

*Section***Two**

**Thinking
about**
Fundraising

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Why Fundraise?



In a time of shrinking tax dollars and decreased budgets, the public library has to be concerned about its future. How can it maintain the services it has always provided, let alone provide new services necessary to address community needs? One proactive way to address these concerns is by increasing the support for the library through fundraising. With the extra funds collected through fundraising efforts, libraries can:

- increase collections and other services;
- provide better service with more staff;
- build or improve library facilities;
- increase hours;
- eliminate threat of closure.

In addition, fundraising can be an excellent public relations tool for your library since it raises your library's profile within the community and provides opportunities for public education about the services provided.

Implications for Public Funding

Of course, you need to be aware of possible consequences with respect to the piece of the tax pie that you currently receive. In three focus group sessions with municipal councillors, councillors were concerned about shrinking revenues and tight budgets, which led to discussions of library budgets and the need for libraries to "curb" their expectations, increase their use of volunteers and **seek out other sources of funding**.¹ However, they did not address whether financing traditionally received from the municipality would be reduced by the amount raised privately.²

Perhaps the answer lies in ensuring that city councillors are fully familiar with what services the local library can provide. It has been found that municipal councillors, in general, have little knowledge of how their public libraries operate or of the services libraries provide or could provide. Councillors do, however, have a generally positive view of the library and are open to funding real needs.³ In an information session with city council, the library's fundraising goals could be discussed and a co-operative approach initiated so that all types of financing could come to bear.

In addition, money raised through fundraising could be leveraged to build community support, which would then influence the municipal councillors to maintain or increase their current level of support.⁴