

Writing a Successful Fundraising Plan and Fundraising Ideas



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Introduction

- Running an un-organized and un-planned fundraising operation is a recipe for stress, headaches and ultimately failure.
- No matter how small your organization is, your group needs a comprehensive, well-written plan.
- A written plan will allow you to focus your efforts and give you guidance and strategy

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The anatomy of a fundraising plan

We will cover....

- Who and when – Who will write the plan and when should you write it.
- Understanding your needs and goals
- Outlining your strategies for the year
- Listing your resources
- Study past fundraising
- Creating a path forward
- Creating a fundraising calendar

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Who and When

- **Start now** – if you are operating without a plan, it is worth your time to sit down for a week and write your plan.
- **Who should write your plan?** If you have development staff or a fundraising committee, they should write the plan in consultation with your charity's CEO or Executive Director. If you don't have the staff or the committee, it would be best for Executive Director or head person write the plan in consultation with your board of directors.

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1. Understand your needs and goals

- Goals are based on the needs of your organization and in theory match your mission. For example: Your fundraising goal may be to raise \$250,000, your mission is to feed 1,000 families.
- Goals should be **S.M.A.R.T.**, or specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

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What is **S.M.A.R.T**

- **Specific:** Be Clear about your goal. I.E. Raise \$10,000 for new building by December 31.
- **Measurable:** Every goal needs some kind of metric. Did you raise money, lose money, or break even?
- **Attainable:** Are your goals within reach if you put in the required work?
- **Relevant:** Who is benefiting from this goal and why is it important to your mission. I.E. A new building would mean shelter for an additional 75 dogs and cats.
- **Timely:** Deadlines keep everyone accountable.

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Calculating your fundraising need.

- Write down how much you expect to spend on **ALL** expenses
- Write down how much you are expecting to bring in from guaranteed, committed sources
- Calculate the total you need to raise by subtracting guaranteed income from your total expenses. This will give you the total you need to raise in other fundraising activities.

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Determining your financial need

Operating Budget	\$250,000
Government grants	\$25,000
Foundation grants	\$20,000
Pledges Committed	\$50,000
Total Income	\$95,000
Total need	\$155,000

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2. Outline your strategies and tactics

- **What tactics will you use to raise money?**
 - Individual Giving – Asking major donors to make gifts to your organization.
 - Major Donor Groups – May include board giving, a finance or development committee, etc.
 - Events – Both large and small.
 - Direct Mail
 - Telemarketing
 - Online and E-Giving
 - Grants– Foundations, Corporate, Government
 - Corporate Giving Programs

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2. What strategies will you use? What will you focus on?

Focus Area: Increase the number of donors

Goal: Increase the total number of donors by 5%

- **Strategy:** Organize one major fundraiser per quarter and one small fundraiser per month
- **Strategy:** Plan a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign
- **Strategy:** Use Facebook and Instagram ads to direct a targeted online audience to your fundraising website

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3. List your resources – Fundraising takes more than will, you also need a way

- How many staff people can devote time to fundraising and how much time?
- Do you have a volunteer base to help with fundraising?
- Are your board members required to fundraise on your behalf?
- What is your annual fundraising budget, including marketing costs?

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An Example of resources

Staff	Hours/Wk
Sarah M	15
Mark F	25
Volunteers (2)	2 volunteers x 5 hrs =10
Board Members (5)	5 board members x 3 hrs=15
Total # of Dedicated Fundraising Hrs/Wk	65
Total Fundraising Budget	\$55,000

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4. Study past fundraising trends. What has worked and hasn't worked in past fundraising efforts

CREATE A SPREADSHEET and create a complete list of all activities you organized in the past year.

- Note the expenses for each and how much you earned.
- Identify the estimated number of hours of staff and volunteers spend organizing and implementing the fundraiser
- Write down any pertinent information about each fundraiser, (ie. Donor reception, difficult to manage, payment issues, etc.)
- Remember to cover All Sources of income on this spreadsheet.

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Sources of Income

- All individual donations (including major gifts) procured by
 - Direct mail
 - Online fundraising
 - Special/in-person fundraisers
 - Phone solicitation
 - Membership fees
- Corporate sponsorships
- Company matches
- Grants
- Sale of items/raffles

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Which fundraisers would you want to do again?

Fundraiser	Expenses	Income	Staff/Volunteer Time	Notes
Recurring Giving Campaign	\$7,500	\$150,000	5/wk 260/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Direct Mail marketing costs • Good ROI
Feb. Valentine's Day Flower Sales	\$2,000	\$4,500	10/wk for 4 weeks 40/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase exposure • Market in local paper
March Direct Mail Campaign	\$1,500	\$22,000	20/wk for 3 weeks 60/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive response from returning donors

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5. Create a path forward – Make a list of fundraisers and when you want them to occur

- Be mindful of remaining strategic
- Use donor trends and knowledge of your donor base
- Specify details for each fundraiser

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Specify details for each fundraiser

- Fundraiser type and name
- Anticipated income
- Volunteer and staff time
- Marketing cost
- Other expenses
- Day/time
- Intended audience

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Detailed list example

Fundraiser – Giving Tuesday Peer-to Peer Fundraiser		
Audience – Online supporters and their networks		
When Nov. 1 – December 1	Estimated Expenses \$1,370 Staff Time: 40 hrs @ \$15/hr = \$600 Fundraising Software = \$320 Social Media Ads = \$250 Printing = \$200	Income Goal \$16,000
Additional notes Use CauseVox to power a peer-to peer fundraiser. Tap current donors and social media audience to promote the campaign and fundraiser		

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6. Create a fundraising calendar – Set timelines

- A calendar will give you a clear understanding of your timelines for each event
- Keeps you organized before, during and after each fundraising event

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6. Create a fundraising calendar – Set timelines

	Fundraising Activity	Costs	Staff Hours/Vol Number	Est. Income	Net Income	Results from 2018	Goal Alignment	Other Resources/Notes
Q1								
January	New donor survey	Staff: \$225 Printed and Facebook Posters: \$225 Staff: \$500 Postcard: \$100	15 hrs	\$0.00	-\$225.00		1, 4	Get feedback about communication preferences, social media use, interests
February	Major donor event	Staff: \$100 Materials: \$175 Event Space: 0 Food: \$500	40 hrs	\$10,000.00	\$8,300.00	2 major donors	2	Materials from current major donors/business relationships, recruitment party
March	Spring online crowdfunding campaign	Staff: \$475 Materials: \$175	20 hrs	\$0.00	-\$650.00		1, 4	Share 1-page snapshot of donor ROI, request from 2018
April	Donor appreciation event	Staff: \$150 Food: \$100 Staff: \$175 Facebook Ads: \$100	10 hrs	\$0.00	-\$325.00		1, 4	Use Crossover, market on social media, recruit supporters to share campaign
May	Recurring giving drive	Staff: \$450 Postcard: \$100 Materials: \$100	30 hrs	\$5,000.00	\$4,500.00	12 recurring donors	3, 4	Board members to make calls, 30 days
June								Work with marketing dept. Consider incorporating a recurring donor referral incentive
July								Secure a gift match for the month (ask Board)
August								Secure a gift match for the month (ask Board)
September								
October								
November								
December								

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Measuring the success of your fundraiser

- A crucial step in order to succeed
- Will help isolate and troubleshoot any ongoing problems
- Metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are analytical tools to continue to raise more funds

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Methods of measuring fundraising

- General fundraising metrics
- Giving level metrics
- Engagement metrics
- Online Metrics

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General Fundraising Metrics

- Cost per dollar raised
- Return on investment
- Donor retention rate
- Donor growth
- Conversion rate
- Gifts secured
- Matching gift rate

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Giving Level Metrics – Giving level metrics are used to help with acquisition and retention strategies

- Average gift size
- Average major gift size
- Average giving capacity of top donors

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Engagement Metrics – Donations start with engage prospects

- Frequency of contact with donors
- Fundraising participation rate
- Asks made

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Online performance metrics – your online presence and tactics deserve assessment as much as any of your activities.

- Same as general fundraising methods
- Click throughs and open rates
- Email opt-out rates

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Budgeting a fundraiser can help you plan and prepare for your event.

- Projecting Fundraising Income – setting estimated values can help you estimate projected income and set goals.
- Estimating and Recording Expenses – can help you during the planning stages and ensuring you stay within budget

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Questions to consider in projecting your income.

- Are you charging an admission fee?
- Do you intend to secure sponsorships?
- Are you hosting a charity auction or raffle?
- Do you intend on selling merchandise?
- Do you have access to volunteer help?
- Are you able to receive in-kind donations?

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Questions to consider in projecting your expenses.

- Does your event need a venue that costs?
- Will you be renting chairs, tables, etc.?
- Will you be paying staff, entertainers, etc.?
- How much will you spend on decorations?
- How much will you spend on promotion?
- Permits or event insurance?

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What is the best fundraising method for your organization?

- Determine your capacity as an organization
- Review performance metrics
- Create a sound plan to follow

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Online fundraising – the wave of the future

- What is online fundraising?
- Why is it important?
- Why does it work?

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What are the benefits of online fundraising for the nonprofit?

- Collect donations from anywhere
- Fundraise cost-effectively
- Capture more donor information
- Increase awareness and visibility of your organization

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How does online fundraising benefit donors?

- Give Easily
- Set up recurring donations
- Share donations

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Steps to take for online fundraising

- Assess your current situation
- Get approval from leadership and board of directors
- Select the right donation tool
- Promote your page to donors

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Best practices for online fundraising.

- Keep the form simple
- Use consistent branding
- Minimize required information
- Include an image
- Offer recurring donations
- Suggest different giving levels

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Strategies for promoting online fundraising

- Tell your organization's story
- Talk about one person who benefited from your program
- Be sure to include back-up data
- Make a fundraising pitch
- Show how donors can be a part of story.

