



The Penny Harvest Handbook

Question:

*What is on the back of the penny?
(No looking!)*

*Answer: The Lincoln Memorial
(If you look close enough you
might see Lincoln sitting inside.)*

"Every Penny Counts!"

Virtually everyone enjoys donating pennies. There's no question about it. The key thing is making sure people are informed about what you're doing. An expert fund-raising school teacher from New Jersey related the story where her school's penny harvest was so well-run and successful that the town was "drained" of pennies. "Our first fund-raising surge was so successful that there weren't any pennies left to collect," she exclaimed.

Here are three points to always bear in mind: (1) Every penny counts, and they add up quickly to sizable sums of money. Many efforts raise between \$1,000 and \$3,000. (2) Let as many people as possible know that you're raising funds using the penny. Individuals who don't know that a penny harvest is taking place can't give. So, ask people face-to-face; call people; write people; send announcements/flyers to local media, schools, businesses, churches, synagogues or wherever folks tend to congregate. People will give to causes that matter.

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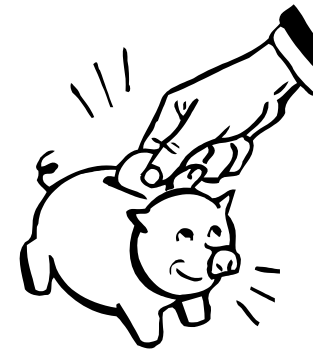


Question:

Since 1787, how many different penny designs have there been?

They want to make a difference in an organization they care about and find worthwhile. And yours does.

(3) We want you to *interact* with us! Give us your suggestions and input. Tell us your fundraising stories so we can make this handbook increasingly helpful to its users. This handbook is to be an evolving product.



Answer: 11



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**Pennies are made
of copper right?**

Wrong!

97.5% of a penny is made of ZINC. With the remaining 2.5% being copper. Pennies were originally 100% copper. In fact during the early 1790's Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere supplied some of the copper to make pennies. Since 1856 the amount of copper in the penny has been going down.

Collecting Your Pennies

How should fund-raisers collect their pennies? To our knowledge, there are many creative ways to collect and store pennies. A plastic milk jug, an old coffee can, or a reinforced cardboard box—just about anything is suitable for collecting your pennies. Milk containers, for instance, are very common and are easy to lift once full.

Other great ideas include using small decorative cardboard boxes. For example, the U.S. Committee for UNICEF has used orange cardboard containers during Halloween to solicit coin donations. Many people recognize the UNICEF containers and look forward to making their Halloween donation. Other popular containers are the 10-gallon blue water jugs, which reportedly hold over \$350 in pennies when full. We caution fund-raisers against using containers that are unreasonably heavy to lift. We suggest using containers that are light-weight and portable.



The most "expensive" penny is a rare one minted in 1793. Only four are known to exist today and their worth is estimated at more than \$275,000.

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Storing and Protecting Your Pennies

For the majority of penny harvests, the security issue does not have a huge price tag, save for a lock or two. Teachers have told us they store their pennies in locked classrooms at night. A teacher at Prices Fork Elementary School in Blacksburg, Virginia, informed us that a smart and common sense way for teachers to store pennies is in their homeroom classes. During the day, individuals are generally on hand to keep watch of the precious pennies; in the evening, it is recommended that teachers lock their classroom doors.

Fortunately, though, Americans for Common Cents has not heard of coin theft being a significant dilemma for fund-raisers. But this is no reason to let your guard down. Be smart and protect your pennies.



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Since it was first minted there have been 11 different penny designs. The penny we all know is the Lincoln penny. It was first minted in 1909 to commemorate Lincoln's 100th birthday.

In summary:

- Fund-raisers should collect and store their pennies in portable reinforced plastic containers.
- Once collected, fund-raisers should store pennies in a room or centralized location.
- Lastly, maintaining a strict accounting (perhaps weekly) of your penny totals is as important as safety and storage.



**An average of
1,040 pennies are
produced every
second, adding up
to 30 million a day!!**

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Counting Your Pennies

Overall, Americans for Common Cents has targeted three good options for counting and processing your pennies.

