



Unlocking Year-Round Fundraising Ideas



EDUCATION NONPROFITS

Introduction

Education organizations play a vital role in our society, addressing a wide range of humanitarian, social, and spiritual needs. Sustaining your impactful work requires substantial planning and fundraising efforts, engaging volunteer support, and soliciting donor contributions. One often-overlooked strategy is to align your appeals and agenda with the various holidays and observance days throughout the year. Doing so can maximize your efforts and create meaningful connections with your supporters.

Each season of the year presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Taking advantage of these seasonal shifts—tailoring holidays and observance days to meet the objectives of your mission and integrating them into your annual plans—can help you strategize effectively, engage your community, and optimize your fundraising efforts. And because [more than 70% of donors](#) say they are motivated by a personal connection to the cause, connecting stories with the theme of the observance day can also help boost your appeals.



Using this calendar



Before we delve into the list of holidays and observance days that might not already be on your calendar, here are some strategies to align these days with your mission.

1. Connect your cause to the holiday

Find the common ground between the holiday or observance day and your mission. Earth Day is a natural fit for environmental organizations. Still, other holidays, whether it's Mother's Day or a [random quirky holiday](#) like "Kid Inventors' Day" or "Make Your Dreams Come True Day," can be a fun excuse to reach out to your constituents. Highlight how your work relates to that date's values, themes, or causes.

2. Create themed campaigns

Develop specific fundraising or awareness campaigns tailored to the holiday. Craft compelling messaging that resonates with your audience's emotions and motivations.

3. Launch volunteer opportunities

Organize volunteer projects or service events related to the holiday's theme. Encourage your community to contribute their time and skills to make a difference.

4. Share impactful stories

[More than 70% of givers](#) say they are motivated by a personal connection to the cause. Take this opportunity to share stories about the individuals or communities your organization has positively impacted. Use these narratives to demonstrate the tangible outcomes of your work and how it aligns with the holiday's spirit.

5. Host educational events

Organize workshops, webinars, or seminars to celebrate or educate the public about issues or topics related to the holiday.

6. Empower advocacy

Encourage supporters to take action in a way that aligns with the holiday's goals. Provide resources and guidance to help them support the vision of your organization.

7. Launch targeted fundraising appeals

Clearly articulate how contributions will directly contribute to advancing your organization's mission. Your offer should be clear, specific, and tangible. For example, "Your \$100 gift will provide essential materials and resources for our arts programs, enabling students to explore their creativity."

8. Engage with your community on social media

Share stories, quotes, and visual content that resonate with your audience. Use relevant hashtags and encourage user-generated content.

9. Amplify the impact by collaborating with other education organizations

Partner with other nonprofits, community organizations, or local businesses to create a collective impact around the holiday. Joint efforts can expand your reach and engage more supporters.

10. Engage your donors

The greatest gift you can give your donors is the gift of being known by you. Show them the love on special holidays and celebrate milestones in their life like birthdays and anniversaries. Use these [important dates](#) to express appreciation for donors' ongoing support.

11. Introduce unique giving opportunities

Create time-limited giving opportunities, donation matching campaigns, or challenges specifically for the holiday. Encourage your supporters to contribute in celebration or honor of the occasion.

12. Follow-up and stewardship

After the holiday, continue to engage with those who participated in your activities or campaigns. Share updates on the impact of their efforts and contributions. Cultivate these relationships throughout the year.

By following this approach, your organization can effectively harness the power of holidays and observance days to build a sense of community, foster support, and advance your mission. Whether it's Read Across America Day, Arts in Education Week, or any other significant date, integrating these strategies into [your yearly calendar](#) can help you build long-lasting connections with your audience and drive positive change in your community.



Understanding seasonal impact

Educational organizations navigate through a unique rhythm dictated by the academic calendar, with each season offering a set of challenges and opportunities. Whether they operate within a calendar year, fiscal year, or school year, these periods can significantly influence their activities and strategies. The diverse calendar of holidays and observance days that follow provides a strategic framework for educational nonprofits like yours to enhance your impact, offering timely opportunities to engage with the community, launch fundraising campaigns, and amplify your mission.

By thoughtfully aligning your activities with these key times, you can tap into heightened periods of community interest and giving, like back-to-school excitement or the generosity of the holiday season. This strategic, seasonal approach not only keeps you closely connected with your supporters but also helps to maximize your fundraising efforts and make significant strides in achieving your educational objectives all year round.



