — this website is the most straightforward place for individuals to raise money online. It is free to use and easy to set up, with helpful pointers on how to make your appeal stand out.

www.crowdfunder.co.uk — this involves offering those who support you different rewards for their money. For example, you may offer anyone who donates £5 a free signed programme from your project with a personal thank you and so on...

iv. Trusts and Foundations

There are hundreds of charitable Trusts and Foundations across the UK who may be willing to help fund your course. You just need to find one in your local area. Most have long lead times (the time between submitting an application and getting a decision) so don't leave it too late. Putting in some time now will get things underway.

There are far too many trusts and foundations for us to list here, but you could try looking at www.fundfinder.org.uk (this one takes a lot of navigating through) or www.youngscot.org (only for those who live in Scotland). You could also visit your local library and ask for books on “grant making trusts” – there are usually different directories for local and national trusts. Look for those whose funding policy includes Youth, Drama, Music, Theatre or Education and most importantly welcome applications from individuals. You can also try Googling ‘charitable trusts’ in your town as well as the Charity Commission.

Alternatively, just give the YMT office a call. We have a whole folder full of trusts and foundations we’ve identified, which might give funding to our young people, and we also have access to subscription only websites we can use to search for trusts for you.

You could also try your local council or Education Authority. Many have funds to support students working at this level of excellence in the arts. Or you could try your Mayor, or Parish Council.

The most important thing to do if you are thinking of making an application to a charitable trust is **contact the YMT office**. We can give you advice about how to make the application, and we even have sample letters that you might be able to use.

v. Lions, Rotary Club etc

Young people in previous years have had great success approaching organisations like the local Round Table, Youth Forum, Lions Club (www.lions.org.uk) or Rotary Club (www.rotary.org). You need to contact the Chairperson. Search online to find your local club.

Offer to go in and give a talk when you return from your course and publicise their donation to the local papers, giving them some good PR and raising their profile in the community.

vi. Networking

This might sound daunting, but networking is actually really simple – you’ve probably done a lot more of it than you know!

Think about your friends and family: do any of them work in local businesses that might be able to give you some money? Many of our young people have found that a parent’s workplace is able to help them – many have funds set aside for things just like YMT.

If you have a job why not ask your employer to contribute? Or would they let you organise an event at work?

vii. Local businesses

It’s always worth approaching any local businesses or large businesses that have their headquarters in your area. Ask for the Marketing Department or the person who deals with community liaison, if they have one - or the managing director. If they are unable to donate money, maybe they will be willing to donate a raffle prize.

Businesses are usually quite willing to offer something that they sell – so why not try travel companies - your local train, bus or coach company may be willing to give you travel tickets instead of money, which will help keep travel costs down. In previous years, a number of young people have received ferry tickets, train tickets and coach trips for their course travel.

Be prepared to give something back to the company. This may include wearing their T-shirt for an event and taking your picture for their newsletters, or giving the company good publicity when you get home.

viii. Fundraising events

This is where your imagination comes in! There are loads of ways to raise funds from your friends and family. You could get sponsored to do something, such as swimming lengths of your local pool, or staying silent for 24 hours! If you can get your friends to join in, even better! Don’t be shy about asking people to sponsor you – try your teachers and ask your parents if they will help collect sponsors. If you’re holding a larger event, get help! If your mates can’t give you money, get them to give out flyers, tell all their other friends, and help clear up after the event.

Some other event ideas could include:

- Plan a concert – that’s why you’re here! Host a performance.
- Record a CD – try asking your school or local community centre if they have any facilities for recording. You could even try asking local recording studios if they would give you time for free. Then make your own CD and sell it to friends and family!
- Charity discos – with a dress code and a prize for the best/worst dressed!

- Open Mic Night – try approaching your local community centre to host.
- 12 or 24 hour Music Jam – you and your mates just have to make music non-stop.
- Movie and Meal Night – just make sure you use a venue that has an appropriate license for showing films to a large group of people, and then ask for donations. You cannot directly ask for an entrance fee.
- Auction of promises – people make offers and you get paid for what they do.
- Battle of the Bands – get your friends involved and help discover the next big thing.
- Supper Quiz or Costume dinners – you cook and they pay what they might in a restaurant.
- Ebay auction/Car Boot Sale – Sell some clothes you don't wear anymore or other items that you might have lying around your house!
- Bag packing – see if your local shop or supermarket could let you help people pack their shopping, in exchange for a collection bucket for donations.