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Online fundraising ideas

- Crowdfunding
- Peer to Peer Funding
- Online Giving Days
- Text-to-Give/Donate Campaign

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Traditional fundraising ideas

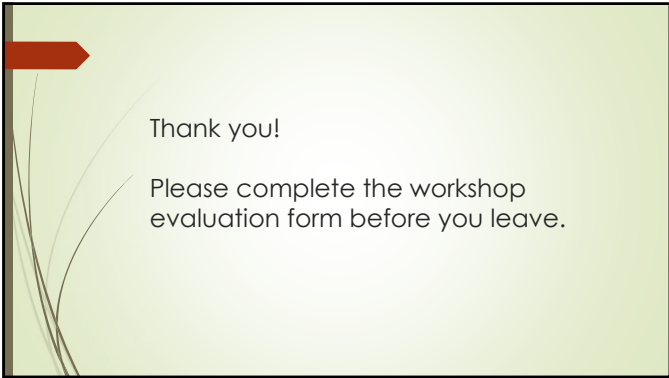
- Fun fundraising
- Team fundraising
- Other ideas

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Resource Page

- Free Donor Management Software
- Other resources

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Writing a Successful Fundraising Plan

Introduction:

Many non-profits, particularly smaller charities and start-ups operate without a fundraising plan. When there is an idea for an event or a campaign, these organizations simply put together a host committee or volunteer group and go for it. They may send out a letter occasionally or host some donor meetings but when the cash get low, they often go into “panic mode” and race to find cash to keep the doors open.

This is definitely not the best way to run a program. Even if the non-profit is flush with cash, running an unorganized and unplanned fundraising operation is a recipe for stress, headaches, and ultimately financial ruin.

The best way to avoid this fate is by having a written fundraising plan. No matter how small the church, school, or charity is, or how far along it is into its operation, the group needs a comprehensive, well-written fundraising plan. A written plan will allow the organization to focus its efforts, schedule the yearly [fundraising calendar](#) and give guidance on strategy and tactics when the group is in the thick of events, mailings, and calls. In short, the fundraising plan will keep some sanity in the insane day-to-day operation.

Your Plan: Who and When?

Typically, a development director should write the plan, in consultation with your charity’s CEO or Executive Director along with the board of directors. Small organizations may not have sufficient staff and might consider assistance from a qualified development consultant who specializes in writing fundraising plans.

The when is answered easily . . . NOW! If the organization is operating without a plan, it is best to take the time to write it. Ideally, a plan is written in 2, 3 or 5-year increments but updated annually as goals are revised or updated.

Anatomy of a Fundraising Plan

1. Understand your needs and goals.

The best starting point for your plan is with the end point in mind: What is your overall fundraising goal for this year and for the next four years. This goal should not be drawn out of thin air but are based on the needs of the organization. How much money will your organization need to raise in order to carry out your programs and activities?

The goals should be S.M.A.R.T. So what is SMART?

- **Specific:** Be Clear about your goal. I.E. Raise \$10,000 for new building by December 31.
- **Measurable:** Every goal needs some kind of metric. Did you raise money, lose money, or break even?
- **Attainable:** Are your goals within reach if you put in the required work?
- **Relevant:** Who is benefiting from this goal and why is it important to your mission. I.E. A new building would mean shelter for an additional 75 dogs and cats.
- **Timely:** Deadlines keep everyone accountable.

While a fundraising goal may be to raise \$250,000, the organization's mission is to feed 1,000 families. If the goal answers the question, "How much money do you need?" then the mission answers the question, "Why do you need it?" So when creating your goal you need to know:

Your organization's mission

What do you plan to do with the money you raise?

What is your operating budget, and what is the basis for the amount?

To calculate your fundraising needs you need to look at your operating budget and;

1. Determine and understand the expenses (administrative, programming, fundraising) of the organization.
2. Identify the known sources of revenue (Campaign pledges, government grants, private grants, foundations)
3. Calculate the total needed to be raised by subtracting the known sources of income (#2) from the total expenses (#1). These differences will determine what needs to be raised in other types of fundraising activity during the year or years.

For example, if the total operating budget is \$250,000 and you have \$25,000 in government grants, \$20,000 in foundation grants, and another \$50,000 in pledges already committed, the organization must raise an additional \$155,500 through other fundraisers.

Operating Budget	\$250,000
Government Grants	-\$25,000
Foundation Grants	-\$20,000
Total additional fundraising needed	-\$155,000

By starting with the need and working down to the goal, there will be a greater understanding of what needs to be accomplished to be successful.

2. Outline the strategies and tactics

Once you know how much you need to raise and why you need to raise it, you need to figure out how you are going to raise the full amount. What tactics will you use to raise your goal amount this year and in the following years. Go into detail here and figure a goal for each of the tactics that adds up to your total goal.

For example, if you need to raise \$155,000 as we determined in the previous slide. You may say that you will raise \$50,000 through donor sponsors, \$30,000 from a major event, \$25,000 from grants, \$15,000 from online and e-giving, \$30,000 from four quarterly small fundraising events.

Some common tactics include:

1. Individual Giving – Asking major donors to make gifts to your organization.
2. Major Donor Groups – May include board giving, a finance or development committee, etc.
3. Events – Both large and small.
4. Direct Mail
5. Telemarketing
6. Online and E-Giving
7. Grants – Foundations, Corporate, Government
8. Corporate Giving Programs

You will also need to outline your strategies: What do you want to focus on in order to meet your fiscal needs and to support your tactics.

For example, the organization may want to increase the number of donors it has. Create strategic goals and track metrics around the following benchmarks.

- Increase total number of donors
- Increase donor retention rates
- Increase average donation size

Set up individual goals behind each strategy. The finished product should look like this:

Goal: Increase the total number of donors by 5%

- Strategy: Organize one major fundraiser per quarter and one small fundraiser per month.
- Strategy: Plan a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign
- Strategy: Use Facebook and Instagram ads to direct a targeted online audience to the fundraising website.

Goal: Increase the average donation size by 2%

- Strategy: Create giving levels and incorporate into all online fundraisers
- Strategy: Ask returning donors to increase gifts
- Strategy: Target one-time donors for a recurring giving campaign

3. List Your Resources

Listing the resources in a clear, organized manner can help the organization go about raising the funds needed. This is your infrastructure for fundraising. What do you currently have in place for fundraising and what do you anticipate you will need in the coming years.

For starters, answer these questions:

- How many staff people can devote their time to fundraising?
 - How much time can they devote each week?
- Is there a volunteer base to help with fundraising tasks?
 - If so, how many hours per week total for all volunteers?
- Are the board members required to fundraise on behalf of the organization?
 - If so, how many hours per week are they expected to engage?
- What is the annual fundraising budget, including marketing costs?

Then, organize the findings using this checklist on a spreadsheet or table similar to the one provided below:

- List each staff person and the amount of time they can devote per week
- Write down the average number of volunteers and their anticipated weekly commitment
- Outline your annual fundraising budget, including staff time, fundraising, and other expenses

Staff	Hours per week
Sarah M.	15
Mark F.	25
Volunteers (2)	2 volunteers x 5 hours = 10
Board Members (5)	5 board members x 3 hours = 15
Total Fundraising Hours per week	65
Total Fundraising Budget	\$55,000

Once you have an idea of your infrastructure you have in place you can determine whether you will need additional staff, volunteers, what will need to be upgraded or replaced and what additional costs can you anticipate.

4. Study Past Fundraising Trends

The best way to grow your resources is to understand what has worked (and hasn't worked) in past fundraising efforts. If you don't know where you are, how will you understand where to go?

Again, prepare a spreadsheet and create a complete list of all fundraising activities that have been organized in the past year, as well as any other sources of income.

- Note the expenses for each and how much was earned.
- Identify the estimated number of hours staff and volunteers spend organizing and implementing the fundraiser
- Write down any pertinent information about each fundraiser (ie. donor reception, difficult to manage, payment issues, etc.)

Remember to cover ALL sources of income on this spreadsheet. This exhaustive list should include:

- All individual donations (including major gifts) procured by:
Direct mail, Online fundraising, Special/in-person fundraisers, Phone solicitations, Membership fees, etc.
- Corporate sponsorships
- Company matches
- Grants
- Sale of items/services

Fundraiser	Expenses	Income	Staff/Volunteer Time	Notes
Recurring Giving Campaign	7,500	150,000	5/wk 260/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High direct mail costs ▪ Good ROI
Valentine's Day Flower Sale	2,000	4,500	10/wk for 4 weeks 40/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increases exposure ▪ Market in local paper
March Direct Mail Campaign	1,500	22,000	20/wk for 3 weeks 60/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discount provided from XYZ Printing ▪ Positive response from returning donors
City Grant	200	5,000	6/wk for 1 week 6/annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can count on this annually ▪ Report back in July

Now, take a good look at this spreadsheet. Highlight the fundraisers expected to bring similar results. Mark those that the organization wants to do again, and cross out anything that wasn't worth the time or had a low return on investment (ROI).

5. Create A Path Forward

For starters, make a list of all the fundraisers and when they should occur. Remain strategic using donor trends and knowledge of your donor base to outline the annual plan. As an example, if it is known that donors aren't as likely to attend an event in the summer months, focus on an online campaign at this time. Specify details for each fundraiser including:

- Fundraiser type and name
- Anticipated income
- Staff and volunteer time
- Marketing costs
- Other expenses
- Day/time
- Intended audience
- Any other notes

A detailed list will look something like this for every fundraising event/effort

Fundraiser Giving Tuesday Peer-to-Peer Fundraiser		
Audience Online supporters and their networks		
When November 1-31	Estimated Expenses \$1,370 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff Time: 40 hours at \$15= \$600 ▪ Fundraising software: 2%=\$320 ▪ Social media ads: \$250 ▪ Printing: \$200 	Income Goal \$16,000
Additional Notes Use CauseVox to power a peer-to-peer fundraiser. Tap current donors and social media audience to promote the campaign.		

During this step, be sure to plan enough activities to cover your budgetary needs and be mindful of overstretching your current resources.

Fundraising Calendar

While many nonprofits and charities use everyday calendars to organize annual fundraisers, a detailed spreadsheet can work wonders in keeping you organized before, during, and after each fundraising activity.

Sample Fundraising Calendar (Template) is in your Binder.

