

NGFFL Toolkit Module: Fundraising, Income & Sponsorship	Original Issue Date: 2012	Most Recent Version Issue Date: 06/29/2018
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National Gay Flag Football League (NGFFL)



Local League Toolkit

Module V: Fundraising, Income & Sponsorship



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1.0 Overview and Purpose

The National Gay Flag Football League (“**NGFFL**”) is committed to proudly fostering community, comradery and inclusivity by providing opportunities to engage in competition through flag football. As part of this vision, the NGFFL has a supporting agenda which includes driving local membership growth and development.

The purpose of the Local League Toolkit (“**Toolkit**”) is to provide lessons learned and resources that can help start or strengthen a local flag football league. Each city and league will be different, but there are common elements that will make this Toolkit useful to local leaders and other stakeholders who organize and run local leagues. This Toolkit is meant to share best practices, examples and lessons learned, all in an attempt to make organization and execution as efficient and as high of quality as possible.

The purpose of this module is to discuss recommended strategies for fundraising and income sources, including sponsorships.

2.0 Income

Your local league’s main goal for income and sponsorship is to cover costs associated with managing and running the local league. This could be as simple as covering the cost to buy equipment or as comprehensive as creating a fundraising plan to cover all costs through sponsorship.

The first step for creating any budget is to think through **ALL** costs associated with the local league so that individuals will not have to foot the bill for any league costs. Local leagues should also try to build a “nest egg” for any future unforeseen costs that may arise. Comparing all of your expected costs, you will need to have to generate sufficient income for all your costs.

The main sources of income include:

- Player Registration Fees
- Team or League Sponsorships
- Fundraising Events
- Merchandise

3.0 Player Registration Fees

Player registration fees help cover the costs associated with the local league and strengthen the commitment players have actually showing up and playing. The fees that each player will have to pay will vary based on your costs, but in all likelihood, you will not be able to cover all of your costs through player fees alone.



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You should compare what other sports leagues in your area charge so you don't under- or over-estimate fees. Some leagues charge \$30 and others charge \$125 for the season, depending on the costs associated with executing the local league's activities.

Some leagues offer a multi-season discount or offer a lowered fee to those in need. Some leagues provide discount for each additional player you bring that registers and pays. Often you can offer a lower fee to incentivize early registration (i.e. \$35 instead of \$40 if you register two weeks out from the deadline). If you use a waitlist, you can also offer a discounted fee to those who are joining the season once it's begun.

Also consider the experience that the players get with their registration fee: do they have some tangible item (such as uniform or tshirt), is the quality of play or league operations feel worth the money, is it a fun/worthwhile experience.

Fees should be collected by a set deadline and enforcement around non-compliance strictly adhered to.

Some leagues utilize a PayPal account to collect registration dues and other funds. If using this service, be aware that PayPal requires an account of that size to have a social security number on file. To accommodate this requirement, leagues have provided the SSN of the City Leader because PayPal uses it for verification only.

Other services exist to collect payment, including the LeagueApps platform, which also serves as a registration tool. The Stripe tool is on the backend of LeagueApps and can be leveraged as well. Other leagues have used Venmo, CashApp or have simply gone to a cash only system. Whatever you choose for your local league, make sure that you keep records of all income for accounting purposes.

4.0 Sponsors

Start by making a list of all of those businesses and groups that might be willing to sponsor your local league. If you have a local gay magazine or newspaper, it often has a business directory in the back which can get you to think beyond the usual one or two bars that sponsor everything. Also consider businesses that promote and advertise how supportive they are of LGBT initiatives.

Divide up the list and ask around to see who you know might have a connection. If you don't have a connection, start cold calling or stop by at a time that makes sense to be able to talk with someone (i.e. bar managers are often setting up in the afternoon before they officially open). Once you've approached prospective sponsors, don't give up until you hear a no. Just because they aren't calling you back doesn't mean they aren't interested. If you have email, it is often helpful to email them and then follow up with a phone call a day or two later and reference your email. This gives them a chance to consider the request and check to see if it fits for their business.

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Before you approach sponsors, you should create a simple document to make the case for why they should support your local league. It should include the sponsorship levels, the case for why they should be a sponsor, a few points about the league, and contact information.

See Appendix A for an example of a sponsorship packet.

Keep in mind that your point of contact might need to pass something along to the owners who make the final decision, so keep it straight forward and clear. The more quantitative you can be, the better. How many people usually go to a league-wide event? How much do they spend? Why might they like to target the gay community for their business? The more you can show that the return on their investment will be high, the more successful you will be. If helpful, stress the non-profit, tax-exempt status of your organization (*See Toolkit Module III: Tax & Legal Implications*) or any community outreach or volunteer activities that you provide.

