



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING  
Intercultural Exchange Programs

## FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES

### Are you ready to study abroad with YFU but need to figure out how to raise the money for your tuition funds and spending money?

#### WHAT DOES THE TUITION COVER AND FOR WHAT EXPENSES AM I RESPONSIBLE?

The YFU program tuition differs from country to country and program to program. Refer to the website [yfuusa.org](http://yfuusa.org) for exact tuition amounts. Program tuition covers your travel expenses, orientations, host family placement, meals, and support from local and global YFU networks. You will have other expenses you will need to cover including passport fees, visa costs, and insurance. If you are on an academic program you may also have school related expenses for books, uniforms, etc. The amount of money you will spend overseas depends on your personal spending and saving habits, the country you are going to, and the current rate of exchange for the U.S. dollar. You should budget spending money for clothes, toiletries, snacks, postage, entertainment, and any other miscellaneous expenses you think you may incur while on exchange. Average amounts of spending money are \$150-\$300 per month for year and semester students, and \$300-\$500 (total) for summer students.

Please note: unlike donations made directly to YFU USA, gifts made to offset a particular student's tuition are not tax-deductible for individuals or businesses.

#### NEED SOME IDEAS ON HOW TO RAISE MONEY?

Keep reading! Students just like you have raised the money to go on a YFU exchange program. We'd like to share with you their strategies for fundraising. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your own ideas, please contact us at [info@yfu.org](mailto:info@yfu.org) or **1.800.TEENAGE**.

#### APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

YFU awards approximately 300 scholarships annually. Check our website to see which scholarships are currently available. You're welcome to apply for as many scholarships as you are eligible for. If you have questions please contact us at [info@yfu.org](mailto:info@yfu.org) or **1.800.TEENAGE**. In addition, ask your high school counselor, teachers and local business people about other opportunities and scholarships that may be available to you in your community.

#### DO YOU HAVE A JOB?

If you do not already have a job, you can get one. Try responding to classified ads in local newspapers or online listings. You could create a job listing for employment and advertise for jobs such as babysitting, dog walking, lawn mowing, snow shoveling, house-keeping or tutoring. Check with your high school guidance counselor or local community center about possible job opportunities and teen job fairs. Be sure to tell all your friends and neighbors you are looking for ways to earn money.

If you already have a job, consider saving some of what you earn towards an exchange program. Set aside a minimum amount from each paycheck in a savings account. Consider cutting or trimming your expenses. Your parents may have ideas about setting up a savings plan. A part-time job can amount to big savings!

Having a job is the most realistic way for you to raise money for your exchange. The more effort you invest in becoming an exchange student, the more rewarding your experience will be.

## WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIAL TALENTS AND SKILLS?

What are you good at doing? Use your skills and talents in creative ways to raise funds. The following examples relate some of the successful ideas previously used by other YFU students:

- A YFU student who went to Switzerland for the summer program made Swiss chalet gingerbread houses for the Christmas season and sold them to neighbors before her trip.
- A YFU student to Australia for the semester program made an agreement with the local newspaper to be its “foreign correspondent.” She wrote articles for the paper about life in Australia. In return, the newspaper paid for most of her program tuition.
- A student going to Scotland sold Scottish bean soup mix and Scottish shortbread that he made himself to pay for his program tuition.
- A student going to Finland sold home-made greeting and holiday cards to neighbors, friends, and relatives.
- A student on the YFU program to Chile asked the members of his church to give him unused and unwanted items, such as clothing, furniture, books, and records. Then he used his entrepreneurial skills to sell the items they gave him at a garage sale.
- If you are active in a sport, you and your friends could sign up sponsors to give you money for every mile you run, lap you swim, or basket you make.
- Another YFU student collected donations from her neighbors in exchange for sending them a small souvenir from Sweden.
- A student going to Australia was able to raise funds by raffling off donated items.
- A student going to New Zealand organized a school dance as a fundraiser for her exchange.
- If you are musically talented, organize a small benefit concert featuring the music of the country you are going to, or sing or play at weddings or parties.
- Have an international dinner with the help of your church or local community center and charge each guest a small attendance fee.
- If you are skilled in writing, debate, speech making, or in speaking a foreign language, participate in national and regional competitions that provide substantial cash awards to winners. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars sponsor several competitions in oratory languages. Such educational organizations as the American Association of Teachers of German provide awards to qualifying high school students learning another language. Your high school guidance counselor may know of some local opportunities.
- Have an “exhibit” of your paintings, sketches, ceramics, or photography. Sell them, take orders, charge admission, or put out a donation jar.
- Videotape weddings, birthdays, or graduations for a fraction of what professionals charge.
- Coordinate a car wash or talent show with a school club or group you’re involved with and split the profits with them.