New Year

Preparing for the year ahead

The new year is the time to build your foundation for the year ahead. It's a month to take stock of your achievements and challenges—past and future—and set the stage for the coming months. By analyzing past performance and acknowledging donors' generosity, you demonstrate transparency and accountability to your constituents.

JANUARY

New Year's Day | January 1

New Year's Day offers an opportunity for educational nonprofit organizations to emphasize new beginnings and the importance of setting academic goals. You can launch fundraising campaigns that align with New Year resolutions, encouraging donations towards new educational programs or resources. Host goal-setting workshops or webinars for students and parents at the start of the year to foster community involvement and support for educational initiatives. Kick off the year by celebrating the contributions of volunteers and encouraging their continued engagement.

Make Your Dreams Come True Day | January 13

This day encourages people of all ages to pursue their dreams, a principle deeply rooted in educational missions. Take advantage of this day to inspire students and the community by hosting workshops or speaker events featuring successful individuals from various fields. Fundraising activities could include dream-themed art contests or essay competitions, with entry fees or donations supporting educational programs.

Kid Inventors' Day | January 17

Kid Inventors' Day celebrates the creativity and ingenuity of young minds, aligning perfectly with educational nonprofits focused on STEM/STEAM programs. Host invention fairs or competitions to showcase student projects, offering a platform for innovation while encouraging donations or sponsorships to support STEM education initiatives.

International Day of Education | January 24

Celebrates education worldwide and highlights its importance as a fundamental human right. You can host webinars or panel discussions on the importance of access to education and launch social media campaigns to raise awareness and funds.

FEBRUARY

National School Counseling Week | First full week of February

Highlights school counselors' tremendous impact in helping students achieve school success. Host appreciation events or fundraisers to support school counseling programs.

Valentine's Day | February 14

Promote themes of love and kindness within the context of education. Organize Valentine-themed events, like card-making workshops for students to express gratitude towards teachers and peers, which can include a small donation component for educational supplies or programs. Or you can arrange fundraisers selling themed merchandise, like flowers, or heart-shaped cookies or chocolates to raise funds for educational projects. At the same time, volunteer-driven initiatives can strengthen community bonds and volunteer engagement, like reading love-themed stories to children at libraries or schools.

International Mother Language Day | February 21

Promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingual education. Your nonprofit can host cultural festivals or language workshops, raising funds for language preservation programs or multilingual education resources.

Digital Learning Day | Date varies

Celebrates the use of digital technology in learning. Organize online learning challenges, webinars on digital literacy, or fundraisers to provide digital devices to underprivileged students.

World Read Aloud Day | Date varies

Advocates for literacy as a right that belongs to everyone. Organize read-aloud events in schools or community centers and encourage donations for each book read.

Black History Month | February in the US and Canada

Honors the contributions and achievements of black Americans and the importance of black history education. Create educational content and curriculum materials, and host events celebrating black historical figures, encouraging donations to support educational equity.



Spring Mobilizing volunteers

Engaging volunteers not only strengthens their connection to your organization but can also lead to increased financial support as they become more deeply invested in the cause. This is especially true in the educational sector, where the passion for making a difference in students' lives can translate into significant support. A national study by the [Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund found that volunteers' donations average 10 times that of non-volunteers.](#)

By involving volunteers in various aspects of your operations, from tutoring and mentoring to event planning and fundraising, you create a community of advocates who are emotionally and financially invested in your mission to enrich education.

MARCH

Read Across America Day | March 2

Encourages children to read more. Partner with authors for readings, host book drives, and sponsor read-a-thons, encouraging students and community members to pledge reading time and helping to raise funds for new books and literacy initiatives.

International Women's Day | March 8

Underscores the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment within the educational sector. You can host events like seminars, panel discussions, and interactive workshops featuring female leaders and role models from various fields to inspire students and the broader community. Fundraising efforts could include campaigns that specifically support scholarships for girls or initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation in STEM fields. Boost community involvement by organizing community service projects focused on improving educational facilities for girls or running social media awareness campaigns.

Public Schools Week | Date varies

Highlights the importance of public schools. You can launch advocacy campaigns or fundraisers to support enrichment programs in public schools.

Women's History Month | March

Highlights the significant contributions of women to society and advocates for gender equality in education. Engage the community by hosting workshops, lectures, and discussions led by influential women, fostering inspiration and learning. Fundraising efforts might include selling themed merchandise or organizing pledge drives to support programs empowering young girls and women in education. You can also run contests focused on women's achievements to raise awareness and funds, encouraging community participation and volunteer involvement.