- **Rolling coins.** Almost everyone has counted and wrapped pennies at some point in his or her life. It is rather easy—but sometimes time-consuming. Paper wrappers can be obtained from financial institutions. Volunteers should be designated to count, wrap, and organize pennies each week. Fund-raisers should attempt to partner with a local bank to make sorting and counting much easier. Indeed, some banks may allow fund-raisers to use their bank sacks.

Work towards counting and sorting your coins each week. Don't be afraid to ask others to volunteer their help. Remember, you're holding a penny harvest for a good cause. People enjoy contributing their time to a worthy project.



There are over 130 billion one-cent coins currently in circulation.

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School vendor counting machines. We have learned that fund-raisers may be able to utilize vending services that contract with schools to supply sodas, candy bars, and other refreshments. Teachers, parents, or school administrators will have to establish these relationships. Vendors we have interviewed expressed a strong willingness to lend a hand. Some vending counting equipment is portable, some is not. If it is necessary to transport coins, it is recommended that teachers and students take coins to the vendor at an "off time." A Saturdays or late weekday afternoons are a good time to take the coins.

The benefits to using a vendor are significant. Compared to rolling, coins can be processed more quickly. Vendors can count, sort and provide a receipt indicating the numbers and types of coins collected. Vendors usually have relationships with local banks. And, vendors often have trucks that may be used to safely transport coins to financial institutions.



Since its beginning, the U.S. Mint has produced over 288.7 billion pennies. Lined up edge to edge, these pennies would circle the earth 137 times!

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- **Coinstar machines.** Fund-raisers can utilize a sizeable network of Coinstar machines, which are located nation-wide. The Coinstar network consists of self-service coin counting machines located at the front entrances of grocery stores. Coinstar machines count shoppers' accumulated coins and dispense a voucher that can be exchanged in the store for cash or groceries. They count up to 600 coins per minute. It is important to note that Coinstar machines charge approximately a 8 to 9 percent fee on the total of coins counted. The location of Coinstar machines can be researched through their web site, www.Coinstar.com.



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Over half of all coins produced by the U.S. Mint are pennies.



Getting the Public and Media Involved in Your Penny Harvest

Arguably, the best way to advertise a penny harvest campaign is by faxing or e-mailing a one-page press release to various journalists in your town or city. Fund-raisers who are new to penny drives may be surprised at how receptive journalists are to their cause. Penny harvests are human-interest stories which journalists love to add to their daily reporting. It is recommended that penny harvest press releases be followed-up with telephone calls.

Plus, writing a good "press release" lends itself to creating interesting flyers or announcements that entice people to donate to your cause. Place these flyers in as many public areas as possible, like churches, local businesses, and gyms.

The message here for penny fund-raisers is that there is a relationship between cultivating the media (e.g., TV, newspapers, radio) and increased voluntary giving.



Penny Facts

Q: Why does the portrait of Lincoln on the penny face to the right when all other circulating coins have presidents face to the left?

A: The likeness of Lincoln on the penny is an adaptation of a plaque by the outstanding sculptor Victor David Brenner. President Theodore Roosevelt was so impressed with Brenner's design that he recommended the portrait be placed on the penny to commemorate the Lincoln Centennial Year of 1909. The direction Lincoln faces was not mandated; it was simply the choice of the designer!

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Fund-raisers should not be shy about promoting their cause: The media wants you. So be persistent, because there is competition out there for people's pennies and other forms of money, cultivating strong media attention should be given strict attention.

Hold one or two special events during the penny harvest. Publicity and general awareness are perhaps the main benefits of a special event. The special event is an integral part of the overall penny harvest strategy. You call attention to your organization at a specific moment. Seeking publicity from the local media is a central ingredient to success, but favorable publicity can also come from those who attend.

Americans for Common Cents hopes that this handbook has given you some information to contribute to a successful penny harvest.

Please let us know how you do and if you would like to make any suggestions to the Penny Harvest Handbook by calling 1-800-561-7909.

Good luck raising those pennies!