2019 Fundraising Calendar - AdventureFund

	Fundraising Activity	Costs	Staff Hours/Vol Needed	Est. Income	Net Income	Results from 2018	Goal Alignment	Other Resources/Notes
Q1								
January	New donor survey	Staff: \$225 Prize: \$100, Staff \$225, Marketing, \$100	15/No	\$0.00	-\$225.00		1, 4	Get feedback about communication preferences, social media use, interests.
	Pinterest and Facebook Contest		15/No	\$0.00	-\$425.00	108 FB, 29 Insta	1, 4, 5, 6	Cross promote in eNewsletter, hold a contest for Pinterest engagement, raffle a Kindle.
February	Major donor recruitment	Staff: \$600 Postage: \$100 Materials: \$200 Event Space: 0 Food: \$800	40/Yes	\$10,000.00	\$8,300.00	3 major donors	2	Referrals from current major donors/business relationships, recruitment party
	Mail/email 2016 Impact	Staff: \$300 Postage: \$100 Materials: \$175	20/No	-	-\$575.00		1, 4	Share 1-page snapshot of donor ROI, impact from 2016
	Spring online crowdfunding campaign	Staff: \$675 Fees: \$400	45/Yes	\$20,000.00	\$18,925.00	\$18,500	2, 4, 5, 6	Use CauseVox, market on social media, recruit supporters to share campaign
Q2								
April	Donor appreciation phone calls	Staff: \$150	10/Yes	\$0.00	-\$150.00	-	1, 4	Board members to make calls. 20 hours
	Promote recurring giving in eNewsletter and social media	Staff: \$75 Facebook Ads: \$100	5/Yes	\$2,000.00	\$1,825.00		3	Work with marketing dept. Consider incorporating a recurring donor referral incentive
May	Recurring giving email campaign	Staff: \$450	30/No	\$5,000.00	\$4,550.00	12 recurring donors	3, 1	Secure a gift match for the month (ask Board)
June	Recurring giving direct mail campaign	Staff: \$450 Postage: \$100 Materials \$250	30/Yes	\$5,000.00	\$4,200.00	10 recurring donors	3, 1	Secure a gift match for the month. (ask Board)
Q3								

July	Pool Party Fundraiser	Staff: \$600 Space: \$0 Prizes/Games: \$150 Marketing Materials: \$150	40/Yes	\$5,000.00	\$4,100.00	\$5,200.00	1, 4	Pool @YMCA reserved as of 12/13/16, ice cream donated, start advertising last week of school
August	Back to School Supply Drive	Staff: \$600 Marketing: \$100	40/Yes	-	-\$700.00	\$5,000 worth of supplies	4, 5	Recruit volunteers to assist with supply pick up and drop off. Work with businesses to increase scope.
September	One-Day Social Media Fundraising Blitz	Staff: \$150 Facebook/Insta Ads: \$200	10/Yes	\$10,000.00	\$9,650.00	\$8,000.00	5, 6	Increase in Twitter followers, so focus here
	Donor mid-year impact update	Staff: \$150 Materials: \$200 Postage \$100	10/No	-	-\$450.00			
Q4								
October	Donor appreciation letters	Staff: \$225 Materials \$200 Postage \$50	15/Yes	-	-\$475.00	-	1, 4	Volunteers/board to help handwrite letters to every donor giving \$1+
November	#GivingTuesday peer-to-peer fundraiser	Staff \$375 Fees \$200	25/Yes	\$10,000.00	\$9,425.00	\$42,540.00	2, 4, 5, 6	Use CausesVox, begin recruiting fundraisers early Nov, update last year's toolkit
December	Year-End email and social media appeal	Staff: \$525 Social media ads: \$250	35/Yes	\$60,000.00	\$59,225.00	\$55,600.00	1, 4, 5	Frequency, wk 1- 1, wk 2-1, wk 3-2, wk 4-3. Have volunteers respond/share on social media
Total						\$117,200.00		

20__ SMART Fundraising Goals - [input your nonprofit's name]

Overall Fundraising Goal: [input your primary goal for fundraising and development this year]

STRATEGY FOCUS [input the key thing you'll focus on to do this]		TARGETS
FOCUS AREAS	OBSTACLES	
Key Focus Area #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activity #1- Activity #2- Activity #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Barrier #1- Barrier #2- Barrier #3	Primary Goal <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secondary goal #1- Secondary goal #2- Secondary goal #3
Key Focus Area #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activity #1- Activity #2- Activity #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Barrier #1- Barrier #2- Barrier #3	Primary Goal <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secondary goal #1- Secondary goal #2- Secondary goal #3
Key Focus Area #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activity #1- Activity #2- Activity #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Barrier #1- Barrier #2- Barrier #3	Primary Goal <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secondary goal #1- Secondary goal #2- Secondary goal #3

20__ Fundraising Calendar - [input your nonprofit's name]

	Fundraising Activity	Costs	Staff Hours/Vol Needed	Est. Income	Net Income	Results from 2016	Goal Alignment	Other Resources/Notes
Q1								
January								
February								
March								
Q2								
April								
May								
June								
Q3								
July								
August								
September								
Q4								
October								
November								
December								
Total					\$0.00			

Measuring the success of your fundraiser.

Measuring your performance is a crucial step that nonprofits must take to succeed. This measuring of performance will help isolate and troubleshoot any ongoing problems. These metrics, often referred to as key performance indicators (KPIs), are the analytical tools nonprofits need to continue to raising more funds. There is no shortage of methods of measuring fundraising, these include:

1. General fundraising metrics
2. Giving level metrics
3. Engagement metrics
4. Online metrics

GENERAL FUNDRAISING METRICS:

These are the metrics most organizations are tracking and give a picture of the fundraising success and can point the nonprofit in the direction it needs to go. Remember it is important to have accurate and complete information on donors.

1. Cost per dollar raised (CPDR). CPDR answers the very simple question – Did the event raise money, lose money or break even. To determine cost per dollar raised, divide the expense by revenue for the given fundraiser that is being examined (event, direct mail appeal, etc.).

For example: An event that XYZ nonprofit held cost \$500 and raised \$2,000. Just looking at the dollar amounts, it can be seen that the fundraiser made money but see the exact cost analysis divide the cost by amount raised.

$$\$500/\$2,000 = .25$$

In this instance, for every dollar XYZ raised it cost the nonprofit \$0.25.

2. Fundraising return on investment (ROI)

Fundraising return on investment is another popular metric. To determine this metric revenue is divided by expense. Once the two amounts are divided, a number greater than one indicates that money was raised.

CPDR and ROI both provide identical information. If cost cutting is a priority, utilizing CPDR would be the preferred method to determining the cost per dollar raised; whereas, ROI is a great indicator of the effects of making strategic changes to increase revenue.

3. Donor Retention Rate

It is important to track how many donors the nonprofit retains on a year-over-year basis. Cultivating donors is a time-intensive process. Maintaining donors through retention is just as essential as acquiring new donors. Your acquisition and retention rates should be improving concurrently.

Tracking your retention rate can reveal a lot about a nonprofit performance, including

- How a nonprofit should prioritize communication with supporters.
- Is the organization acknowledging donors in a thoughtful and immediate fashion.
- The ease in which donors are able to give via various donation methods.

If you have an undesirable rate for donor retention, the nonprofit may want to look at its practices by evaluating its acknowledgment process, follow-ups with donors and continued communications.

4. Donor Growth

Measuring donor growth ensures that the nonprofit is paying attention to its overall performance and allows the nonprofit to address concerns early and quickly.

5. Conversion Rate

Measuring conversion rates can help a nonprofit organization better understand their supporters' giving preferences as well as the relative success of each outreach method. In order to determine conversion rate, a goal action is needed and a list of donors the nonprofit would like to complete that action. The goal action could be anything from attending an event, responding to a direct mail letter and the most common goal action involves donations.

The rate will investigate how many prospects donated to a specific campaign or took an action as a result of a specific request. To determine the rate, divide the number of people who completed the goal action by the number of people who were given an opportunity to do so. Multiply by 100 to get a percentage.

Example: XYZ nonprofit sent out an email to 100 donors asking them to follow a link and make a donation online. Of those 100, 30 followed the link and used the nonprofits online giving page or tool to complete their donations. In this example the conversion rate was 30 percent.

6. Gifts Secured

Tracking gifts secured over time is another way of tracking donation growth. Gifts can be separated by type:

- Major giving
- Planned giving
- Mid-level gifts
- Annual fund donations
- Monthly donations

The more in-depth for determining the kinds of gift-giving the better the nonprofit can adjust and plan for the future.

7. Matching Gift Rate

Tracking the percentage of contributions matched through corporate philanthropy or employee matching gift programs is an easy way to identify areas for growth. According to Double the Donation, an estimated \$4-7 Billion in corporate donations goes unclaimed every year. Determine how many donors already take advantage of matching gift programs and then start promoting them to the rest of your donor base. 1 in 3 donors indicate they'd give a larger gift if matching is applied to their donation.

Giving Level Metrics

The top nonprofits use giving levels to their advantage. Giving levels are used to help inform their acquisition and retention strategies while active seeking upgrade opportunities. Three key performance indicators for this type of metric are:

1. Average Gift Size
2. Average Major Gift Size
3. Average Giving Capacity of Top Donors

8. Average gift size

To calculate average gift size, divide the revenue for a certain fundraiser or time period by the amount of gifts you received in that same window. Average gift size is a metric best used when tracked on a recurring basis. This will allow the nonprofit to see if the gift size is growing, stagnating or decreasing

Methods to measure the average gift size:

- At the same event year-over-year
- At all events for the year (or multiple years) and figure which events draw the largest donations.
- Over a repeated, fixed time frame (like six months or a year) and track general changes.

Average gift size can be a big help in evaluating the success of major gift efforts.

9. Average major gift size

Exactly the same method as measuring the average gift size but exclusively for major gifts.

10. Average giving capacity (of top donors)

The best way to avoid “Leaving money on the table.” is to know the prospect’s giving capacity which can be determined through an investigation into three categories:

1. Connection to your cause
2. Philanthropic propensity or focus
3. Wealth markers

Once donors’ giving capacities are known, this metric comes into play.

Engagement Metrics

Donations start with engaged prospects. Utilize the following metrics to determine donor engagement:

1. Frequency of contact with donors
2. Fundraising participation rates
3. Asks made

11. Frequency of contact with donors

As long as the nonprofit keeps records of donor- staff interactions in its database it will be able to determine the frequency of contact. A common concern among fundraising entities surrounds how much is too much (or too little) contact. The nonprofit will have to build relationships with its donors in order to find the “Sweet Spot” for contact.

A good place to start is by looking at what has been done to date, i.e. how often are donors contacted. Once that number has been determined, the nonprofit will need to look at its conversion rates.

Does reaching out to one kind of donor more than another yield a better conversion rate, return on investment or cost per dollar rate.

The types of contacts to be tracked are:

Phone calls

Discussions at events
Meeting
Emails

Data like this and how the nonprofit uses it can be crucial to keeping their donors engaged, finding the right campaigns for them to donate to and staying up with what these donors want from the nonprofit.

12. Fundraising participation rate

As peer-to-peer fundraising and various iterations of “a-thons” grow, fundraising participation rate is more important to track than ever before. With this performance indicator, nonprofits can track how many of the event participants raised funds for them.

