

**USA for**



**UNHCR**

The UN  
Refugee Agency

# Community Fundraising Handbook

USA for UNHCR

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

How can I help refugees?	3
What is UNHCR and USA for UNHCR?	3
What kind of support can USA for UNHCR offer me if I organize a fundraising event?	4
Common Fundraising Events	5
Fundraising Materials, Ethics and Procedures	24





*An Afghan refugee and her child who have just returned to her homeland after years in exile.  
UNHCR/T.Irwin/2007*

## HOW CAN I HELP SUPPORT THE REFUGEE CAUSE AND THE LIFE-SAVING WORK OF THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY?

Refugees anywhere in the world are people like each of us. They live in a community of friends, family and social groups. Frequently, it is the strength of their community that allows them to survive.

The USA for UNHCR Community Fundraising Handbook includes a series of suggestions on how you can enlist your community—friends, family, colleagues and others—to raise funds to support the UN Refugee Agency’s work with refugees and other displaced people.

## WHAT IS UNHCR?

UNHCR is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Refugee Agency.

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950, the UN Refugee Agency protects refugees in hundreds of countries around the world. In fact, UNHCR is the only agency with the specific mandate to help refugees and resolve their plight.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as “a person, who owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country.”

The UN Refugee Agency currently cares for more than 20 million uprooted people around the world. This includes refugees who have fled their homes and crossed international borders, as well as internally

displaced persons (IDPs) who have also been forced to flee their homes, but still reside within their country of origin.

The UN Refugee Agency provides those in need with humanitarian assistance—shelter, safe water, sanitation, medical care and basic education. The UN Refugee Agency also ensures legal protection and advocates for the rights of refugees and other persecuted individuals. There are currently more than 6,000 UNHCR staff members working in 116 countries. 84% of UNHCR staff members work directly in conflict zones.

## WHAT IS USA FOR UNHCR?

USA for UNHCR is the United States Association for UNHCR, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization that supports the UN Refugee Agency's humanitarian work to protect and assist refugees around the world. The organization strives to meet the unmet needs of the world's most vulnerable people, building support and awareness in the United States for UNHCR's life-saving relief programs.

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN USA FOR UNHCR OFFER ME IF I ORGANIZE A FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY IN MY COMMUNITY?

USA for UNHCR counts on the help of people like you to help raise support and awareness in local communities about the refugee cause and the work of the UN Refugee Agency. While we are happy to provide guidance and material assistance wherever possible, we are not able to provide financial backing for fundraising activities. Instead, we recommend designing your fundraising activity to pay for itself, with extra funds being sent as a donation to USA for UNHCR.

We do produce publicity materials, including brochures, DVDs, posters, newsletters and other items that we would be pleased to provide to support your fundraising activities. There is a list of materials you can request from us at the end of this document.

Moreover, if you require assistance with fundraising procedures (especially if you would like to arrange to have tax receipts sent to those involved in your fundraising activity), or you have questions about the work of the UN Refugee Agency, you can always email us at: [info@usaforunhcr.org](mailto:info@usaforunhcr.org) or call us toll free at 1-800-770-1100.

## IDEAS TO CONSIDER

There are a number of ways that you can raise awareness and funds in your community. Some of the ideas are for a single person to encourage donations from their friends, family, neighbors or colleagues, while others are designed for your group—church, scout or guide troop, classroom, office, service club or sports team—to do together. Each activity is described in some detail, with suggestions on common pitfalls to avoid, time and financial investment required, and possible variations on similar themes. **You are never alone when developing your fundraising activity for USA for UNHCR.** Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions, to discuss your own idea with us, or if you'd like some help or guidance. If you have a fundraising idea for your community that is not included in this collection, please let us know and we can offer your idea to others who may be able to do the same activity in another part of the country.

## COMMON FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Pledge Event (Something-a-thon)	6
Public Speaker/Presentation	7
Sale of Goods/Services	8
Gala Evening/Cocktail Party	10
Auction	11
Per Head Fundraising	13
Lottery/Raffle/50-50 Draw	14
Sports Tournament	16
Potluck Supper	17
Theater/Concert Benefit	18
Dance	20
Bingo/Casino Night	21
Food Fair/Beer or Wine Tasting	22

## PLEDGE EVENT (*SOMETHING-A-THON*)

### ***Summary:***

Any event in which participants collect pledges from individuals, based upon the premise that the participant will complete some sort of task (run a certain distance, cycle across the country, etc)

### ***Expected Investment:***

Generally, there is a cost to run the event and this cost can be quite high. For large multi-year events, the first year may only raise enough money to cover the costs. For smaller, single year events, organizers might expect to spend \$1.00 to raise \$2.00.