## HOW YOUR PARENTS AND RELATIVES CAN CONTRIBUTE

One enterprising student who was raising money for the year program to Denmark listed all the things his parents spent money on for him. When his parents realized how many of these things they would not have to pay for while he was overseas, they agreed to contribute to the program tuition. The student also let his relatives know that he would appreciate contributions to his program tuition instead of gifts for holidays. Reach out to your grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, family friends and neighbors to see if they might be able to help.

Many students have since followed this student’s example. Expenses vary from person to person, but the table on the right is a sample list for a one-year period.

Meals	365 days x \$12	\$4,380
School Activities		\$220
Family Vacations	Two Times/Year x \$400	\$800
Car Insurance	Yearly on Parents Car	\$500
Gas for Car	Monthly x \$50	\$600
Holiday Gift Money		\$500
Clothes	\$435	\$435
Shoes	\$325	\$325
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$7,760</b>

## HOW TO ASK BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE

A Michigan student who wanted to go to Germany for a year raised over a thousand dollars by asking local shopkeepers, stores, and restaurants to put donation jars by cash registers. She put up a sign explaining who she was and why she was fundraising.

Write a letter asking local stores, companies, and organizations for contributions (a sample letter is included). Many businesses already have funds set up to assist students. Others may be interested in starting one because of your request.

Make a list of local companies and organizations you want to contact from the phone book, visitor's center or local Chamber of Commerce. Your family, relatives, friends' families, and your parents' colleagues may have some suggestions. Think about what communities you and your family are a part of—your school, your parents' office, clubs you are in, organizations where you volunteer, etc. Your local newspaper may publish a guide to businesses and organizations in the area that you can contact. Here are some suggestions that may help you:

**COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:** Women's and men's business clubs, garden clubs, labor unions, veterans' halls, religious organizations, Boards of Education, student clubs or organizations, alumni associations, local American Legion Post or Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter. Look for ethnic heritage or cultural groups in your community representing your potential host country.

## WRITE A LETTER REQUESTING DONATIONS

*Please speak with the study abroad team before contacting larger companies.*

- 1) Although it is best to always address a letter to a specific person, if you are unable to obtain that information, begin with "Dear Sir or Madam" or perhaps "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon." You may also want to use a salutation in the language of your host country. Briefly explain that YFU USA is a non-profit international exchange program for high school students.
- 2) Identify the country you are going to and the program in which you are participating. Be enthusiastic and tell them what you hope to gain from being an exchange student.
- 3) Summarize the cost of the program. Explain what you plan to contribute from your own savings, as well as what contributions you hope your parents and other organizations will make. Do you have a part time job? If so, tell them that. Sponsors will be impressed by the fact that you are working for this experience.

**LOCAL BUSINESSES:** Consider businesses and stores that you, your family, and friends use or shop at often. Examples include supermarkets, law firms, realty firms, local banks, utility companies, restaurants, newspapers, insurance companies, and medical offices. Ask businesses that have an international connection, such as travel agencies, ethnic restaurants, and foreign car dealerships. You can also try your own current or former employers and your parents' employers.

