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Guide To Troop Fundraising With Abby Candles Fundraising

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Troop Fundraising Guide

How to Use This Guide

The Troop Fundraising Guide has been developed as a tool to assist Troops in planning, implementing and developing successful Troop fundraising activities.

If your Troop has limited experience in planning its own fundraising activity, you will want to follow the Guide very closely. Your Troop's fundraising manager should carefully review each section and plan to use the information and checklists provided, thoroughly addressing each component. Even if your Troop already has significant experience with successful Troop fundraising, the Troop fundraising manager should fully review the information offered in the guidebook every time you participate in a fundraiser. *Please remember according to IRS rules, under NO circumstances can fundraising profits benefit an individual girl or be placed in "Girl Accounts."*

Purpose

The process of planning, implementing and evaluating a fundraising activity should contribute to each girl's accomplishment of the mission of the American Heritage Girl program:

***"Building women of integrity through service to God,
family, community and country."***

Fundraising is a powerful public relations tool for AHG and will help create awareness of the AHG program in your communities. Please keep this in mind when developing the overall program and product that your Troop will choose. The fundraising activity must compliment American Heritage Girls' foundational principles. Fundraising activities should be fun and reflect the interest areas of the Troop.

The process should include girl/adult partnerships as well as small group planning, decision-making and evaluation. Troops that set goals on a weekly basis will see a much higher likelihood of success than those who do not; track Troop goals as the fundraiser progresses, making it a fun process for the girls to see the progress they've made as time continues. Keep in mind that the shorter the time frame, the easier it will be to maintain momentum throughout the fundraiser. Generally, 3-4 weeks seems to be a trend that Troops have found successful.

Fundraising activities should be based on progressive experiences and support learning in some or all of the following areas: skill development, service, citizenship, health and safety and money management. Fundraising helps teach the girls about working hard to achieve their goals. It helps create/develop important life skills for the girls – promoting AHG's mission of instilling the following values: confidence building, helpfulness, leadership, social development, money management, responsibility, service and teamwork. The positive benefits of the Troop setting a goal, working together as a team and ultimately the reward that comes from witnessing the goal being achieved cannot be stressed enough. Fundraising offers the rare opportunity for the members of the Troop to work together toward a common

monetary goal that will have a direct impact on their AHG year. *Fundraising teaches them skills that receiving a “buyout” from parents/guardians/benefactors will not.*

How fundraising activities are planned and implemented are as important as the profit of the activity. The more time to think through the whole process, the more successful your fundraiser can be. Take time to develop a successful fundraiser so the Troop’s efforts are capitalized instead of throwing one together last minute. The fundraiser(s) the Troop participates in should help raise money for your program and help meet Troop objectives to create an ideal year for the girls! Focus on planning and executing one or two really successful fundraisers, rather than participating in several that are somewhat ineffective.

Becoming an Entrepreneur:

Every fundraising activity resembles a small business and the planning process used by your Troop will be similar to the steps taken by an entrepreneur. To be successful in the process, Troops should use the following guidelines:

- 1) Choose your business/activity based on the Troop’s interests and skills.
- 2) Set SMART goals. They should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable/Realistic and Timely, even if the Troop has a larger, long-term goal.
- 3) Make your overall plan as specific as possible.
- 4) Set goals at the girl and the Troop level.
 - Discuss selling goals and the importance of meeting these goals.
 - Brainstorm activities/expenses and their associated costs.
 - Create Troop goals that further recognize the girls’ efforts and increase their motivation.
- 5) Set evaluation points ahead of time. Schedule them so that your Troop Board has time to adjust both future fundraising plans and your Troop’s budget.

The value that is provided by these activities goes beyond the money raised for the Troop. When girls have an active part in planning activities and taking the steps to make the activities happen, they gain a wide variety of the skills that can range from creative writing to budget management. Most importantly, they develop the skill and confidence to know that they can be “entrepreneurs for life.”

Guidelines for Fundraising Activities:

American Heritage Girls’ guidelines for fundraising activities are based on the AHG mission, creed, and health and safety concerns of the participants. The specific guidelines for planning these activities are listed below.