Participants have to be treated as VIP's, as they are the people who are actually doing the fundraising by collecting pledges. Sometimes, prizes are given to those who surpass benchmark pledge amounts—generally the prize is valued at no more than 10% of the benchmark, and prizes are often donated.

These sorts of events require quite a bit of time to prepare, as participants need to be recruited (by phone, word of mouth, flyers, or advertising) and then they need time to raise pledges. The day (week or month) of the event, when all participants are completing their task often requires a number of volunteers who need to be recruited or trained. This does not necessarily require a lot of money, but it does take time, as the professionalism and enthusiasm of the volunteers really affects the participants and will affect the success of repeating this sort of event.

### ***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

These sorts of fundraisers, when run well, generally raise about twice as much as they cost.

### ***Possible Timeline:***

For a small event, where a group might hope to raise \$1000 or less through the efforts of a handful of participants, plan to have at least two months to organize. Larger events, where there may be 100's of participants and revenues of hundreds of thousands of dollars require up to a year of preparation time and a series of committed volunteers to coordinate planning and activities.

### ***Variations:***

- Invite corporate "teams" to participate and challenge each team to raise more money than their competitors.

- Read-a-thons (great for school based fundraising)
- Consider making the task a community enhancement project, such as, picking up garbage, or planting flowers/bulbs around the neighborhood.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Sometimes the “task” requires local permits that might take time to acquire (especially true for sporting events such as bike rides or runs)
- Try to have all participants collect the money at the time they ask for pledges, not after the event
- Do not plan to contact the donors on behalf of the participants after the event
- Be sure to have all donors (pledges) give their complete mailing address, in order to have UNHCR be able to send them a thank you and a tax receipt

## **PUBLIC SPEAKER/PRESENTATION**

***Summary:***

Create a community awareness event featuring either a high profile guest, or a credible guest (like a refugee or someone who has worked or volunteered overseas with refugees). The event should be introduced as a fundraising event, and when the speaker(s) are thanked at the end, the audience should be reminded how their donations can make a difference to the issues mentioned in the talk.

***Expected Investment:***

A small token gift for the speaker (can be a cash honorarium if the speaker is a high profile individual), room rental if appropriate, and advertising for public events should be taken into consideration.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

Generally, these events cost very little to organize, and revenue can be minimal if the “hat” is passed around the audience, or can be more lucrative if based upon tickets sales. As a general rule, the more eminent the speaker, the higher the ticket price can be, ranging in price from a few dollars (for student events) to as much as \$100 for an international figure.

***Possible Timeline:***

Events can be organized in as little as three weeks, depending on the access to an audience, the speaker’s availability and the venue. If the audience is a church group or a school service club, then the event can be organized quite quickly as both the audience and the venue are guaranteed. If the event is for the general public in a community auditorium, then time must be allowed for advertising and for ticket sales (if appropriate).

***Variations:***

- Single speaker or panel discussion—for a good panel discussion, both “sides” should be represented.
- Slide shows—pictures are worth a thousand words, but the slide show has to be short and well edited.
- Live entertainment, either music or dance, often creates a festive atmosphere for this sort of educational effort.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid***

- A tax receipt cannot be issued for the value of the admission, and will not be made for cash donations made into a donation box (or “hat”). Be sure to identify how UNHCR is addressing the challenges that may be part of the speech.
- Have materials available for people to take home and be sure to give everyone an addressed envelope and donation coupon as they leave (UNHCR can supply these items at no charge with a week’s advance notice)

## **SALE OF GOODS/SERVICES**

***Summary:***

This sort of fundraising is like running a small business enterprise and donating the “profit” to UNHCR. The small business may be very small, like a lemonade stand, or very large like running a full time not-for profit business (like a thrift shop). Of course most people work to make money for themselves, but donating that profit to UNHCR offers a tax receipt for the donation and is a great marketing tool. (People like to know their purchase is going to support a good cause)

***Expected Investment:***

Depends entirely on the scope of the activity. Garage sales might only require \$10 worth of signage and coffee, with total sales in excess of \$300. Without volunteers, this sort of activity requires minimal investment. However, if you begin a lawn cutting business for a summer (even with volunteers) there will be expenses for gas, oil, machinery, and repairs.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

Again, this depends on the scope of the activity. With a weekend single occurrence activity (like a bake sale or a pancake breakfast), \$300-\$400 after expenses would be considered very successful.