**LARGER COMPANIES:** Although we strongly recommend contacting local businesses first, and expect you will have more success with local businesses, you can also consider contacting larger companies that either specializes in a field you may be interested in as a career or that conduct business with or have branches in the country to which you would like to go. Currently YFU solicits gifts for funding scholarships and other purposes from many large national and international companies. Before you attempt to contact these larger companies, it is important that you first speak with the study abroad team at **1.800.TEENAGE**.

**MENTORS:** Seek out mentors or professionals who can point you toward the right individuals or businesses to solicit.

- 4) Tell them the entire amount of the program tuition and that any amount they could help you with would be greatly appreciated. Be certain to inform them that, unlike donations directly to YFU USA, donations by businesses (or individuals) on behalf of a particular student are not tax deductible.
- 5) Tell them what they will gain from giving you a contribution. Offer to write letters for the company's newsletter describing your overseas experiences, give a presentation about your experience, or offer lessons in the culture and language of your host country when you return.
- 6) Make sure to use complete sentences, correct spelling, and good grammar. Your letter should be neat, clear, concise, and not longer than one page. Please use the sample letter as a guide **ONLY**. A personalized letter written from your perspective will have more of an impact.
- 7) If you haven't received a response from a prospective donor, give them a follow-up phone call about two weeks after sending your letter.

123 Main St.  
Bridgeport, MI 21000  
Date

Ms. Ann Jones, President  
F. Larson, Inc.  
Detroit, MI 17653

Dear Ms. Jones:

My name is Tamara Jennings and I am a junior at Colony Hills High School. I applied and have been selected to spend my senior year living with a family in Brazil through YFU USA (Youth For Understanding). Since Portuguese is not taught in my high school and only in a few colleges, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to become fluent in the language and immerse myself in the culture of Brazil. I would like to have a career in international business and believe that knowledge of other cultures is important to succeed in this field.

The tuition for the year program to Brazil is \$\_\_\_\_\_. This includes international and domestic airfare, assistance with visas, placement with a screened host family in Brazil, language instruction, and support services 24 hours a day. If your company is able to contribute any amount possible, it would greatly aid my situation. I should let you know that although donations to YFU USA are tax deductible, a specific donation on my behalf will not be tax deductible.

I have completed the admissions process and paid an enrollment fee of \$500. My parents can contribute \$500 in addition to the \$500 enrollment fee. I have a job as a waitress after school and on weekends and hope to save at least \$2000. I must pay the full tuition by April 1, 2014.

My financial situation is as follows:

Program fee to Brazil: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

FUNDING: \$3,375

Enrollment fee paid: \$500

Teacher's Contribution: \$50

Parents' contribution: \$500

Colony Hills Business Association: \$250

Earnings through May: \$2,000

El Jardin Restaurant: \$75

STILL TO BE RAISED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would be happy to meet with you if you would like more

information about YFU or my own extracurricular activities and academic achievements. I would also be eager to make a presentation to you and your company upon my return from Brazil and keep you informed throughout my year there. This is a wonderful opportunity to represent my community, country, and myself overseas and to form bonds between our two cultures. I hope you will seriously consider my request. My home phone number is (123) 555-3310. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Tamara Jennings

## CROWD FUNDING FOR YOUR YFU EXCHANGE

What it is: The process of raising money online through contributions made by many different people who share the same passion for your project that you do.

Choosing your site:

Before moving forward, discuss the crowd-funding option with your parents first. Once you have all agreed that this is the best option for you, it's time to research your options. There are many good crowd-funding websites out there, however, there are a few things you should be aware of:

- Fees – Some sites give you 100% of the donations while others charge you a percentage of the money you raise. Know what the fees are before you begin your project!
- Flexible vs Fixed funding- With fixed funding, you only keep the money if you hit your goal. Flexible funding allows you to keep the money regardless of if you hit your goal or not. While this may sound appealing from your end, this may not sit well with your potential donors.