For example, a participant of XYZ nonprofit’s road race who paid an entry fee is not a fundraiser., However, if that same participant gathered pledges in addition to the entry fee, they are a fundraiser. Event attendees who donate and double as fundraisers are assets. Examining this rate can tell an organization if it is missing out on the opportunity.

13. Asks made

Asks made is as straightforward as it seems. How many asks is the organization making and are they being tracked.

Online performance metrics

The internet is the new frontier of fundraising. An organization’s on presence and tactics need to be assessed. Online giving is the way of the future and nonprofits need to become more proficient in online giving. Metrics for online giving are much the same as traditional fundraising methods such as gift giving percentages and conversion rates. Other metrics specific to online giving would be click throughs and open rates as well as email opt-out rates. Looking at these rates will help an organization determine the best day and time of day to send emails.

How to budget for a fundraiser

A fundraising event budget can help you plan and prepare for an upcoming event by anticipating income and expenses. Whether you are hosting a walk-a-thon, gala, charity auction or other fundraising event, financial tracking and planning is one key ingredient to making your fundraising event a success. Please refer to the templates provided in your materials.

Projecting Fundraising Income

Setting estimated values for incoming revenue from ticket sales, sponsorships, online donations and product sales can help you estimate projected income and establish financial goals for your fundraising event. Once your goals are set, you can continually monitor your progress and identify any shortcomings. This is a critical step, as you cannot measure the success of your fundraising efforts without establishing these goals in advance of your campaign. If you have hosted this event or a similar event in the past, this job will be easier. Look to your previous events and determine how you can raise more, as well as a realistic (but optimistic) idea of how much more you can raise.

If you have earned less than projected in sponsorship dollars, perhaps you can rethink the sponsorship levels you are offering. What about the benefits – are sponsors seeing the value in your offering? Monitoring incoming donations is easily done on your fundraising website. Your organization sets a fundraising goal and then automatically tracks this progress as donations come in with a fundraising thermometer and other macros. If your organization seems to be falling short of reaching your goal, you can do last minute appeals via email and Social Media to your constituents informing them of the gap and need for funds, helping to rally last minute donations.

Here are questions to consider in projecting your fundraising income:

- Are you charging an admission fee for your fundraising event? If so, estimate the number of event attendees and the amount you intend to raise from ticket sales.
- Do you intend to secure sponsorships from local businesses?
- Do you plan to host a charity auction or fundraising raffle as part of your event?
- Will you sell fundraising merchandise (i.e. fundraising t-shirts, hats, golf balls)?
- Do you have access to volunteers who can help minimize staffing fees?
- Are you able to receive any in-kind donations or services to help you save money?

Estimating and Recording Expenses

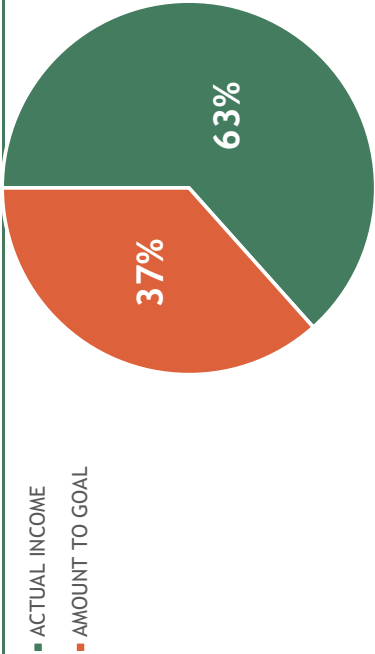
Similarly, estimating expenses can help you during the planning stages to ensure you are staying within your budget, and not spending too much time or money on any specific initiative. But with expenses, surprises always come up! Be sure to update your expenses as your event progresses. This fundraising event budget is pre-populated with examples of items you may want to include such as:

venue rental, marketing expenses, food and beverages, entertainers, prizes and event fundraising software.

Below are some questions you'll want to ask when putting together your fundraising budget expenses:

- Are you hosting your fundraiser at a venue that costs money?
- Will you be renting tents, tables, chairs, microphones, etc?
- Will you be paying staff, vendors, caterers, and entertainers?
- How much will you spend on decorations?
- Do you intend to spend money on event promotion (ads, posters, etc.)?
- Do you plan to purchase fundraising event software to help you manage the event and accept online donations?
- Does your event require permits or event insurance?
- Will you have other general expenses such as postage, printing fees, or other?

FUNDRAISER EVENT NAME



EVENT GOAL

\$5,000.00

TOTAL INCOME	\$3,400.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$230.00
ACTUAL INCOME	\$3,170.00
AMOUNT TO GOAL	\$1,830.00

AMOUNT COLLECTED BY NAME		AMOUNT EXPENDED BY NAME	
COLLECTED BY		SOURCE	EXPENDED BY
Name 1		Advertising	Name 2
Name 10		Supplies	Name 5
Name 2		Vehicle Rental	Name 6
Name 3			Name 7

DATE	(All)	
COLLECTED BY	Income Amount	
Name 1	\$450.00	
Name 2	\$50.00	
Name 3	\$150.00	
Name 8	\$550.00	
Name 5	\$75.00	
Name 4	\$725.00	
Name 7	\$775.00	
Name 6	\$350.00	
Name 9	\$150.00	
Name 10	\$125.00	
Grand Total	\$3,400.00	

DATE	(All)	
EXPENDED BY	Expenditure Amount	
Name 6	\$115.00	
Name 7	\$45.50	
Name 2	\$50.00	
Name 5	\$19.50	
Grand Total	\$230.00	

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

EXPENSES			
SOURCE	AMOUNT	DATE	EXPENSED BY
Vehicle Rental	\$115.00	6/1/2025	Name 6
Supplies	\$45.50	6/2/2025	Name 7
Supplies	\$50.00	6/1/2025	Name 2
Advertising	\$19.50	6/1/2025	Name 5

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE			
SOURCE	AMOUNT	DATE	COLLECTED BY
Raffle Tickets	\$250.00	6/1/2025	Name 1
Cash Donation	\$50.00	6/1/2025	Name 2
Anonymous Donation	\$150.00	6/2/2025	Name 3
Silent Auction	\$550.00	6/3/2025	Name 8
Goods/Services Sold	\$75.00	6/3/2025	Name 5
Cash Donation	\$200.00	6/4/2025	Name 1
Anonymous Donation	\$500.00	6/5/2025	Name 4
Silent Auction	\$775.00	6/6/2025	Name 7
Goods/Services Sold	\$350.00	6/8/2025	Name 6
Raffle Tickets	\$225.00	6/9/2025	Name 4
Raffle Tickets	\$150.00	6/11/2025	Name 9
Raffle Tickets	\$125.00	6/11/2025	Name 10

LISTS

REVENUE

EXPENDITURE

INCOME ITEMS	
	Column1
Raffle Tickets	
Entry Fees	
Cash Donation	
Donated Silent Auction Items	
Goods/Services Sold	
Anonymous Donation	
Silent Auction	

LISTS

EXPENDITURE ITEMS

Managing Volunteers
Feeding Volunteers
Facility Rental
Supplies
Sales Tax
Insurance
Business License
Cost of Goods Sold
Vehicle Rental
Postage
Printed Materials
Advertising
Goods or Services

What is the best fundraising method for your organization?

You will need to determine your capacity as an organization and develop a good plan.

ONLINE FUNDRAISING

What is online fundraising?

Online fundraising is a way for nonprofit organizations to raise money via the internet. It usually involves an online donation page and can include mobile giving, peer-to-peer fundraising, and more.

Why is online fundraising Important?

Online fundraising allows donors to give quickly, easily, and securely. Nonprofits are able to collect donations from across the country and around the world.

Why does online fundraising work?

Nearly everyone has access to the internet in one way or another. With online fundraising, nonprofits can meet donors where they already are.

Benefits of online fundraising

FOR NONPROFITS

1. Collect Donations from anywhere. As long as donors have internet access and the link to your donation page, they can give to your nonprofit's cause.

2. Fund raise cost-effectively. Online fundraising is one of the most cost-effective ways to raise money from donors. Your donation page provider will likely collect a percentage of each donation or charge a flat fee per contribution. **Either way, the costs are minimal compared to other fundraising methods.**

3. Capture more donor information. When your nonprofit uses online fundraising, you're able to capture different types of information from your loyal supporters. **Your nonprofit can have access to billing addresses, email addresses, and more when you employ online giving.**

4. Online giving increases awareness of and visibility for your organization. Online fundraising gets the word out about your nonprofit and your cause. By encouraging donors to give online, you direct them to your website where they can find even more info.

FOR DONORS

Give Easily. Donors want to be able to give to your organization as easily as possible.

Set up Recurring Donations. In the past, donors who wanted to give to your organization on a regular basis had to mail in a check every month or year. With online giving, donors can easily set up recurring donations that are automatically made on a regular basis.

Share Donation Information. Donors who want to help your organization get the word out about your cause can easily do so with online fundraising. With social sharing, donors can demonstrate their support for your cause and encourage others to donate online.

Steps to take for online fundraising.

1. Assess your current situation. Make sure that you take a long and hard look at your existing fundraising strategies to determine how online fundraising fits in.

2. Get approval from leadership and/or board. You'll likely need to obtain permission or approval from members of your leadership team or your board of directors. If this is the case, you'll need to present a convincing case to them to demonstrate that online fundraising is the way to go for your organization.

3. Select the right donation tool. Once you have the green light from your leadership, it's time to select the perfect online donation tool. Selecting an online donation tool is a process that requires input from many departments and, in some cases, even your donors.

You'll need to consider:

- Fees and costs
- Setup and maintenance procedures
- Integration with your current software
- Scalability options
- And more

In your packet is a list of nonprofit donor management software companies.

4. Promote the page to your donors. Now that you've selected an online fundraising tool and set up a donation page, it's time to promote it to your donors!