AHG Troop fundraising activities will:

- 1) Provide the community for girls to learn multiple skills, such as budgeting, goal-setting, customer relations, good business practices and public relations.
- 2) Be based upon voluntary participation, an understanding of the Troop budget and sound business procedures, keeping in mind that a “buyout” from parents/guardians will not teach the girls life skills that a fundraiser will.
- 3) Allow for all profits to be used for AHG Troop activities.
- 4) Require parent/guardian permission for participants.

- 5) Require Charter Organization and AHG Inc. Office approval. The *Troop Fundraising Activity Form* is available at www.ahgonline.org, Leader area.
- 6) Follow the guidelines and regulations established by American Heritage Girls and federal, state and local authorities.

Guidelines to Troop Fundraising Projects:

The way in which a Troop earns funds to carry out its program is important to the education of its youth members in basic values.

Whenever your Troop is planning a fundraising project, this list of questions can serve as your guide. It will be helpful to you as you complete the Fundraising Activity Form.

1 – Do we have a plan for the finances we will raise?

The finances that are raised from the fundraiser should be identified during the planning process. It's important to remember that individual girl members are also expected to earn their own way. The need should be over and above normal budget items covered by dues. The number of fundraising projects should not exceed three projects per year, and the monetary goal to be raised should be determined in accordance to a previously prepared Troop budget.

2 – Is the timing good?

The plan and corresponding timeline should avoid competition with fundraising efforts and policies of your Charter Organization. It is important that fundraising activities are chosen and agreed upon by the Troop Ministry Team. Check with your Charter Representative to make certain that your Charter Organization agrees on the dates and type of fundraiser.

3 – Is this type of fundraiser permitted?

Abby Candles Fundraising is an AHG Preferred Fundraising Vendor, and thus is pre-approved for your Troop. However, you must still submit a Fundraising Approval form with AHG Nationals to inform them of your Troop's intention to participate in a fundraiser. Be sure to also check with your Charter Organization regarding any fundraising guidelines they may have.

4 – Can your Troop accept monetary donations?

Yes. A Troop can only accept monetary donations that are tax deductible, provided the donation is made directly to the Charter Organization, on behalf of the Troop. American Heritage Girl Troops are not individually designated as separate 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations but can accept donations with the approval of the Charter Organization. Please check with your Charter Organization to see how tax deductible donations for the Troop should be handled.

5 – Can your Troop solicit money for other worthwhile organizations?

No. Girl members may support other organizations through service projects. They may contribute a portion of their Troop treasury to other organizations or projects they feel are worthwhile (e.g. adopt a needy family, donate hygiene projects, etc.). However, they may not solicit money as an American Heritage Girl on behalf of other organizations. From time to time, AHG Inc. may engage in national program initiatives that allow Troops to raise funds for a specific cause. Only during this type of national initiative is this type of solicitation acceptable.

Developing a Successful Fundraising Plan

Thinking About Fundraising:

1. The fundraising goals should be realistically achievable for the age and skill level of the girls involved. If not, this is an indication that the Troop plans are not appropriate for that level in the Troop and fundraiser's goals will need to be readjusted. Abby Candles Fundraising employees can assist in guidance for Troop goal setting.
2. The Troop Board and the Troop leadership should develop initial plans and the Troop budget for the coming year. They should also take in to consideration that the maximum of three fundraising activities are allowed per year. Even though you are able to participate in three fundraisers, it is better to focus on spending time and energy on just one or two really successful ones per year. The Troop's choices in fundraising should be effective and efficient. Fundraising should help raise money for your program and help meet your Troop's objectives to create an ideal year for its members.
3. A Troop Board policy concerning girl "buyouts" may be necessary to cover the Troop's yearly budget including the Program Support Responsibility. This information should be included in your Troop's Policy and Procedure Handbook. Best practices would be to provide a "buyout" program for those girls who do not participate in the fundraisers. However, a Troop should be careful in discouraging the girls from participating in fun and exciting fundraisers due to the fact that the majority of girls want to participate. Fundraising helps create and develop important life skills for the girls – something a "buyout" does not.