APRIL

International Children's Book Day | April 2

Promotes the enjoyment of books and reading. Organize book donation drives, distribute children's books to schools and libraries, arrange storytelling sessions to raise funds for literacy programs, or provide books for underserved communities.

STEM/STEAM Month | April

Focuses on education in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Host STEM workshops or competitions, with entry fees or donations supporting STEM education initiatives.

Environmental Education Week | Date varies

Encourages ecological learning and stewardship. Organize environmental clean-up projects, workshops on sustainability, or fundraising campaigns for outdoor educational spaces.

Global Action Week for Education | Date varies

Advocates for the importance of education and ensuring governments uphold their education commitments. Coordinate advocacy campaigns, public demonstrations, or social media blitzes to highlight the importance of universal education.

School Library Month | April

Highlights the critical role of libraries in fostering literacy and lifelong learning. Collaborate with local libraries to host book drives, author visits, and read-a-thons, encouraging community participation and raising funds for library resources and programs. Initiatives could also include workshops for digital literacy and research skills, enhancing students' educational experiences. Engaging volunteers in organizing these events or running special library projects can strengthen community ties and support for educational libraries.

Autism Awareness Month | April

Promotes understanding and inclusion for individuals with autism within educational systems and communities. Your organization can organize awareness campaigns, professional development workshops for educators on inclusive teaching strategies, and sensory-friendly learning events for students. Fundraising activities could support programs tailored to the needs of students with autism, like adaptive technology or specialized educational resources. Engaging the community through awareness walks or runs, and volunteer opportunities in support services for students with autism can foster a more inclusive educational environment.

Financial Literacy Month | April

Aims to teach individuals financial skills. Offer workshops on financial literacy, budgeting, and saving, and partner with financial institutions for matching donation campaigns.

MAY

Teacher Appreciation Week | First full week of May

Celebrates teachers and recognizes their contributions to education. Organize fundraising campaigns to supply classroom materials or sponsor professional development for teachers.

Mother's Day | Second Sunday in May

Mother's Day is an opportunity to honor the role of mothers in supporting education. You can organize events like mother-child tea parties or craft sessions, where participants can make donations in honor of their mothers. You can also run fundraising campaigns that offer the opportunity to sponsor a child's education as a gift to mothers, emphasizing the importance of education support.

Health and PE Week | Date varies

Promotes health and physical education in schools. Organize community sports events, health and wellness fairs, or fundraisers to improve physical education resources in schools.



Summer

Planning upcoming fundraising and back-to-school activities

Summer vacation vibes may be in the air, but there's an opportunity to take advantage of the lull and [do a mid-year check-in](#) to strategize and plan your fundraising efforts for the rest of the year. This time is crucial for planning back-to-school activities, which is a significant time for engagement and fundraising. Summer provides an excellent opportunity for education nonprofits to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and set clear objectives for the remainder of the year. By taking advantage of this quieter time, your organization can develop detailed plans for campaigns, events, and donor outreach that will enhance your impact and fundraising success in the busy months ahead.

JUNE

Father's Day | Third Sunday in June

Like Mother's Day, Father's Day enables educational organizations to acknowledge fathers' contributions to education. Hosting father-child activities, like building projects or science experiments, can foster community involvement and raise funds. You might also run campaigns encouraging donations to support father-involved educational programs or scholarships for students in need.

End of School Year | Date varies by location and school

Take advantage of this time to focus on achievements and transitions. Host award ceremonies or showcases for student projects, with entry fees or donations supporting next year's educational initiatives. You can also arrange a "thank you" event for teachers and volunteers, incorporating fundraising activities for school supplies or programs for the upcoming school year.

JULY

World Youth Skills Day | July 15

Emphasizes the importance of equipping young people with skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Organizations can hold skills workshops, career fairs, or sponsorships for vocational training programs.

AUGUST

Back to School Season | Date varies by location

Marks the start of the new academic year and is a crucial time for educational preparedness. Use this time to conduct school supply drives, offer back-to-school nights with educational resources, or initiate campaigns to fund school meal programs or technology for underserved students.



Autumn

Priming for end-of-year giving

Fall ushers in back-to-school season, a pivotal fundraising period for educational nonprofits. This time is ideal for engaging donors, as education is top of mind, and many are already planning their end-of-year giving. Your educational nonprofit can use this momentum to communicate your needs, whether it's funding for classroom supplies, scholarships, or program expansion. By strategically targeting fundraising efforts now, you can tap into the increased willingness of your supporters to contribute, ensuring you have the resources you need for the remainder of the year. This approach not only highlights the importance of education but also helps you secure a solid financial footing for future initiatives.