Get onto your project-related Facebook group for more ideas and advice. Please make sure you get permission to hold any kind of event – if it's outdoors, let the local police know too. You could try contacting your local paper for press coverage. If you do, please call the YMT Office for advice and remember we're always keen to see your press cuttings.

ix. Press, Radio and TV

Finally, it's always a good idea to try to get your fundraising efforts publicised! Each year several of our young people appear in their local newspapers. Contact your local paper to see if they'll write an article about you being offered a place – local newspapers love to report about good news for a change, especially when it involves people from the local area.

If they want any further information please refer them to the YMT Office. We can also give you suggestions about how to contact the press, and materials such as photos and statistics for journalists to use.

If you get mentioned, you could then include your cuttings with any letters you write. Please remember to send us your cuttings if you get any press coverage!

4. Pay attention!

If you're applying to a charitable trust or foundation, make absolutely sure that your course fee is the kind of thing they are likely to fund. Check this by reading their Guidelines. Things to pay particular attention to are: Does the charity support individuals, or will they only give grants to organisations? Usually charities will provide a list of things they won't fund ("Exclusions") – make sure "individuals" is not on that list. Does the charity only support people in a specific area? Make sure that the charity you apply to is relevant to where you live.

Once you're sure your cause is one a charity will consider, make sure your letter to them makes that really clear! The closer you fit their guidelines, the more likely they are to consider your application.

5. Make yourself unforgettable!

Use the personal touch:

- A phone call or a personal visit (if local) will prepare the way for your application. Even a simple phone-call to check if your cause is something that would be considered for funding will help, and you may pick up useful tips for your application in the process.
- Always find out who you need to write to, their name and job title. Make sure you spell their name correctly.

Stand out from the crowd:

- Make sure your application is eye catching, and play to your strengths. You're part of the UK's biggest musical theatre company, for a start!
- Try to think about what the person reading the letter might find interesting, and what makes YOU more deserving of funding than anyone else.

Keep it brief:

- There's nothing that puts off funders like letters that don't get to the point. Try to stick to one page.
- Check out our letter sample in Section 5 for guidance.

Follow up:

- A quick call within two-three days of when you expect the letter to be received will never hurt and might give you the opportunity to get some more information across.
- If somebody does respond to your fundraising appeal, you should also make sure you follow up with them after your project. This is one of the most important things in fundraising.

If individuals, companies or trusts have contributed to your funding (and even if they haven't) it is always worth letting them know what you actually did and how incredible the project was. As a professional courtesy you should thank them for their contribution. This may also help you in future if you are fundraising again next year..

6. Be professional

Asking for money is a serious business, and you need to make sure you are professional in your approach.

Writing Letters

A sample letter is included in the following pages, but here are some helpful hints:

- Explain about yourself, why you want to do the project, why you want to be a part of YMT & how you will benefit.
- Explain that this is a fantastic opportunity.
- Tell them how much it's going to cost in total (your fundraising target – See Budget) and how else you are trying to raise the funds.
- Don't ask for all the money, but ask if they can help in some way.
- Let them know that if they help with these costs YMT will, wherever possible, offer credits in programmes and on our website.
- Get a friend or parent to read it through – a good way of checking for spelling mistakes!

Making phone calls

It can be a bit daunting calling people you don't know, but once you've made the first call you'll see how easy it can be. You'll be surprised how supportive and interested some people are. In Section 5 we've put some ideas in italics of what to say, but try to put these into your own words.

7. Get help

Here at YMT we are fundraising all year round, and have been helping young people raise course fees for over ten years! We have a great database of places you can try, and advice to give on how to fundraise so PLEASE give us a call if you are having any trouble.

8. Never, ever, ever, ever, ever give up!

Fundraising is tough: we know! You're not always going to get a positive response from everyone you speak to. But the most important thing is to keep going, keep positive, and to let us help you if you're having trouble. The last thing we want is for you to be constantly worrying about your fundraising, so if you need some encouragement, email fundraising@ymtuk.org. We can only help you if you keep us informed!

Ambassadors

When you decide to fundraise for your course fee, please remember that you are representing us as an ambassador for the company. Remember, even if organisations or individuals are not able to support you financially, you will have added to the profile of the company by describing the project to which you've been cast. As the face of the company, make sure we both look good!