Budgeting to Help Set Troop Fundraising Goals:

- 1) Find out what activities the girls believe would create a perfect AHG year. Get them involved in the planning process! The more involved they feel, the more devoted they will be. By helping in the planning and execution of the fundraiser, they will realize how their efforts have helped/will help the Troop. They'll get excited about the upcoming year and will learn what needs to come together to make their ideal year become a reality. Ex: Troop outings, camping, day trips, special events such as father-daughter dances, mother-daughter tea, costs to attend national and/or regional conferences, etc.
- 2) Using the Troop budget, determine:
 - The total cost of the activities that are planned.
 - The total cost of other expenses, such as Troop dues and other AHG program costs, such as registration, uniforms, patches/badges, handbooks, flags, etc.
 - The total money available through current sources; (i.e., dues, remaining treasury, contributions, etc.)
 - The Troop/Unit fundraising goal that would allow the Troop to follow through with the ideal year. Ex: You calculate that the Troop will need to raise \$8,000 for the year to cover any and all expenses. The fundraiser you plan to participate in offers 50% profit. Your Troop sales goal will be to sell \$16,000 worth of product in order to raise the \$8,000 you need. If there are 50 girls in the Troop, each girl's goal would be to sell \$320.

Implementing Fundraising Activities:

1. Discuss plans with parents/guardians and secure permission to participate. Use *Parent/Guardian Permission Form*.
2. Receive approval from your Charter Organization.
3. Identify specific components of the plan:
 - Activity goals
 - Skills and resources needed
 - Event tasks, locations and personnel: girls and adult partners
 - Cost of carrying out the plan
 - Fundraising and health and safety guidelines
 - Evaluation
4. Don't be afraid to ask questions! Contact your Troop Coach (a.k.a. Support Services Coordinator) or Abby Candles Fundraising and ask any questions you have. Ask for suggestions, best practices, etc.

Increasing Sales and Troop Participation:

- ✓ **Get everyone involved.** This is the easiest and fastest way to achieve the Troop's financial goals for the fundraiser. This goes for the girls, Troop leaders and the parents/guardians, your Charter and/or your community. Find a leader to spearhead the fundraiser who is organized and enthusiastic – one who will bring energy to the project and continue to motivate others. If the leaders are excited, the girls will be too! Have girls work together – they will build camaraderie and motivate each other.
- ✓ **Educate the Troop members and their families** that it is a fundraiser that will help the Troop overall and that it should be looked at as a team-building opportunity for their girls. Make sure parents understand that their child will not receive the educational benefits that participating in the fundraiser can provide for their child if they choose to “buyout” and pay everything straight from their pocket.
- ✓ **Dedicate a Troop meeting to the fundraiser.** Have an exciting and informative fundraising kick off meeting. Be enthusiastic and thorough!
 - Make sure the families/girls know why you are fundraising. Tell them the Troop's goals and the importance of meeting those goals. Talk to the girls about the financial needs that your Troop may have.
 - Let the girls and their families know that your Troop treasury depends on successful fundraising.
 - If this fundraiser is also being used for your Troop's program support fee obligation to AHG, Inc., share with the girls that AHG, Inc. also depends on these monies to provide Troop and leader support, training, resource materials as well as program support that all members enjoy.
 - Review all product information so that they understand what they are selling. Providing samples to see, smell and/or taste is important. Don't be afraid to ask the company you are working with for samples.
 - The timeline of the fundraiser, especially any important deadlines.