***Possible Timeline:***

Planning should occur not less than 3 weeks in advance of the event, longer if the activity will last over a span of time.

***Variations:***

- Garage sale, plant sale, carwash, house painting, bazaar, caroling, haircutting, making birdhouses, selling a cookbook of favorite recipes, buying broken goods to repair and resell, babysitting, dog-walking, teaching/training, etc

***Common Pitfalls:***

- The bigger the investment, the bigger the risk. Running a business, whether small or large, requires commitment to see returns on the initial investment (just ask any child operating a lemonade stand!)
- Those purchasing the goods or services DO NOT get a tax receipt (only if they make an outright gift!)
- Don't underestimate the cost of advertising and promotion. For some service-related activities, advertising might be the only cost, but it will make or break the success of the event
- Make sure that you pay your expenses first, then donate the remainder to UNHCR



*A young girl who fled the violence in Timor Leste. UNHCR/N. NG/ 2006*

## GALA EVENING/COCKTAIL PARTY

### ***Summary:***

This is a fundraising event that relies on selling tickets to make money. Generally, there is some sort of attraction (guest speaker, opportunity to meet someone famous, social networking opportunity, musical performer, etc) or game (casino night, auction, raffle, etc.) although these “hooks” are not obligatory for success. Invitations are sent to an audience of likely attendees (usually people who have a bit of disposable income). It is preferred if the price of admission is collected in advance of the evening (that way, sickness or inclement weather don’t reduce the revenue at the time of the reception). Generally these are fancy affairs where the guests are treated like VIPs, with a served dinner, or catered hors d’oeuvres. The price of a ticket should be set based upon the level of services offered. It is not uncommon to sell tickets at \$100 per person, with 40% being tax creditable<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Expected Investment:***

Between 40-60% of the ticket price per person. (i.e. for a party of 75 at \$100/ticket, the cost of putting on the event might be \$2000-3000 (although some of the costs might be donated if enough planning is involved)

### ***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

40-50% of the ticket price multiplied by the number of guests in attendance. With the scenario of 75 guests at \$100/ticket, the total donation to UNHCR after all costs have been covered might be \$3500.

### ***Possible Timeline:***

Plan at least two months in advance, longer for a more elaborate function.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the section at the end of this handbook on Fundraising Procedures

***Variations:***

- “No show” gala—where invitations are sent to NOT come to a gala, and people pay for the privilege of absence. This works well if your guest list is tired of these events but would like to support your cause nonetheless. (for the No Show Gala, 100% of the “ticket” price can be receipted)
- Raffles, auctions or sales can be part of the activities, in order to raise extra money from the assembled guests.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Although tremendously enjoyable, these events generally cost a lot to put on, and require a good network of people willing to purchase the tickets at whatever price is set. Moreover, this is a glorified dinner party, and therefore takes careful (and sometime laborious) planning
- Considerations: parking/valet service, wheelchair accessibility, available seating for older guests, coat and umbrella check
- The success of this event relies ENTIRELY on the guest list—leave enough time to call people and invite them personally if numbers of ticket sales are low

## AUCTION

***Summary:***

This fundraising event can take many forms, but in any case it relies on the ability to auction off goods or services (known as “lots”) to a group of willing purchasers. The auction can take place as part of a larger function like a dinner gala or a church pancake breakfast. The items on auction are normally donated in order to make the greatest possible revenue for donation.

***Expected Investment:***

This can be an inexpensive way to add value to another event, as the investment is almost always time: time to get donated goods from companies, time to invite people, and time to ensure that there are volunteers to help with banking and spotting bidders.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

This type of fundraising can be very lucrative, as most of the costs are in volunteer time. A simple services auction might raise \$300-\$500 in a few hours. A more complicated auction with a professional auctioneer and viewing times for items might raise several thousand, depending on the excitement of the audience and the quality of the auction lots.

***Possible Timeline:***

In most cases, a live auction might require at least a month to get the selection of items for bid, invite bidders, arrange for an auctioneer, and book a location. A silent auction can take very little time and can be done by mail, or by setting up an email site featuring the items for bid.