The most obvious ways to get the word out about your online fundraising options are:

- Emails
- Social media
- On your website

However, you can also use more traditional routes, such as:

- Direct mail
- Public advertisements

Best practices for online fundraising

Keep the form simple: The more straightforward your online fundraising form is, the higher your donation page conversion rate will be. This metric measures the percentage of people who complete the donation process. Don't overcomplicate your donation page with unnecessary links, text, or images. **Donors should be able to clearly identify which fields they need to fill out and how they can submit a donation**

Use consistent branding: A key component of online fundraising is obtaining and keeping your donors' trust. An effective way to do that is to maintain consistent branding on your donation page. Use the same colors, images, and fonts that are on your main website on your donation form. **Your donors will know that they are *definitely* giving to your organization and are more likely to submit a donation.**

Minimize required information: Your donors shouldn't have to fill out multiple pages of required information just to give to your organization. Your form should only ask for the bare minimum when it comes to donating. This ensures that your donors can give quickly and without the hassle of filling out a

ton of info. **Donors are more likely to finish the donation process when the form is all on one page. Make giving to your organization a cinch!**

Include an image: The top of your online fundraising page is crucial for capturing donors' attentions and encouraging them to continue giving to your organization. You can include a single image at the top of your form that shows the people, animals, or communities that you serve. **This high-quality image should encourage donors to give and should *not* lead them away from the donation page.**

Offer recurring donations: If you want to start receiving regular donations from your supporters, offer the option to set up recurring donations on your donation form. You can include options for donors to make contributions every week, month, quarter, six months, or year! **Offering the option to set up recurring donations can increase your donor retention rates over time.**

Suggest different giving levels: Some donors are comfortable giving \$20 online while others can give hundreds. Offering different giving levels allows donors to choose for themselves! Having different giving levels on your donation form makes it easy for donors to choose the amount they'd like to give. **Different giving levels can also increase the average size of donors' contributions over time**

Strategies for Promoting Online Fundraising

Donors won't be able to access your online donation page unless you direct them to it.

Tell your organization's story

Talk about one person: Tell the story of someone that your organization has helped or is trying to assist, and donors will feel moved to donate online!

Don't forget the data: Stories have emotional appeal, but they need to be backed up by facts. Don't forget to include relevant statistics and data to demonstrate that your story isn't fictional.

Make a fundraising pitch: Don't forget, you actually need to ask for a donation during your story.

Once you've appealed to donors' emotions, show them how *they* can be part of the story, too!

ONLINE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Crowdfunding:

Crowdfunding is a way to raise funds for a specific cause or project by asking a large number of people to donate money, usually in small amounts, and usually during a relatively short period of time, such as a few months. Crowdfunding is done online, often with social networks, which make it easy for supporters to share a cause or project cause with their social networks.

Some of the top platforms for this type of fundraising are:

Gofundme - <https://www.gofundme.com>

Fundly - <https://fundly.com/>

Donately - <https://donately.com>

DonateKindly - <https://www.ed.co/linkcampaign/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/fundraisers>

Most of these will charge anywhere from 0 to 4% fee of money raised. Most do have card processing but will charge a fee. You will need to research to find the right tool for you. Facebook charges no fees for donations made to nonprofits, however your payment processor may.

Peer-to Peer Fundraising

Peer-to-peer fundraising is a multi-tiered approach to crowdfunding. This means individuals can create personal fundraising pages on your cause's behalf. This can feed revenue back to your organization as a whole, or to a specific campaign you're running. Either way, the individual shares his or her page with friends, family and community members for donations (hence "peer-to-peer").

There are two main types of peer-to-peer campaigns: "**rolling campaigns**" and "**time-based campaigns**." Rolling, or year-round campaigns revolve around your supporters' life events. Whether it's a birthday, holiday, wedding, or athletic endeavor, (or just because!) supporters can use any occasion as an opportunity to fundraise for your organization. By implementing this option as a permanent fixture on your website, you enable your fundraising community to take action on behalf of your organization outside of your hosted campaigns or events.

Online Giving Days

An online giving day can be an energetic and fast-paced way to raise money for your cause. Electrify your donor base with lots of digital promotions and encourage them to give as much as they can in just 24 hours! The most common online giving day is #GivingTuesday, a national day of charitable giving. An online giving day has to have a lot of digital promotion and advertising to make it effective. Reach out to your supporters with emails, over social media, on your website, via text message and videos. The outreach methods should contain information about your giving day such as the time, ways to donate, what the funds will go toward and how supporters can get more involved.

Text-to-Give/Donate Campaign

Text-to-give is quickly becoming one of the most popular online fundraising ideas. Don't get left behind by this fundraising trend! Text-to-give came on the scene as a digital fundraising method in 2010 when millions of dollars were donated to the American Red Cross to support victims of the Haiti earthquake. **Since then, text-to-give (or text-to-tithe for churches) has become a mainstream way to raise money for any organization or cause!** Today, text-to-give tends to work like this:

1. A donor will text a keyword to a specific number that has been assigned to a nonprofit.
2. The donor will receive a link as a text message.
3. The link takes the donors to a mobile-responsive donation page where they can make a contribution.

Givelively.org has a free platform to capture donations and is entirely free.

Traditional Fundraising Ideas:

FUN FUNDRAISING IDEAS

10,000 Steps Challenge

How It Raises Money: Sponsorships

Cost: \$

Difficulty: ⚡

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ Team members pledge to walk 10,000 steps a day over a certain time frame (often a week or month) in exchange for sponsorships.

Considerations: You can purchase [pedometers online \(in bulk\)](#) and have participants track their own metrics. To keep costs down, there are plenty of apps that count steps. Consider directing your participants to free pedometer apps like [pedometer-step-counter](#)

Pool Party

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: ⚡

Outcome: ❤️

It's summertime and it's sweltering. What can you do to cool people off and raise money at the same time? Host a pool party!

Considerations: Connect with your local pool (community/town, YMCA, neighborhood association) and get information on prices and availability. Discuss particulars, including the option to bring your own food to sell, lifeguards, insurance, etc. before committing.

Community Yard Sale

How It Raises Money: General sale

Cost: \$

Difficulty: ⚡ ⚡

Outcome: ❤️

Everyone has a closet or garage full of things that they need to get rid of, so urge your community to bust out their old lawn mowers, clothes, and furniture to give for a good cause.

Considerations: After securing space (parking lots or streets with little to no traffic work best), ask sellers to reserve booths ahead of time. Therefore, you know how many volunteers and other resources you'll need on the day of the sale.

Food Truck Event

How It Raises Money: General sale

Cost: \$

Difficulty: ⚡ ⚡

Outcome: ❤️

If your town has a food truck gathering spot, ask them to sponsor a night/week/event when a percentage of sales goes to your nonprofit.

Considerations: Ramp up your marketing efforts on social media to maximize your efforts.

Host A Concert

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$\$\$

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

You don't have to be a big charity to host a benefit concert- nonprofits of any size can run one of these fundraisers. Just find a performer that fits well with your audience and start the planning process.

Considerations: Ask local performers to consider donating their services in-kind. Secure the venue, security, insurance, and any other logistics months in advance. Then, market the event through all avenues, from social media to your website and email newsletter.

Host A Marathon

How It Raises Money: Sponsorships

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Raise money by having your supporters run for your cause.

Considerations: Many towns and cities have popular routes for "rent" that go through parks and city streets. Call ahead to your local municipality before creating your own event. If hosting an entire marathon isn't in the cards, encourage participants to join a preexisting marathon on a team to raise funds for your cause.

Swim-a-thon

How It Raises Money: Sponsorships

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️ :

Similar to a 5k, a swim-a-thon is a great fundraiser for schools, swim teams, and churches.

Considerations: Partner with a neighborhood or city pool and recruit swimmers from nearby swim teams (research [USA Swimming](#) and your local YMCA to find swim team contact information), as well as your current donor base.

Outrageous Bet for Charity

How It Raises Money: Sponsorship

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Do you have supporters willing to go the distance to show their passion for your cause? If so, then consider daring them to perform an outrageous bet for charity. They can camp on the roof of your building or dye their hair a funky color- as long as it's outrageous!

Considerations: Promote these outrageous bets on social media to maximize your exposure to bring in more sponsorships.

Obstacle Course

How It Raises Money: Entry fee, Sponsorships

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

With an obstacle course, you can go big (like the popular “Mud Run”) or gear the event to children. Either way, you’re sure to gather a crowd ready to take a risk while raising money for your cause.

Considerations: You don’t need an extreme location to create a great obstacle course. A simple parking lot can be transformed into a spectacular course with some parking cones, baby pools, and rope.

Peer-to-Peer Online Fundraiser

How It Raises Money: Fundraising

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

Nonprofits and charities with supporters eager to do some fundraising themselves should consider running an online peer-to-peer fundraiser.

Considerations: To ensure a user-friendly interface, technical support, and safe payment processing, partner with an online fundraising platform.

Raffle

How It Raises Money: Sponsorships, In-Kind Donation, General Sale

Cost: \$ 🔧

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Ask staff, supporters, and volunteers to donate gift cards, gifts, and money that will be raffled off.

Considerations: Ask local businesses such as restaurants, boutiques, and salons to donate items for the raffle.

Dunk Tank

How It Raises Money: Pay per activity

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Dunk tanks are a great fundraiser for churches, schools, and in the workplace. You’ll need an unlucky volunteer or two (particularly a supervisor or principal) to sacrifice themselves for the good of your cause.

Considerations: Dunk tanks can be rented from most party rental stores. The average cost for a half-day rental is \$200.

Haunted House

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Transform an old house, a popular walking trail, or even your office into a “Not So Spooky” haunted house.

Considerations: Have staff and supporters gather decorations and prepare the site the morning of the event. Make sure you have enough volunteers to help with the “haunting” activities.

Museum or Zoo Night

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Does your city have a museum, zoo, or aquarium that hosts special events after-hours? If so, then get on their schedule!

Considerations: This type of fundraiser is especially popular with millennials interested in mixing and mingling while making a difference. Museums, such as Discovery Place, generally have rental packages available to fit any budget.

Murder Mystery Dinner

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Treat your guests to dinner and a show with a Murder Mystery Dinner fundraiser.

Considerations: This is another event that takes significant planning, but it’s bound to be fun for staff, volunteers, and attendees. You can plan the event yourself or hire a professional company to do the legwork.

Bar Crawl

How It Raises Money: Entry fee, Other

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Get the attention of your supporters and beer lovers in your community with a bar crawl.

Considerations: Plan your route ahead of time, and consider matching t-shirts for participants. If you’re looking to go above and beyond, take donation buckets along the way to encourage other bar patrons to join in on the fun (and help support your cause).

Skydiving

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Do you have supporters willing to jump out of a plane for your cause? If so, then have them do just that!

Considerations: Coordinate an event with a local skydiving outfit or encourage participants to fundraise and skydive on their own. Either way, they’ll be people jumping out of a plane because of your nonprofit or charity- and that’s something to celebrate.

TEAM FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Board Game Tournament

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Teams of people compete together during a board game tournament to raise money for your nonprofit or charity.