- Remind girls of the procedure for turning in orders, money collected as well as delivery specifications. If products are to be delivered at a later date, a “receipt” with delivery date, contact number, first name of seller etc. should be provided to the customer.
- ✓ **Set Troop goals as well as individual goals for the girls.**
 - A prize order form should be provided to each girl showing the prizes that are available based on the number of items or the dollar amount sold.
 - For example, “if each girl sells fifteen units, we will have a sleepover or if each girl sells \$300, we will all go horseback riding for free!
 - Incentive prizes can be purchased or donated. Prize costs should be kept to a minimum when purchasing items.
 - The following are a few more examples you could use: Troop movie nights, AHG spirit wear and other gifts from the AHG Attic, Troop pizza party, fishing, bike riding, tickets to local museums/events/concerts, gift cards/cash, be a Troop activity leader for a day with the Troop Coordinator, a weekly prize for the top seller, a prize for the overall top seller in the Troop, etc. American Heritage Girl spirit wear and other gift items can be purchased through the AHG Attic at <http://store.ahgonline.org/>. You may also want to consider an AHG Attic gift certificate in various amounts for top sellers.
- ✓ **Describe incentives/prizes the girls will get for the efforts.** Make sure they understand what they’ll get out of their hard work, what they’ll get to do because of the money raised, what they’ll get to see and experience and how much fun they’ll have. Doing this will increase motivation and participation. Have specific goals for them so they know exactly what they will need to sell/earn to receive different prizes/incentives.
 - Describe incentives offered directly from the fundraising company you are working with. From patches to gift cards to other prizes – make sure they know exactly what is offered and how to earn them.
 - Describe incentives created by the Troop.
- ✓ **Publicize** your fundraiser and your goals so the community can help support your sale. Networking is crucial when raising money. Reach out through posters, radio stations, TV stations, newspapers, online, etc. Be sure to utilize AHG logos and program information in your marketing to educate the public about American Heritage Girls. Ask your Troop Coach and/or Abby Candles Fundraising for assistance.

Provide a Training Session During a Troop Meeting:

It is important to educate all the Troop members, leaders and families in order to have a successful fundraiser. Helping everyone understand the fundraising process allows everyone to be on the same page, have the same agenda and to work toward a common goal. It is also important to teach Troop members how to successfully fundraise so they are comfortable with the process, as well. Abby Candles Fundraising created three quick fundraising training videos available to aid in this. They can be accessed on AHG’s leader site.

1) AHG Fundraising: Tips from Top Sellers

- ★ AHG TN 1180 was the Top Selling Troop working with Abby Candles Fundraising for several years running, starting with the Troop’s very first fundraiser ever in fall 2011 and raising \$5,000-\$8,000 annually each subsequent year. The Top Selling Girl was also a member of this Troop for the first several years of their relationship with Abby Candles

and AHG. Hear tips from the Troop's fundraising coordinator, the top-selling girl and her mom in the video!

2) *AHG Fundraising: Troop Planning/Budgeting*

- ★ Watch a quick video about planning and budgeting that will help everyone understand what goes in to developing a successful fundraiser.

3) *AHG Fundraising: Learn How to Sell*

- ★ Have the Troop members watch this video to aid them in the selling experience.
- ★ Have the girls role play customer relations skills and sales techniques so they are comfortable speaking with potential customers. Emphasize the need for good manners while selling. The girl members will be representing American Heritage Girls while they sell and should reflect the attributes contained in our Creed. It is of utmost importance that the girls are courteous to their customers, whether they purchase items or not. Ask the company you are working with if they have these tools available to you.
- ★ Encourage the girls to wear AHG uniforms, spirit wear or membership pin. Identification with the organization, even an AHG cap or vest, will help the customer identify the salesgirl with the group. It may be beneficial for the girls to bring an informational brochure with them as they make their sales.

Suggested Sales Opportunities:

- Mom & Dad
- Grandmothers & Grandfathers
- Aunts & Uncles
- Godparents
- Close friends of the family
- Let your community help support your fundraiser:
 - Businesses in your area:
 - They can buy gifts for their employees or for key customers
 - Realtors can purchase products for their open houses/home listings
 - Insurance and/or bank representatives
 - Church family/friends and the pastor/preacher/minister/etc.
 - Friends on social media sites
 - The family's hair stylist/barber, doctor and dentist
 - The girls' teachers/coaches
 - Consider sales outside your Charter Organization, supermarket or special event.
- Out-of-town relatives (can purchase online & have products shipped to them)
- Parents' work associates
- Neighbors

Sharing Your Success

Many Troops find and implement successful fundraising activities. Share your success with others to help them find their own! Also, once you have found success and accomplished your goals, be sure to recognize the girls, parents/guardians, sponsors/charters, donors and any volunteers that made your success possible. Have Troop members write short "thank you" messages to each customer for their support and aid in helping the Troop meet their goals. Furthermore, if the leader in charge of the fundraiser will not be leading it the next year, pass along information to new leaders to ensure the Troop's fundraising success in subsequent years.