***Variations:***

- Silent Auction: a popular variation, where people view the items for auction and they make a pledge on a piece of paper located near the item. The bidders circulate and see the bids already made and if they want to win, they must outbid the last written bid. After a set amount of time, the bidding closes and the last name on each list “wins” the item
- Online auction: consider selling an item on EBay and donating the proceeds to UNHCR. (In this case, you can get a tax receipt for the amount you give to UNHCR)
- Services auction: Many people find it easier to invite members of their community to donate services rather than goods. Services might include a home cooked meal (you’d be surprised how much a single person might pay!), leaf raking services, a painted portrait or two hours of handyman time. If you belong to a service club, then members of that club might be willing to offer their services to each other. The auction then, becomes a game to raise money in a creative way. This is a very popular fundraiser in churches and other community gatherings

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Be sure to have the auction items either confirmed in writing or at the event. There is nothing more embarrassing than having a winning bid for an item or service that never materializes
- Banking is important in these auctions, as it is frequently difficult to locate the bidders after they have made the final bid. Some will issue bidders a “number card” which identifies them. In other cases, volunteers can go and find the successful bidder in the crowd immediately after

the winning bid. Of course this problem is alleviated in the silent auction, as the name of the donor (and their telephone number) is included as part of their bid

- When soliciting “lots” for bid, ask the donors to help you develop a special “portfolio” to show off the item. This will help raise the bids. If people do not know what they are bidding for, they will likely underbid
- Consider setting a “minimum bid” for items for which you’ve had to pay something to get (i.e. make sure that you at least recoup your costs) or to ensure that a \$100 item doesn’t go for a song—the donor of that item will not be impressed if their donated item doesn’t raise any money for the cause
- It is important to note that bidders do not get a tax receipt, as they are in effect “buying” the good or service. However, the donors of the items for auction (not the services) are eligible for a tax receipt in some cases. For information on how to get a tax receipt to these donors, contact USA for UNHCR

## PER-HEAD FUNDRAISING

### ***Summary:***

Ask everyone you know to give a small amount--\$1.00, for example. This works well if you belong to a membership-based organization like a service club or a union. Most people will not mind giving a small donation and this can raise quite a bit of money in an afternoon. This is also a tremendous way to increase awareness about the work of the UN Refugee Agency and the plight of refugees.

### ***Expected Investment:***

This is an easy fundraiser, requiring nothing more than time and a willingness to ask for a donation, and to answer questions on the work of UNHCR.

### ***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

It is easy to raise \$200-\$300, perhaps more, depending on how much you ask for per person.

**Possible Timeline:**

Can be spontaneously organized at a party, a social gathering, or in the workplace, but it works best if there is some planning to at least be able to answer potential questions from donors.

**Variations:**

- Give something to each donor for their dollar—a sticker, or a piece of paper with basic facts on UNHCR (available from UNHCR)
- Suggest that everyone in your office empty the change out of his or her pockets after going for lunch, or for coffee.
- Buy a box of donut holes, bring them to the office, and then sell them for a \$1.00 each, calling it a “refugee tax”

**Common Pitfalls to Avoid:**

- *Give people a way to say no—if someone is struggling for money, this sort of fundraising can make them feel very awkward.*
- The donations are not eligible for a tax receipt, unless someone wants to make a gift of \$10 or more, at which time it is important to get that donor’s full name and address (including postal code) and return that information to USA for UNHCR when the donations are submitted.

**LOTTERY/RAFFLE/50-50 DRAW****Summary:**

As with an auction, this activity requires a prize, and a certain level of organization. However, it does not necessarily rely on an assembled audience, as tickets can be sold over time by mail, in person or by email. In a lottery or raffle, the individuals buy tickets in the expectation that they might win the prize.

**Expected Investment:**

This requires time to acquire the prize. As with an auction, the prize can be a donated item or service, or it could be a cash prize. Other than getting the prize, the investment will typically be small (less than \$30) for stamps, printing or purchase of tickets, and administering the process.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

For most community-based lotteries, one can expect to sell tickets for \$2-\$5 each (or discounts for multiples), the more effort is put into ticket sales the greater the revenue. Total revenue, therefore, might be \$200-\$1000 depending on the prize and the ticket price

***Possible Timeline:***

If the lottery is an in-person event allow at least 1-2 weeks to arrange location and gather volunteers to staff event. If added on to an existing event or if done by mail or email, it can be planned within a few days. Make sure to allow time to secure the “prize”.