Considerations: Ask local businesses or supports to donate prizes for tournament winners. And, you can give “bonus points” to board game participants/teams that fundraise on their own for your cause.

Fantasy Football

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Start a fantasy football team. Bets can be placed throughout the season, each one contributing to the cause.

Considerations: Research fantasy football programs to find one that works with nonprofits, such as [SportzFund](#).

Chili Cookoff

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Organize a team-based chili cook-off. This fundraiser works great in workplaces, so encourage local businesses to run their own chili cookoffs to support your cause.

Considerations: Chili Cookoffs are a good fundraiser for a crisp, fall day. Don’t forget to gather some small prizes for winners, such as a certificate or ribbon.

Croquet Tournament

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Croquet may not be the most popular sport, but it’s fun for people of all ages and skill levels.

Considerations: Encourage participants to wear their most fabulous croquet gear. If you don’t have the equipment, you’ll find rental options at your nearby party rental business. Try hosting a 24 hour-event like this one for the [Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund](#).

Corn Hole Tournament

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Make friends and raise money while spending a spring afternoon in the sun playing cornhole.

Considerations: There's a chance that people close to your nonprofit or charity have cornhole sets lying around. So before you invest in customized boards, check with your contacts.

Scavenger Hunt

How It Raises Money: Entry fee

Cost: 💵

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

A scavenger hunt can be done online (through pictures) or offline (in person). Create a list of items (or mix it up with riddles) needed to win the hunt.

Considerations: To spice it up, encourage participants to donate extra money to "unlock" special clues. The [Multiple Sclerosis Society](#) hosted a successful scavenger hunt fundraiser in Austin, TX.

Ping Pong Tournament

How It Raises Money: Entry fee, sponsorships

Cost: 💵

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️

Who doesn't love ping pong? Get your supporters in a competitive mood with a ping pong tournament.

Considerations: Before renting ping pong tables, ask your supporters if they have any tables that can be borrowed for the event.

\$100 Turn Around

How It Raises Money: Sponsorship

Cost: 💵 💵

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Give fundraisers \$100 for materials to create something (example: table, cake, piece of art) and have them sell it to raise funds.

Considerations: Ask around your community for businesses and individuals willing to sponsor the event (or a fundraiser or 2)

5K Run/Walk

How It Raises Money: Sponsorship, Entry fee

Cost: 💵 💵

Difficulty: 🛠️ 🛠️ 🛠️

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

There's nothing better than spending a spring or fall morning participating in a 5K or a charity walk.

Runners/walkers will need to pay an entry fee, but you can also encourage participants to get sponsorships.

Considerations: Races and walks are all the rage right now, so jump on the bandwagon. This is a great fundraiser that brings your current supporters together with potential donors from your community. Plus, specialty runs (such as The Color Run) add a creative element to an otherwise simple idea.

OTHER FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Giving Tree

How It Raises Money: General donation

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

This popular holiday fundraiser can be run year-round. It's an interactive fundraiser and something that many donors look forward to year after year.

Considerations: Set the tree up in your lobby or another public area to maximize exposure.

Text Donations

How It Raises Money: Pay per activity

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Modernize your fundraising with a text donation campaign.

Considerations: Work with a company like [Mobile Cause](#) to streamline the process.

Thermometer Fundraiser

How It Raises Money: General donation

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Use a thermometer to track your fundraiser. This is a great idea if you have a centrally located, visible office. Or, ask your town if you can set up a jumbo thermometer at a popular location such as a park or street corner.

Considerations: Use a thermometer in conjunction with another fundraiser, such as a penny drive, bottle donation collection, or fundraising cards.

Change (Penny) Drive

How It Raises Money: General donation

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Put coin collection jars around town. Ask about setting them up in locations like town hall, library, restaurants, and other businesses (with permission, of course). You'll be amazed at how quickly the change adds up.

Considerations: Your "container" can be anything from a cardboard box to a plastic container. Don't forget to add your logo/branding!

Company Match

How It Raises Money: Other

Cost:

Difficulty:

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Encourage donors to look into company matches at their places of employment.

Considerations: Check out [Double the Donation](#) for company leads within your own community.

Social Media Blitz

How It Raises Money: Online fundraising

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Inundate your social media followers with messages about a day-long online fundraising campaign.

Considerations: Let your supporters know ahead of time that you'll be running a one-day fundraising blitz.

On the day of the event, plan special images, videos, and stories that will encourage your audience to make a donation online.

Prime Parking Spot

How It Raises Money: Pay per activity, Other

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Encourage employees in local workplaces to donate to your nonprofit or charity by encouraging the management to offer a great parking spot in exchange for raffle tickets or bids.

Considerations: For a steady stream of donations, ask local businesses to offer this fundraiser perk monthly.

Talent Auction (Legal Services, Accounting, Housekeeping)

How It Raises Money: Online fundraising, Pay per activity

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🔧🔧

Outcome: ❤️ ❤️

Your supporters hold a variety of jobs, from lawyers and doctors to accountants and estheticians. Ask them to donate a coupon or voucher for their services in-kind that can be auctioned off for your cause.

Considerations: You can choose to host an online auction or hold an in-person event

Photo Booth

How It Raises Money: Pay per activity

Cost: \$\$

Difficulty: 🔧🔧

Outcome: ❤️

Printed pictures are a rarity. Give your supporters an actual picture to take home with them at your next community event.

Considerations: You don't have to go and rent a professional photo booth (although, that is an option). Instead, hang up some fancy wrapping paper and purchase some photo booth props at a party supply store. Then, grab a Polaroid camera and shoot away.

Grow a Beard

How It Raises Money: Sponsorship, Online fundraising

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️🛠️

Outcome: ❤️❤️

Maybe you want to go the opposite route of head shaving and instead delve into the world of facial hair growth. Like other similar events, participants will collect sponsorships to support their beard-growing efforts.

Considerations: Again, this is a fundraising idea that is as much about awareness as it is about raising money. People are going to want to know WHY others are willing to grow beards for your cause. Think ahead and give participants pamphlets or elevator speeches to share with inquisitive friends and family.

Shave Head

How It Raises Money: Sponsorship, Online Fundraising

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️🛠️

Outcome: ❤️❤️

Similar to the St. Baldrick's Day fundraiser, ask supporters to seek sponsorships to shave their head.

Considerations: Head shaving is bound to draw a crowd, so inform your local media in advance to increase the likelihood that the event will be covered in the newspaper and during the evening news

Local Celebrity Appearance

How It Raises Money: Entry Fee

Cost: \$\$\$

Difficulty: 🛠️🛠️

Outcome: ❤️❤️

Does your community have a local celebrity that makes special appearances? If so, get on his/her schedule.

Considerations: Comedians, musicians, television personalities – celebrities of every genre and caliber live all around the world. Work with you favorite local celebrity to host a unique celebrity appearance fundraiser.

Singing Valentines/Telegrams

How It Raises Money: Pay per Activity

Cost: \$

Difficulty: 🛠️🛠️

Outcome: ❤️

Forget roses and chocolate. Give your supporters the chance to express their love with a singing Valentine/Telegram.

Considerations: Have your staff and volunteers go out in groups to deliver these special messages on and around Valentine's Day. If the event is successful, do it annually! People will come to expect it (and count on it) year after year.

Resources:

Free Donor Management Software:

Spending money to raise money is one of the great struggles of nonprofits the world over. If you're running a new or small nonprofit, it often doesn't make sense (or isn't possible) to spend money on fundraising software. Paid software isn't your only option, though. There's a host of free and open source fundraising software options to choose from, and we've rounded up ten to get you started.

1. CiviCRM: CiviCRM acts as a fundraising database and one-stop shop for managing event registration, content creation, and membership. It is one of the few customer relationship management programs tailored for the nonprofit/charity sector, letting you raise funds, record donors, and correspond with donors through a single system.

2. DonorBox: DonorBox is fundraising software focused on attracting donors, processing donations, and recording donor information. The online system offers customizable donation pages, multi-currency processing, and donor data exports to MailChimp and Salesforce. DonorBox's biggest downside is the \$1,000 monthly donation threshold. Once you exceed \$1,000 per month in donations, DonorBox charges a 0.89% fee on your monthly donation total.

3. DONATION Lite: If you're looking for a temporary fundraising software solution to hold your organization over until you can afford a paid system, DONATION offers a free version of its software. DONATION Lite incorporates the basic functionality of the full version, such as donor information storage, and an upgrade option for up to 100,000 donor records. There are limits on the Lite version to be aware of, such as a storage limit of 100 donors per year (which can hinder your fundraising goals) and a lack of email integration. DONATION Lite is best suited for early-stage nonprofits looking to try out various systems before committing to a paid version

4. ProcessDonation is a relatively recent entrant into the online donation management software sphere and offers free and paid options for nonprofits. The free option includes such features as custom donation pages, fundraising event management, social media connectivity, peer-to-peer fundraising, and even a mobile app. The catch? You're limited to one campaign at a time, and only one administrator is allowed access. ProcessDonation touts this option as best for smaller nonprofits that aren't running multiple campaigns at once.

5. Double the Donation is every nonprofit's go-to fundraising tool to help raise awareness about matching gifts. **The tools available at Double the Donation can help market matching gifts to your donors and show them that sending a request doesn't have to be complicated when you have the right resources.**

6. Fundly: Great for crowdfunding, Fundly lets users customize an online donation page. With a blog-like system, the site lets you easily update your site with photos and videos. And you can do it all from your cell phone with Fundly's mobile app

7. Bonfire: Bonfire's free fundraising site specializes in custom t-shirts. Nonprofits get their own fundraising pages from Bonfire where they can promote their cause and direct their supporters to purchase custom merchandise.

8. Bloomerang: Bloomerang is an all-in-one fundraising solution for nonprofits that value functionality, adaptability, and user experience above all. Not only is Bloomerang's robust donor management database an invaluable tool nonprofits can use to create bonds in their communities, but it also empowers organizations with expert fundraising technology. With Bloomerang, your nonprofit can do everything from campaign planning, to stewardship, to donation processing *all* in a single system.

9. Donately is a great free-to-use fundraising software platform that can work for nonprofits of any size. Not only is Donately a comprehensive online fundraising solution, but they also make it affordable to fundraise. Whether you're looking for a donation form builder, peer-to-peer fundraising software, or on-site fundraising tools, they have what your team needs.