## SET YOURSELF APART

Crowd-funding is a great way to raise money for your exchange...if you are prepared to do the work! Your first step is to create an elevator pitch. This is your appeal to the crowd on why they should support you and your efforts to study abroad. Tell your story about why you want to go on exchange. Make it personal and compelling. You may also want to talk about:

- Who are you?
- Why do you want to go abroad?
- What you hope to learn while you are abroad?
- When are you going and how long will you be gone?
- Where do you hope to exchange to?
- How do you think you'll grow as a person?
- What are you most excited about?
- How do you think this may help you to change the world?

Your pitch will be posted on the crowd-funding site and is the first thing that everyone will know about you. For the actual post, make sure you:

- Post the most important information first. Let your audience know who you are and what you are doing right away.
- Keep it short.

- Stay compelling.
- Explain exactly why you are raising money and what you will use it for (tuition, spending money, other specifics).
- Breakdown your needs. Build trust with your audience by providing them with your exact budget.

## NOW FILM IT:

Using some of your ideas from your elevator pitch, create a 1-3 minute video of yourself that will also be posted on the crowd-funding site. Remember, first impressions are important, so make the first 10 seconds really count! A few other tips:

- You be the star. After all, this is about YOUR exchange goal.
- Invite your donors to join you on your journey by starting a blog BEFORE you go (and keeping it updated while you are gone!)
- Make sure you have a clear call to action. What you want to do and why you want to do it.
- Watch successful crowd-funding videos before you post. See if you can copy their formulas for success.

## FINALIZE YOUR CAMPAIGN

After you've chosen your crowd-funding platform, you'll need to make a few final decisions.

1. How long will you run your campaign for? Research states that the most successful campaigns run for 40 days. Too long, and you lose your sense of urgency. Too short, and you don't get the word out enough!
2. How are you going to promote? Social media is a wonderful way to get the word out, but you'll need friends and family to post for you. Decide in advance who you're going to ask to help get your crowd-funding "viral" and what channels you're going to use.
3. Who else do you know? Can your parent's send your crowd-source information through their work email channels? Aunts, uncles, family friends, who else can and will send for you? Utilized their email network to help you get the word out!

## BE TRANSPARENT WITH YOUR RESULTS

People are investing their money in you and your goal of studying abroad! Keep your word and keep them informed of your progress and the end result! Get that blog updated! Post those exchange pictures on Instagram! Let them know that their contributions have made all the difference in the world!

## CONSIDER OBTAINING AN EDUCATIONAL LOAN

You can also consider obtaining an educational loan to cover your expenses. Chances are, you will take out loans for college (and may be doing so for private high school). Studying abroad in high school is no less important. Take initiative! Your exchange experience will shape the way you view the world and open up amazing opportunities for you in the future. Shop around for the best rates! Ask your bank and others about loan programs to find the one that is best for you.

## YOU CAN DO IT!

The more you do yourself, the closer you will come to making your exchange a reality. Students have proven to us year after year that it can work if you are willing to put forth the effort. All you need is determination, hard work, some creativity, and patience. Follow as many of the suggestions as possible that are listed in these guidelines and don't be discouraged if you do not get responses or results right away. When you do receive assistance or donations, be sure to send a thank you note immediately. Later, send a postcard while you are overseas.

In raising and saving funds for your YFU exchange experience, make decisions about your priorities. If spending the summer in Sweden means you can't go to the movies or shopping every week, which would you choose? Some decisions may mean temporary sacrifices, but long-term benefits bring a world of opportunity. The money that you were saving to buy a car could send you to Germany for a year. Ask yourself, which will take you further in life?

YFU is supportive of your efforts to raise funds for your program. The best thing to do is a combination of all the different kinds of fundraising: a part-time job, writing to companies, and special projects. Both your local YFU Representative and the study abroad team are here to help you. Feel free to call us at **1.800.TEENAGE** for ideas on raising money, assistance in planning your fundraising strategies, and to share your successful fundraising stories with us.



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1.800.TEENAGE

Email: [admissions@yfu.org](mailto:admissions@yfu.org)

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