Ethics, ethics, ethics

Never lie to donors or make up facts. There are some charities that are unethical in practice and as a result the general public has become understandably wary of giving their money to people they don't know.

Learn as much as you can about the company and be up front and honest. YMT is a well-run charity registered with the [Charity Commission](#), our Charity number is 1103076 in England and Wales and SC039863 in Scotland. If potential donors want to know more about the company please refer them to our website: www.youthmusictheatreuk.org.

Anyone believed to be fundraising in YMT's name in ways that are deemed unethical or inappropriate will be reprimanded and may have their place on a project withdrawn. As a result, it is wise to clear any major fundraising ideas not found within this document with our team in the office first.

Stay calm!

It's normal to have a few butterflies in your stomach before starting anything new. Fundraising takes patience and perseverance, so if you need a pep talk, give us a call. At YMT we constantly have to raise money for the company and the work we offer. This means we have staff who can help with your fundraising plans. Just think, if we didn't fundraise the courses would cost at least twice as much – so we do know what we're doing. If you're getting nervous or would like to talk through your ideas please call or email the YMT Office. Contact details are in Section 1.

It will be helpful if you have already created a basic plan and figured out who your network is before you contact us, this way we'll be able to give you the best advice.

Use YMT resources

The YMT Facebook pages are a great place if you would like help with what to do next or have a great idea that you want to share. Follow YMT on Facebook and Twitter and then perhaps we'll mention your ideas next year!

What about the Bursary Scheme?

REMEMBER THE MOST IMPORTANT THING: If you are having trouble with your course fee, or even if you suspect that you might have trouble at some point in the future, **GET IN TOUCH!** Just send an email to hannahkipling@ymtuk.org

Good luck – and remember, we're here to help! Other useful sites:

www.aliveandgiving.com (allows you to search for funding in your area)
www.charityinsight.com
www.opencharities.org
www.charitychoice.co.uk

5. Samples

Budget Planning – how much do you need to raise?

Use this table to calculate the amount of money that you need to raise for your project with YMT.

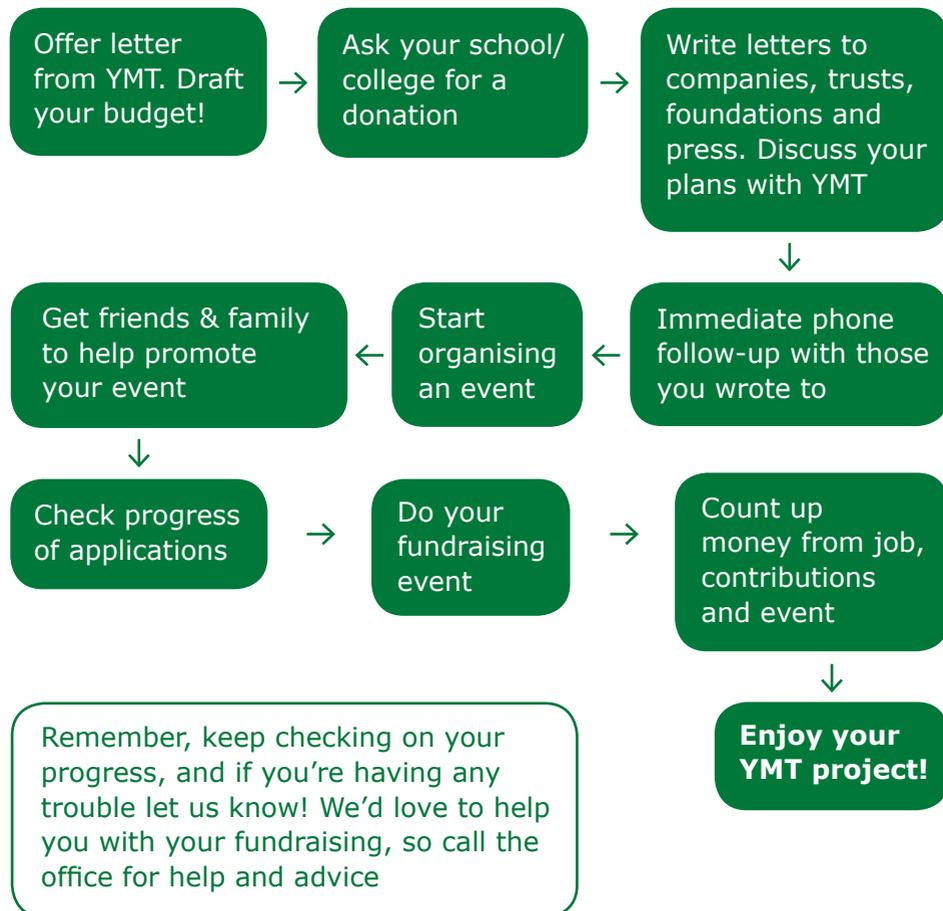
Costs	Course Fee	£
	Travel Costs	£
	Spending Money	£
	Total A	£
Income	Special Event Profit	£
	Donation from school/college	£
	Pocket Money	£
	Savings	£
	Money from a job	£
	Donations	£
	Any other income	£
Total B	£	
Target	Total A	£
	Minus Total B	- £
	Fundraising Target	£