10. Fundraising Report Card: With Fundraising Report Card's innovative analytics tools, nonprofits can analyze reports tracking different fundraising metrics. With so many important metrics to be aware of and so many important data points to collect, it can be tough to get started collecting and evaluating key fundraising data. Luckily for nonprofits with a smaller budget, Fundraising Report Card offers a comprehensive, no-cost solution to help your team get ahead!

Other Resources:

Facebook Social Good: Has fundraising resources, training to collect donations on Facebook, creating a fundraising campaign, etc.

Donately: Online fundraising, donation forms, education, peer to peer fundraising.

Causevox: Online fundraising, donation pages, peer to peer fundraising, CRM tools, Event management, crowdfunding, etc.

Network for Good: Resources, guides and templates, Donor management, fundraising pages, etc.

2019 EDITION

TOP 10 FUNDRAISING & DONOR MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE REPORT

Comparison of the Leading Fundraising & Donor Management Software Vendors

Overview of Fundraising & Donor Management Software Solutions

A nonprofit's ability to campaign successfully and advance relationships with donors, volunteers and members directly affects the organization's prosperity and achievements. To execute these activities effectively, NPOs require a tool to organize data that spans contact information, donation history and fundraising details, as well as one with the means to engage with constituents and collect donations. Nonprofits can use fundraising and donor management software to create email and traditional mail campaigns, manage event attendance and track a variety of donation types. Whether your nonprofit is small or large in size, a platform with donor management and fundraising tools will vastly improve contact management and fund tracking, among other important nonprofit-specific tasks.

When browsing nonprofit software, look for solutions that offer a variety of constituent segmentation, tracking and reporting capabilities.

Your chosen solution should provide robust tools to process donations, track transactions and manage constituents and volunteers. Marketing features and multi-channel fundraising add significant functionality to any solution. Additionally, SaaS deployment can reduce time and money spent maintaining IT staff and enable more flexible access.

Review our Top 10 Fundraising and Donor Management report below to compare features and delivery models of the leading solutions.

Features & Deployment Key



Donation tracking & processing



Multi-channel fundraising



Email marketing



Event management



Mobile accessible



Reporting & analytics



SaaS platform



On-premise platform




















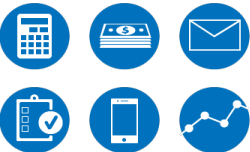
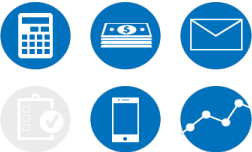
















SaaS and on-premise

About Business-Software.com

Business-Software.com is your go-to source for business software reviews, expert advice, in-depth articles and product white papers to meet all of your software needs. We're the most comprehensive online resource for buyers and vendors, catering to more than 300,000 members who trust us to connect them with the right software.

We offer exclusive comparison reports for 80+ business software segments, enabling you to efficiently research and review highly rated software products. Download our free reports to discover top business solutions for Accounting, CRM, ERP, CMS, Manufacturing, HR and more.

Top 10 Fundraising & Donor Management Software Comparison

DonorPerfect	Blackbaud The Raiser's Edge	Z2 Systems Inc NeonCRM	SoftTrek ClearView CRM	Virtuous Software
				
Ideal for: Nonprofits looking for a platform that will improve donor retention.	Ideal for: Businesses of any size seeking a solution with online marketing functionality included.	Ideal for: Organizations that want a platform with email audience segmentation tools.	Ideal for: Larger companies looking to share and manage data on a national scale.	Ideal for: Nonprofits that have over \$2mm in funding, as well as fundraisers and marketers.
Business size 	Business size 	Business size 	Business size 	Business size 
				
Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 
Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless integration Integrated web forms for donations and registrations Integrated credit card and bank draft processing tools 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage campaigns, funds and appeals Events and volunteer management available through additional modules 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branded donation forms Credit card processing Built-in email, donation appeals and newsletters Automated emails and alerts Custom reports 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access donor information, campaign activities and staff efforts Opportunity management tools Business intelligence and reports 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing automation Predictive analytics Social media scraping CRM
Select Customers Mercy Ships, UNICEF, Boys & Girls Clubs of Long Beach	Select Customers Human Rights Campaign, Partners HealthCare System Inc	Select Customers Boys & Girls Club, Kidney Cancer Association, Habitat for Humanity	Select Customers The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute	Select Customers One Hope, Habitat for Humanity, Operation Mobilization, Jewish Voice
Deployment   	Deployment   	Deployment   	Deployment   	Deployment   

Interested in learning more? Please [click here](#) to request additional information.

Top 10 Fundraising & Donor Management Software Comparison

The Salsa Platform	Abila Fundraising Online	Bloomerang	Arreva Exceed Beyond	StratusLIVE for Fundraisers
				
Ideal for: Any size company that wants a platform to capture registrations and manage fees.	Ideal for: Small to mid size businesses that want to monitor donor and event planning information.	Ideal for: Smaller businesses seeking a platform with an open API with QuickBooks compatability.	Ideal for: Providing nonprofits of all sizes with a robust and customizable donor relationship manager.	Ideal for: Nonprofits seeking a fully integrated solution for individual and corporate fundraising.
Business size 	Business size 	Business size 	Business size 	Business size 
				
Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 	Key Features 
Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create unlimited custom donation forms • Set up automatic confirmation and thank-you messages • Segment donor list for message testing 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage a variety of • Monitors donor and event planning information • Find non-constituent guests with search query 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited users • Engagement meter measures donor activity • Enter and track donations • Comprehensive reporting 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor and contact management • Membership and pledge management • Grant making and grant seeking tools • QuickBooks interface 	Additional Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Intelligence • Analytical marketing • Seamless integration • Constituent management • Online/offline capabilities
Select Customers Polaris Project, DC Design House, Earth Day Network	Select Customers United Methodist Open Door, Centre College, Endeavor Global	Select Customers Kiwanis International, Mental Health America of Tippecanoe	Select Customers Ronald McDonald House Charities, Jewish Federations, YWCA	Select Customers National Wildlife Federation, United Way of Greater Cincinnati
Deployment 	Deployment 	Deployment 	Deployment 	Deployment 

Interested in learning more? Please [click here](#) to request additional information.



How to Write Fundraising Appeals that Raise More Money



About this Guide

To raise money you need a great appeal that grabs donors' attention and inspires them to give. How do you create fundraising letters that stand out and get results?

We've got you covered.

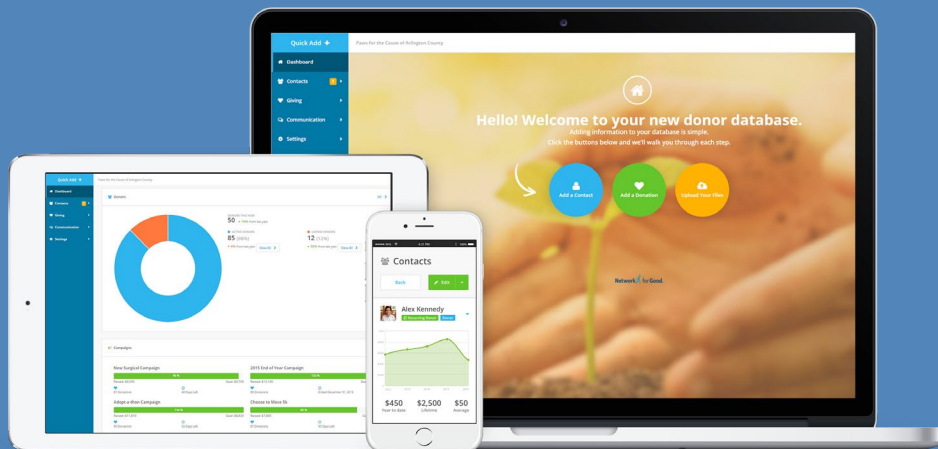
This short guide will give you practical tips for:

- Focusing on the key things donors want to know
- How to tell a compelling—and effective—story
- Crafting an irresistible call to action

Plus, you'll see how one Network for Good customer raised 10x more using our email appeal templates and fundraising software.

Ready to create your best fundraising appeals ever? Let's get started!

WRITE GREAT APPEALS, RAISE MORE MONEY



Network for Good is helping 6,000 emerging nonprofits create more successful fundraising campaigns; we want to help you, too.

Network for Good combines fundraising expertise with simple-to-use technology to provide smarter fundraising software with all the support and coaching you need to get the most out of your investment.



**FUNDRAISING
PAGES**



**DONOR
MANAGEMENT**



**FUNDRAISING
COACHING**

Our suite of tools includes everything you need to grow results, not expenses. Schedule a time to talk with a fundraising consultant today!

SCHEDULE A DEMO NOW

First Things First

Before you start drafting your fundraising appeal, let's take a step back to understand exactly what you hope to accomplish. Yes, the primary goal is to inspire donations, but think about the unique conditions of your campaign to better your odds of success.

Goals

As you finalize your campaign plans, know whether your overall goal for each appeal is to add a specific number of new donors or to reach a certain donation level. Have a clear and measurable end result in mind. Decide how you will define success, such as "Raise \$20,000," or "Add 200 new members."

Audience

Who is the audience you're trying to reach? Are you attempting to activate lapsed donors? Younger donors? Turning annual donors into monthly donors? Have a target in mind and do your research on what makes your particular audience unique. You can then tailor your appeal to make it more effective.



Tip: Use the information you have in your [donor management system](#) to segment your donorbase so you can better tailor messages to these groups of donors.

Timing

When will you send your appeals and how often? Consider holidays and other events that may affect how likely your messages will be opened and read. Remember that it will likely take more than one appeal during a campaign to get a substantial number of donors to act. Decide how you will space your appeals and build a consistent story as well as a sense of urgency.

Past Performance

As you craft your appeals, don't forget to look at previous campaign performance in your [donor management system](#) and how they performed. Look at open rate, click-through rate, as well as completed donations and total donation amounts over time. Note any trends and apply your learnings to your next appeal. You're likely sitting on a goldmine of data that will help you reach more donors!

The Most Important Ingredient

While it's important to remember the all of the components of an effective fundraising appeal (a clear call to action, a sense of urgency, statements about what a donation will do), what will ultimately make your appeal stand out is an attention-grabbing, emotionally compelling, authentic story.

Why are stories so important?

- Stories are a natural form of communication and have been for thousands of years.
- Stories allow us to feel by creating an emotional (and oftentimes physical) reaction—think about a tearjerker movie or suspenseful novel.
- Stories are proven to be easier to remember (in fact, 22x more memorable than straight facts).
- Stories also are more likely to be shared, which is important for spreading your message beyond your core supporters.