***Variations:***

- For a 50-50 draw there is no set prize. In this variation, after all tickets are sold, one ticket is drawn and the winner gets half the amount collected. This is an easy way to make money, as almost everyone with a small urge to gamble will give a small amount to a charity for a chance to win “half the pot”



*Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. UNHCR / 2005*

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- As with an auction, be sure to have the prize confirmed before any tickets are sold
- For larger raffles/lotteries, some cities/states require a license in order to protect the public from fraud. In most cases, a local raffle will not be of concern and there is no set rule to determine at what point a license must be acquired. Generally, if the prizes are worth less than \$10,000, then there should be no need for a license. When in doubt, contact the gaming commission in your area for clarification

## SPORTS TOURNAMENT

### **Summary:**

Golf tournaments have brought this fundraising activity to the forefront, although the same model could apply to any sporting event. In essence, this is fundraising event in which participants come out in a festive atmosphere to play a sport and money is raised for a charity. The revenue can come from entrance fees, corporate sponsorship, sale of food or drink, and in some cases, raising pledges.

### **Expected Investment:**

There may be some rental costs for facilities, and there have to be prizes for the participants for “best ball,” “most sportsmanlike,” or other such praise. Each participant should be considered a VIP; this treatment might require a budget of \$10-30 per person. This can increase you plan to provide food at the end of the event.

### **Expected Revenue (after expenses):**

First, participants will pay an entrance fee to play. This fee pays for all expenses of running the tournament, with any excess being the foundation of the donation to the UN Refugee Agency. Participants can also gather pledges to participate, further increasing potential revenue. Often there is a BBQ or sale of drinks and profits from these sales can add to the donation. Generally, there is a token “participation” prize given to each person who participates. If corporate sponsorship can be organized to pay for the out of pocket costs, then the donation further increases. It is a good policy to plan for a 200% return on investment. Therefore, if it costs \$20 per participant, then the revenue should not be less than \$40. Using this ratio, then revenue can be quite substantial (\$1000's) for a fancy event, such as golf tournaments, or can be more reasonable (\$100's) for a community ball game.

### **Possible Timeline:**

Allow at least two months to organize any sort of fundraising sporting event. If corporate sponsors are to be approached add another 1-2 months.

### **Variations:**

- Golf, softball, soccer, swim meet.
- Team challenge. In many cases, with enough planning, you can arrange to have teams “compete” with each other prior to the event by raising more money than the other. This is common in any pledge driven event (see section on “Something-a-thon”)

- To really make money in this sort of fundraising activity, acquiring some sort of sponsor to help cover the costs in return for some good publicity in the community is a prudent activity.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Have a contingency plan for rain
- Try to collect as many pledges before the event as possible
- Remember that each participant, or team of participants have to have a good time. Sometimes this will require you to organize some entertainment, or generate some excitement during the event
- Also consider adding to this event an auction, or a raffle if time permits. Generally, people who have had a good day will be inclined to give a bit more to support UNHCR

## POTLUCK SUPPER

***Summary:***

This is like the gala event, except that it takes less time to arrange, and can be done quite casually amongst friends. Revenue can be made using one of the party activities (auction, raffle, 50-50 draw, etc) or can also be generated by having each person pay an entrance fee for the pleasure of trying someone else's dish. This is a great opportunity to "pass the hat" after dinner, especially if there is some sort of public awareness activity built into the evening (video, speaker, or question and answer period)

***Expected Investment:***

Everyone must bring a dish, including the host. Otherwise, the investment is mostly in cleaning up afterwards.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

This activity does not have huge revenue potential, but it is fun, accessible for a lot of people of any age or social status, and has the benefit of creating awareness about the UN Refugee Agency. Total revenue might be \$100-200 for this activity.

***Possible Timeline:***

This activity can be organized easily in a few days. If support is needed from USA for UNHCR for educational materials, then please allow one week for shipping these goods.

***Variations:***

- This event is like any other house party. Games, special speeches, announcements, and other activities can help create a special evening.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Try to ensure that everyone understands how valuable this sort of social event can be for refugees when everyone makes a small contribution. Having said that, there are very few pitfalls for this sort of activity.

**THEATRE/CONCERT BENEFIT*****Summary:***

Encourage a local music or theatre group to donate their services for an evening. Many community theaters will allow a worthwhile cause like the UN Refugee Agency to sell tickets to a dress rehearsal or pre-show. Likewise, many local musicians are looking for a place to play, and will gladly perform for free if they are able to get the exposure at no cost to them.