Health and Safety Considerations

- ✓ Review the age characteristics of girls to determine readiness and appropriateness for the proposed age groups.
- ✓ Identify AHG Health and Safety standards, policies and guidelines as well as federal, state and local codes that impact the conduct of the proposed activity.
- ✓ Identify the potential risks involved in conducting this activity.
- ✓ Encourage the girls to telephone relatives and friends regarding their sale. Visiting well-known neighbors is permissible, if the girl is accompanied by an adult or older sibling. Under no circumstances should a girl enter a stranger's house!
- ✓ All contracts must be reviewed and signed by your Chartering Organization Representative.

Questions?

If you have any questions about Troop fundraising, please contact Mara Clark with Abby Candles, 405-895-9957 or mara@abbycandles.com

AHG Preferred Fundraising Vendors:

Abby Candles Fundraising is a Preferred Fundraising Vendor for American Heritage Girls Troops. Abby has dedicated customer service reps that devote extra time and energy to help AHG Troops across the nation. Abby Candles is aligned with AHG's mission of "building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country." Not only can you raise money for your Troop and AHG as a whole, you have the opportunity to sell AHG-branded, quality products made (and sourced!) in the USA, who hold the same values as AHG and who have created a program specifically designed for the Troops. Contact Abby Candles Fundraising for more information!



Mara Clark, Abby Candles Fundraising
200 SE 19th Streer | Moore, OK 73160
Phone: 1-405-895-9957 | Fax: 1-405-895-9904
mara@abbycandles.com
www.abbycandles.com/ahg
www.facebook.com/AbbyCandlesFundraisingAHG

SMART Fundraising

S

Specific:

- Work together with the girls to figure out what things together would create a perfect, or ideal, AHG year
- Use the Troop budget to determine the costs of planned activities and other AHG expenses, such as registration, uniforms, patches, handbooks, etc.
- Avoid the “buyout” mentality, realizing that all funds have a useful purpose. Appreciate the importance of a fundraiser and the educational opportunity that it provides if all girls participate and work together as a team.

M

Measureable:

- Set goals at the Troop level and the individual girl level. Communicate the importance of meeting these goals and explain how they will help the Troop realize the “ideal” year they helped plan for.
- Set evaluation points ahead of time
- Create incentives/prizes at the Troop level and the individual girl level
- Determine how much you would need to sell of the product in order to meet your financial goals

A

Attainable:

- The fundraiser will be more successful if you find a leader to spearhead it who is organized, enthusiastic and will keep everyone focused and motivated.
- The easiest and fastest way to achieve the Troop’s financial goals is to get everyone involved: the girls, Troop leaders, parents/guardians, charter and community [Matthew 7:7 – “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”]
- Focus on performing one or two fundraisers really well instead of participating in three ineffective ones. Then recognize and thank your supporters when you do find success.

R

Realistic:

- Ask Abby Candles and/or other Troop leaders for ideas on how to find fundraising success and seek out Troop testimonials.
- Consider your potential sales opportunities/customers and how many products your Troop members would need to sell in order to successfully achieve their individual and Troop sales goals.

T

Timely:

- The majority of fundraising occurs in the fall/winter seasons and that is also when the biggest financial impact of fundraising will likely take place for the Troop.
- Consider the seasonality of products. Think about what holidays, events, etc. will be occurring around the time of your fundraiser. When selling Abby Candles products in the fall/winter seasons, market them as Christmas gifts! In the spring, market them as Mother’s Day and/or Easter gifts!
- Dedicate a Troop meeting to the fundraiser – make it fun, exciting and informative!
- Try to choose a 3-4 week time frame, if possible, to maintain momentum and enthusiasm within the Troop.

Fundraising Training Information Developed and Edited by:

Abby
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Preferred Fundraising Vendor!*

Questions? We’re happy to help! Contact us:
1-405-895-9957 | www.abbycandles.com/ahg | mara@abbycandles.com