SEPTEMBER

International Literacy Day | September 8

Highlights the importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights. Launch literacy programs, book clubs, or fundraising drives to support literacy education.

Constitution Day | September 17

Offers an opportunity to deepen understanding of democratic principles and civic responsibility among students and the broader community. Your nonprofit can hold mock elections, debates, and workshops on constitutional rights and the importance of civic engagement, encouraging an informed and active citizenry. Fundraising activities could include sponsored civics contests or essay competitions on constitutional themes, with proceeds supporting civic education programs. Volunteer-led initiatives could involve creating educational materials or organizing Constitution Day events in schools, to engage the community in the significance of this foundational document.

National Literacy Month | September

Encourages improving literacy among children and adults. You can hold book fairs, literacy workshops, and pledge drives where donors contribute for every book read during the month.

Arts in Education Week | Date varies

Highlights the value of arts education. Organize art showcases, fundraisers to support school arts programs, or volunteer-led art workshops for students.

OCTOBER

World Teachers' Day | October 5

Acknowledges teachers' vital role in providing quality education. Schedule events to honor teachers, along with campaigns to fund classroom projects.

International Day of the Girl Child | October 11

Focuses on addressing the challenges girls face and promoting girls' empowerment. Hold fundraising drives for girls' education programs, and host panels on women's leadership or mentorship events.

National Book Month | October

Celebrates the importance of reading, writing, and literature. You can host book donation drives or sponsor essay contests with donations supporting literacy programs. Arrange a "Dress Up as Your Favorite Book Character Day," where students can dress up and bring the book featuring their character. Invite family to a parade around the school to see all the characters, with opportunities to contribute to school-sponsored literacy programs.





Year-End

Hosting gala and fundraising events

The year-end is often a festive time. Holiday services, pancake breakfasts, or other special events can generate excitement and funds. Significant funds. Year-end giving accounts for a substantial portion of annual revenue, often accounting for [more than 30% of total annual donations](#). Individuals motivated by the holiday spirit and tax incentives frequently drive this surge. Capitalize on this period to bolster your funding and ensure you have the resources you need for the new year. Be sure you have a clear plan in place to make the most of year-end giving.

NOVEMBER

International Volunteer Managers Day | November 5

Honors the skills and efforts of volunteer managers who are crucial in mobilizing and supporting the volunteer workforce in educational settings. Celebrate by hosting appreciation events for your volunteer managers, organizing professional development workshops, and launching social media campaigns to highlight the impact of their work.

#GivingTuesday | Tuesday following Thanksgiving

A global day of giving. Take advantage of this day to hold online fundraising campaigns, matching gift initiatives, or volunteer appreciation events to support your mission.

American Education Week | Date varies

Celebrates public education and honors individuals making a difference in ensuring every child receives a quality education. Host appreciation events for educators, advocacy campaigns for educational funding, or community forums on educational improvement.

DECEMBER

Winter Solstice | December 21 or 22, varies by year

Marks the start of winter, offering a backdrop for educational content related to astronomy, seasons, and cultural celebrations. Organize educational events or workshops that explore winter solstice traditions around the world, coupled with fundraising activities like bake sales, craft fairs, or a charity auction featuring winter-themed artwork by students.

Winter Holiday Celebrations | Dates vary

Take advantage of this time to promote generosity and support for educational causes. Host a gift-wrapping service, with proceeds going to educational programs. Organize a book or gift donations drive, with funds supporting literacy programs or providing educational resources to children in need.

New Year's Eve | December 31

Marks the end of the year; it's a time for reflection and setting goals for the future, including commitments to supporting education. Host a New Year's Eve gala or dinner event to fund educational initiatives. Launch a year-end giving campaign, encouraging donors to make their final tax-deductible contributions and support educational goals for the upcoming year.

By following the seasonal ebbs and flows, you can plan activities strategically and capitalize on each season’s unique opportunities. This ensures that you meet immediate needs while setting yourself up for long-term success in fulfilling your mission and making a meaningful impact.

Remember to choose holidays and occasions that align with your organization’s vision, as well as the needs of your community. Whether they’re major or minor holidays, these events provide opportunities to connect with your community, engage members and volunteers, and promote the work of your educational organization.



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@BloomerangTech

 
@Bloomerang

317.296.8100
9120 Otis Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46216