***Expected Investment:***

You'll need to do a bit of research and solicit the support of the performers or the performance hall. There may also be a down payment or a small fee required. Sale of tickets should be no less than the value of the down payment (or payment for utilities), just to ensure that if something unforeseen happens, you will not pay out of pocket.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

This can be a very rewarding endeavor. The audience gets a night out and the charity and performers get the exposure they want. Depending on the size of the performance hall, revenue might be \$500 or more after all expenses.

**Possible Timeline:**

Make sure that you leave enough time to sell tickets in advance. Also, if capitalizing on the generosity of the community theatre, the performance time will likely be set well in advance, typically for a weeknight, which means that you'll have to give your attendees time to organize their schedule to be free that evening. For a benefit concert of this magnitude, plan to spend no less than 1 ½ months in preparation.

**Variations:**

- Add an auction item or two either in the lobby during intermission (silent auction) or on stage, if the performers are willing to help out as auctioneers
  
- Consider a post-performance, wine and cheese party or social event with the performers. This may require further permissions and the agreement of the performers, but such a post performance party will allow for a much higher price to be charged for tickets

**Common Pitfalls to Avoid:**

- Note that if the event is a concert, there may be noise bylaws to consider in some neighborhoods
  
- If you plan to sell alcoholic beverages, this may require a permit
  
- Don't rely on ticket sales at the door. These last minute sales are only extra (welcomed) revenue
  
- Again, as the patrons are getting something for their ticket price, there are no tax receipts issued. In this case, the donated talent is also not eligible for a tax receipt, as it would be very difficult to put a price on the value of their performance



## DANCE

### ***Summary:***

As with the concert/benefit, this is a night out for donors. In its most basic form, this is like a High School dance in which there is a fee for admission and all proceeds collected pay for the costs of the gym, the band or DJ, and the residual amount goes to the UN Refugee Agency. However, this need not be only for high school students. Legions do this sort of fundraiser regularly. More revenue can be made if there is a small markup on the bar or food served.

### ***Expected Investment:***

You can expect to pay for the rental of the venue, lights, sound equipment (sometimes the band will include this in their fee) and of course the band or DJ. You should plan to have these costs covered by ticket sales.

### ***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

This depends on the scope of the activity and the “cachet” of the performer. If you have a local band playing for teens, ticket prices might be \$20 and the band may charge \$400 for the night. If there is an audience of 100 people, then you might expect to make a donation to UNHCR for \$1500 after expenses. For a swing orchestra at a fancy ballroom, ticket prices might be \$60 per person and the band might charge \$1200 or more. Revenue for 100 people in this case might then be \$4000, depending on the costs of renting the ballroom.

### ***Possible Timeline:***

Again, allow plenty of time—months—to advertise the event and generate enthusiasm. Also, there may be some time required to acquire a license to serve alcohol, if this is appropriate.

### ***Variations:***

- Theme dances. Swing night to celebrate an anniversary, for example.

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- This sort of event sometimes suffers from poor attendance. Make sure that ticket sales are strong, and negotiate a “cut off date” with the performers to get your initial deposit back. If it looks like it is going to be poorly attended, cancel as soon as possible and keep your losses to a minimum.

## BINGO/CASINO NIGHT

***Summary:***

Bingo has been a staple fundraising activity for many years at the community level. In fact, many cities have privately run (and government regulated) bingo halls or casinos that raise money in part for charity. In your community, this is a relatively enjoyable social activity in which bingo cards are sold and a percentage of the sale of those cards is available to be won. In many ways, this is like a 50-50 draw as each pot is eventually won and the size of the pot is dependent on the number of players. In the casino option, guests can pay for admission to the casino, and can purchase “chips” and play one of a number of casino games, such as blackjack, craps, or roulette.

***Expected Investment:***

There will be a cost for bingo cards and “stamps”. These are often available at stationary supply stores. This may not exceed \$50, depending on how many cards you are expecting to sell. Likewise, you’ll have to have some means of generating the numbers (either using a ball machine, or numbers in a hat, or a computer to randomly generate the bingo letters and numbers.) In the casino option, there may be some costs for chips, a portable roulette wheel, or a felt for craps.