Having a tiered structure of sponsorship opportunities will broaden the range of businesses you can approach and increase the chances that a loyal sponsor will want to increase their support over time. The biggest bar in town is likely to want to be the top sponsor of your local league. Similarly, a real estate firm may not be able to be the top sponsor but could come in at a lower level. Offering multiple ways for sponsors to support you will also provide an opportunity for in-kind gifts that are donated to your league; for example water/sports drinks, equipment, shirts, printing, graphic design services, advertising, etc.

Once you have a sponsor engaged and received their donation, you should work just as hard to keep them engaged and happy. If appropriate, have a team or league-wide event at their establishment so they see the tangible benefit of supporting your league. Invite sponsors to games or, if they are associated with a certain team, have captains send them a weekly recap of how “their team” did.

The more you connect the sponsor to the league, the more likely they are to return and hopefully increase their sponsorship level. Consider doing a recap at the end of the season of all of the ways they benefited from their investment (i.e. how many events, how many people attended, how much was spent, what publicity did they get, is there an anecdotal story about customer loyalty?).

5.0 Fundraising

Events can be a great way to close a budget gap or lower the cost of player registration fees. Whether you’re organizing a bake sale, car wash, bachelor auction, speed dating night, silent auction, or season-end gala, events always take more time than you initially expect to plan.

You should ensure that your time is spent wisely to bring in the most amount of money for the hours you put into them. Delegating to other (responsible) players can be a way to help balance the load so you don’t get overwhelmed. Perhaps assigning each team in your local league

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responsibility for one fundraising event is a way to delegate out this responsibility. Teams competing off the field to execute the most successful fundraising event is a way to structure it as well.

Make sure to give yourself enough time to not only secure an event space but to advertise it widely enough to attract the crowd you want. Choose a time and location that will make people want to attend, and if possible check community calendars to avoid any major conflicts.

Depending on the scale of the event, you'll want to get the word out in as many ways as possible. If you are organizing a speed dating event with a target goal of getting 30 people to attend and pay \$15 each (to raise \$450), you can blast it out to your list and post it on Facebook. If you are organizing an annual bachelor auction and hope to have 200 people show up to help raise \$10,000, you will want a more robust publicity effort that could include getting an ad donated in your local gay magazine or having a story written about it in your local paper. No matter what scale you're going for, you will be more successful if you use as many connections as possible to spread the word and fill the room.

6.0 Merchandise

A popular way to raise money and increase visibility of the league is to sell merchandise with your logo on it. If you're going to be printing t-shirts, league shirts, league-approved shorts, or other merchandise, you can have a league member (i.e. your treasurer) sell it on the sidelines during games, at social events, or even online if possible.

7.0 Revision History

Version	Version Issue Date	Description of Changes:
1	2012	Initial version
2	03/15/2018	Restructured Toolkit into module format and made required edits to content to account for new format; added updated examples
3	06/29/2018	Updated to include best practices shared in NGFFL City Leaders FB page

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Sponsorship Packet

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8.1 Appendix A

Sample Sponsorship Packet:



About the League: The DC Gay Flag Football League (DCGFFL) is an organization that promotes the positive social and athletic enjoyment of flag football. We seek to foster an athletic community among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight people living in the greater Washington, DC area.

Why Sponsor the League:

- Sponsorship will help get your business in the eyes of a very loyal group of people.
- The league creates a sense of community for the players and socializing off the field is a core part of why many players joined the league. That means we are always looking for reasons and places to get together.
- That's where you come in. Whether it's having a team dinner or watching our favorite sports games, we're loyal to our patron sponsors and eager to show our appreciation for the businesses that support us.
- In addition, we attract a fairly robust set of spectators and friends who will not only see your logo throughout the season but will often join us for the post-game celebrations.
- Finally, many players have commented on how the league enriches their lives and creates a desired sense of community. By sponsoring the league, you help make people happier. And that's some good karma any day!

Sponsorship Levels:

League Sponsor (1 available) - \$2,000

- Naming rights of championship super bowl game (TBD in April 2010)
- Host of league super bowl awards ceremony (TBD in April 2010)
- At least one additional team outing at your establish (if applicable)
- One team sponsorship (logo/name in large print on back of that team's shirt)
- Logo/name on every players team shirt (sleeve) and on every league t-shirt (back)
- Promotion on the DCGFFL website
- Recognition at three league wide events

MVP Sponsor (1 available) - \$1,500

- Logo/name on every players team shirt (sleeve) and on every league t-shirt (back)

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- At least one team outing at your establish
- Promotion on the DCGFFL website
- Recognition at three league wide events

Champion Sponsor (10 available) - \$1,000

- Logo/name on every league t-shirt (back)
- Promotion on the DCGFFL website
- Recognition at three league wide events

Team Sponsor (8-10 available) - \$350

- One team sponsorship (logo/name in large print on back of shirt)
- At least one team outing at your establish (if applicable)
- Promotion on the DCGFFL website
- Recognition at three league wide events

Contact information: To learn more about the league, please visit www.dcgffl.org