Timeline

The Chart below gives you an idea of the different tasks you may need to include in your fundraising. The most important thing to remember is to allow plenty of time for answers to your letters, and similarly for the organising of any event you may choose to run.

This timeline does not include the schedule of payments to YMT. Consider these dates when you are working out where the funding will come from.

The obvious alternative to this timeline is to look through your diary and breakdown the tasks in a similar way.



Sample letter

Charlie Brown
65 The Green
New Edlington
South Yorkshire
DN12 4DT

Mr Jones
Managing Director
The Firm
Doncaster
DN3 8QJ

17 March 2016

Dear Mr Jones,

I write to you in the hope that you may be able to help me realise one of my dreams, by making a donation towards the costs of my summer project. Since as long as I can remember I have really enjoyed drama, dance and music and have wanted a chance to explore, learn and participate in musical theatre.

Over the two past years I have been a performing member of the Edlington Youth Theatre and have taken part in productions at my school where my favourite subjects are English, Music and Drama. Recently, I was thrilled to be offered a place with Youth Music Theatre UK, a national theatre company for young people. They've asked me to join [name of project], a residential musical theatre course held in [name of city] from [dates]. The project covers all aspects of music theatre and we will work with an experienced artistic staff to develop skills in writing, composing and choreography as well as performance.

I am trying to raise the funds needed for my course fee of £xx. The costs cover all my accommodation, food and pastoral care. The only other expenses involved would be travel costs to and from the venue which will be in the region of £xx. My fundraising activities to date include a sponsored walk and a neighbourhood concert where I raised £100 towards my goal.

I am writing to local businesses and friends to ask if they will consider a donation towards my course fee. YMT is a registered charity (number 1103076 in England and Wales, SC039863 in Scotland) and they will be happy to recognise companies and individuals who make donations on their website, newsletter and programme.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this request with a member of YMT staff please phone the YMT Office on 020 8563 7725.

Many thanks for taking time to read this letter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Charlie Brown
Aged 15

Phoning Technique

Once you have a list of people to contact, you can start to make the calls. It can be daunting calling people you don't know but after the first couple it will become easier as you settle into what best to say. Many people will be supportive and interested. If they are not, don't take it personally – just try the next on your list.

Think about when you are calling them:

- Mornings are generally best.
- By comparison, 5.30pm on a Friday is not great (it's home-time for most people!)

The script below is in italics – try putting this into your own words and make it relevant to you and your project. Practice what you're going to say beforehand, you can always write it out.

Target the right person

'Hello, please could I speak to the Managing Director/Marketing Dept/News Desk about fundraising/local press stories'

Give more detail

'Hello, my name is ... and I've been selected by Youth Music Theatre UK to take part in a project called ...'

'I have to raise the course fee of £... and my travel expenses of £... and I wondered whether your company could help in any way?'

'Do you have a minute for me to describe more about the project and the fundraising I need to do?'

If they are busy ask

'Is there someone else I could speak to or is there a better time to catch you?'

Don't rush.

Take a deep breathe.

And **Smile**. People can actually hear you smile!

Some people may seem rude or busy - don't take it personally and, more importantly, you should not be rude back.

Keep a record of the all conversations you have had, good and bad. Include name of the person you spoke to, and any other names they recommended, the telephone number and the follow-up action (write, call again, not interested)

Where companies are unable to help, ask if they can suggest other places for you to try.

And finally...

Working on any project with YMT will be great fun. It will also teach you a lot about yourself, about working with others and about the skills of the Theatre.

We know there is a lot of work involved to get everything organised – but we're here to help! If you have concerns about the project or the fundraising please get in touch with us. You can also find out more at our website.