***Expected Revenue:***

For Bingo, you can expect to make a gift to the UN Refugee Agency for half of the pot, less your expenses. Thus revenue can go from \$50-\$1000, depending on the scope of the activity. For casino’s the revenue can be greater, as there is no guarantee that anyone will win...in fact the odds are that the only winner will be UNHCR.

***Possible Timeline:***

A bingo or a casino can be a part of another social event, and as such it can be organized within a week. As a separate event, it is like any social in that there should be at least one month allowed to invite people to attend.

***Variations:***

- There can be special prize rounds, where an extra prize is available for the players in order to generate more activity or sell more bingo cards
- Don't forget that food and drinks can be sold to the players and the profit can further increase the amount of the final donation to UNHCR

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- This donation is not tax deductible, as the source of the money is actually from the players, who have paid for their cards
- This is considered gambling. You may need to get a gaming license if you are encouraging the general public to play
- If you are running a casino, it is preferable to have volunteers who actually know the games, and can run them seamlessly

## FOOD FAIR/BEER OR WINE TASTING

***Summary:***

This is an event that can be done privately in a person's home, in which case it is very similar to a potluck dinner or a gala. Conversely, it can be a public event, where chefs donate their time and the general public pay an admission to taste the delicacies prepared by different connoisseurs.

***Expected Investment:***

The "at home" version can require the costs of preparing different foods, or buying different wines or beer. The public event will cost more, including advertising, and perhaps a room or restaurant rental.

***Expected Revenue (after expenses):***

Depending upon ticket prices, this sort of event can raise between \$100 and \$1000 dollars for UNHCR. The bigger (and more public the event), the more risk and the more the potential reward.

***Possible Timeline:***

Again, if this is run privately for friends or colleagues, it can be organized and executed within a few weeks. If it is a public, high profile event, then several months or more will be required to secure the voluntary support of chefs, restaurants, or other professionals to make this a success.

***Variations:***

- This event is very common to support the arts, as it is often held either before or after a performance on stage. For this reason, it might be a good event to combine with a theatre/concert benefit as described earlier
- Auctions of some of the recipes, a cook's donated implements, or a special bottle of wine can create more revenue out of this event, and the attendees will be delighted

***Common Pitfalls to Avoid:***

- Don't make this too big an event immediately. Start small and if ticket sales continue to increase, then you can always add more chefs to the program afterwards, as a bonus.
- This sort of event, if enjoyable for the attendees, can easily become a yearly occasion, but don't plan for this until the first event is over and is a clear success

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

USA for UNHCR produces informational brochures and newsletters, as well as posters, DVDs, and videos about refugees and the work of the UN Refugee Agency. If you need information or publicity materials to support your fundraising activities, please contact USA for UNHCR, by email at [info@usaforunhcr.org](mailto:info@usaforunhcr.org), toll free at 1-800-770-1100, or locally at 202-296-1115. A list of available materials also is provided on our website: [www.UNrefugees.org](http://www.UNrefugees.org).

## FUNDRAISING ETHICS

USA for UNHCR is committed to being accountable to its donors, as our work relies on retaining the donor's trust. Although it is not imperative to subscribe to a formal code of ethics when helping USA for UNHCR raise funds in your community, it is important to remember that the UN Refugee Agency works on behalf of individuals who frequently have little or no voice of their own as a result of circumstances beyond their control. We believe that as advocates for refugees and other displaced people, it is important to portray them with dignity and honesty, and to assume that they each have individual beliefs, aspirations and strengths.

## FUNDRAISING PROCEDURES

When organizing a fundraising event for USA for UNHCR, one of the first questions you may have relates to the issuance of tax receipts to donors. USA for UNHCR can issue tax-deductible acknowledgements that can be used by donors as a credit on their United States income tax return. USA for UNHCR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Volunteers are not permitted to issue tax receipts on behalf of UNHCR. This function can only be done by senior USA for UNHCR staff members.

It is important to remember that tax receipts are only issued to donors who make a contribution voluntarily for which they expect to receive no goods or services in return. For this reason, the value of a tax receipt issued to a donor relates to the amount they have given to UNHCR as a gift. For example, if a person purchases a ticket in a raffle, they do not receive a tax receipt, as the ticket is purchasing a "chance to win" much like any provincial lottery ticket. Similarly, if a person purchases a ticket to a gala event for \$100, and for that ticket they receive a meal and a glass of wine that is worth \$60, the tax receipt can only be issued for \$40 (even if the meal and wine are donated—it is the "fair market" value of the good or service that determines the donated portion.)