Your cause's story is the heart and soul of your fundraising letter. It's how your appeal will have a personality that allows you to connect with your donors and inspire them to give. Without it, your appeal will read like many other cookie cutter letters your supporters will receive.

As you plan your appeal, think of your organization's most interesting and moving stories, and then distill them down into key talking points that you can insert in your fundraising letters to make your work come alive in the mind of your donor.

How a Small Shop Raised 10x More with Network for Good & a Smart Appeals Strategy

WHO THEY ARE:

Renaissance Social Services, Inc. (RSSI) is a Chicago-based nonprofit that helps at-risk members of the community find safe and secure housing and get the services they need to live with health, dignity, and stability.

Funded primarily through grants and government contracts, RSSI hired Shailushi Ritchie as Director of Development and Communications in mid-2016 to grow their individual and corporate gifts program.

THE PROBLEM:

When Shailushi joined RSSI, she noticed that their fundraising tools were very piecemeal. The donor database integrated with the accounting software, but had no other functionality. Event ticketing was done through PayPal, which required manual data entry into the donor database. RSSI used MailChimp for email marketing, but linking email stats with the donor database required manually importing the data. This a-la-carte system lacked integration, led to extra work, increased risk of error, and most important, held RSSI back from reaching their individual giving goals.



RENAISSANCE
SOCIAL SERVICES
supportive programs for affordable housing.

- **Founded:** 1997
- **Mission:** Help at-risk individuals and families find stable housing.
- **Staffing:** Two employees focused on fundraising
- **Revenue:** \$4 million, primarily through grants and government funding
- **Network for Good customer since 2016**
- **Success:** Raised 10x more with Network for Good



"[Network for Good's software is] especially helpful for small shops that don't have many people to help with managing donor data. It's so easy to use and the whole system makes my life so much easier." - Shailushi Ritchie, Director of Development

Shailushi searched for a system that would integrate their fundraising operations to make things simpler, more accurate, and way more efficient for RSSI's small fundraising team.

THE SOLUTION:

According to Shailushi, Network for Good's software and fundraising coach are exactly what RSSI needed. Built specifically for small shops, the integrated tools and fundraising coach have enabled RSSI to grow their individual giving.

Shailushi considered Raiser's Edge and Salesforce for donor management, but found that they were too complex for the needs of her small nonprofit. They couldn't be used "straight out of the box," and required a large amount of customization and setup time. Those extra features added a layer of complexity that was beyond what a small nonprofit like RSSI needs to get the job done.

Network for Good's donor management comes with email functionality that automatically tracks email opens and clicks. For RSSI, that means no more uploading lists to and from MailChimp.

"We are loving the integration of the donor management system. We abandoned MailChimp and are using the email marketing tool within donor management for all donor communication now."



Shailushi is using Network for Good's donor management system (pictured above), online donation pages, peer-to-peer fundraising platform, and fundraising coaching to grow RSSI's individual giving program.

EARLY RESULTS:

RSSI became a Network for Good customer in 2016. In November, they tested their first campaign:

“This was our first time ever doing a coordinated campaign like this and we raised \$4,500, which was more than double our goal. It was really encouraging to see those results.

And this fundraising success was also great because I went back to the board, and my boss, to show that the cost of a Network for Good subscription is a great investment and it’s really helping us do what we need to do to raise more money.”

Want to learn how Network for Good’s software can help your organization? [Get a personal software demo today!](#)

WWW.NETWORKFORGOOD.COM

RAISING 10X MORE:

After the success of their November campaign, RSSI started crafting a year-end campaign. Using the built in year-end engagement stream, RSSI was able to quickly put together a campaign using the appeal templates, checklists, and timelines that are built into the donor management system:

“I remember logging into the donor management system one day and there were all these checklists and templates for my year-end campaign right there in the system. All the tasks I needed to complete to get the year-end campaign completed were right there.

That was a lifesaver for us. It might have taken me two weeks to draft an email, edit it and create it in the system but with the template there, I could turn around a donor email in two days. It really did help us raise so much more at year-end. It was critical to success.”

By December 31, RSSI had raised \$25,000 with Network for Good’s tools. Which was a ten times more than what they raised in the 12 months of 2015! We can’t wait to see what they accomplish this year!

The Key Characteristics of Your Ask

Once you have a good story on which to base your fundraising ask, it's time to think about how to frame that story in a way that helps donors take action once they're inspired to give. Beyond the mechanics of your appeal, it's important to include these characteristics in every ask:

Clarity.

Keep your appeals as simple as possible, both in format as well as in language. Offer clear statements about what a gift can do, as well as what action you want your reader to take: donate! Remove anything that causes confusion or weighs down your message.

Specificity.

When your appeals are specific, they can be more relevant, interesting, and authentic. Tell your donors exactly what they will support, why it matters, how much they should give, and how they can complete their donation.

A Sense of Urgency.

It's crucial to create a sense of urgency and immediacy in your appeal. Why should donors give now? What will happen if they act immediately? What might happen if they do not? You can create a sense of urgency for donors with a deadline or by introducing a matching gift

A Trustworthy Messenger.

Consider who will tell your story or sign your appeal. The messenger is often as important as the message. Who are the messengers that wield more influence than you when it comes to your organization? It may not be your executive director. Stuck for ideas? [Here are 10 alternate messengers for your next appeal.](#)

Your Call to Action

Any successful nonprofit fundraising campaign has an effective call to action. Your call to action is the actual spot where you ask your supporter to give. When it comes down to your call to action, there are five key attributes that can transform any run-of-the-mill pitch into a fundraising dynamo.

1. Be highly specific. Having large global missions and lofty goals for changing the world is great, but these kinds of statements can make a potential donor feel they can't make a difference or leave them wondering exactly what steps they can take. Focus on a very tangible impact and a realistic donation amount that will help make an impact.

2. Be feasible. Your action needs to be something that is very easy to do so as not to overwhelm any potential donors. Create a momentum of compliance, wherein once somebody does something small they are more willing to do something larger later on. Not everybody is ready to donate a large amount right away and it's important not to alienate those people.

3. Have a first priority. Don't bog your fundraising appeal down with too many requests or distractions. Your first priority is to inspire someone to give. Think about how you can build your community of potential supporters and about enticing ways to get your foot in the door with a entry-level donor who could become your next major donor.

4. Be free of barriers. This is where usability of your emails, website, and the actual donation process comes into play. Watch somebody make an online donation to your nonprofit and see where they get hung up. Are there unnecessary steps and is everything easy to understand? Honor your audience's time by making everything as straightforward and quick as possible.

5. Be filmable. Consider this your test: Imagine yourself with a video camera and ask, can you film the action you are asking somebody to take? Your audience needs to be able to visualize what they will be doing. If they can't picture themselves doing it, they won't be likely to do it. Think "Give \$20 today to help clean up the beach." vs. "Save the earth!"

How to Stand Out in Your Donor's Inbox

Make it visually appealing.

If your emails look like every other message in your supporter's inbox, you're making it easy for readers to ignore you. Spend as much time designing your emails for your readers' inboxes as you spend writing the contents of your email.

What you can do: Create subject lines that make them want to open and read your message, and think about what shows up in the preview pane and from whom your email is sent. No one wants to get an email from "donotreply@thisnonprofit.org".

Remember that giving is personal.

Charitable giving among donors who regularly or sometimes give to new causes/charities is heavily motivated by affiliation and existing donor knowledge of an organization and is somewhat unresponsive to solicitation.

What you can do: Don't try to blast your message to the "general public" and expect successful results. Use your [donor management system](#) to tailor your outreach for different segments—different audiences will need different messages to be convinced to give to your cause. Use your nonprofit's marketing efforts and fundraising materials to make the connection between your work and the affiliations and identities your community cares most about.

Show the real impact of a potential gift.

When making a charitable donation to a nonprofit, donors are interested in information beyond metrics of financial stability (such as fundraising and overhead costs). As many as [75 percent of donors use information about the nonprofit's impact](#), and 63 percent use information about the social issue the nonprofit addresses.

What you can do: In your fundraising appeals, make a clear tie between a donor's gift and what that donation will accomplish. Make it easy for donors to find information about the results of your work on your website with benchmark reports about your issue area, annual reports, and updates on your programs. Once they've found this information, make sure it's simple to use by presenting your results in easy-to-understand formats like one-page summaries, fact sheets, and graphs.

Offer evidence of trust and transparency.

Most donor research relies on disclosures from the nonprofit, peer recommendations, 3rd-party endorsements. Donors use multiple sources to gather information instead of relying heavily on one particular source. Donors who frequently or occasionally look for information about nonprofits use the nonprofit itself as the most common source, followed by friends or family, and then independent third-party organizations.


What you can do: Provide information about your impact in multiple locations and formats. Include third-party ratings, such as a Charity Navigator or GreatNonprofits badges, in your fundraising appeals, on donation pages, and throughout your website. Encourage your supporters to spread your message by providing them with easy ways to share, recommend, and review your organization.

Provide a feeling of connection to your charity.

For your appeals to be effective, you must answer the question of "Why me?" Your need alone is not enough. You are competing with many messages and many appeals. Think about why your cause is personally meaningful to your audience.

What you can do: Understand why your donors give. Invite them to tell you their stories to gain insight on what motivates people to support your programs. In-person events, thank you phone calls, and online surveys are all easy ways to collect this information.

Also, be sure to segment and target appropriately. Don't use the "spray and pray" method of marketing to win support for your cause. Tailor your



messages to speak to each type of supporter. In addition to personalizing emails with your reader's name in the subject line or greeting, segment and tailor your emails to align with their experience with your organization. Treat recurring donors different from those who haven't given. Send program-specific information to those supporters who have indicated a passion for a particular part of your mission.

Make it mobile friendly.

Over half of all email opens now happen on mobile devices, so it's critical for your emails to be easily opened, read, and actionable from smartphones and tablets.

What you can do: Be sure to simplify your outreach, increase font sizes, and make your buttons and calls to action easy to click with a fingertip or thumb. Applying mobile friendly design principles to your emails will make your organization's messages easier to read and act on, no matter how they're being read. Furthermore, be sure your [online donation page](#) is mobile friendly so when donors read the email on their mobile device they can instantly and easily make a gift. (If your current email marketing system doesn't provide mobile friendly templates, [you should talk to us about switching to Network for Good!](#))

A Simple Template for Your Next Fundraising Appeal

Ready to put it all together? Now that you have your sights set on a fabulous appeal that shares your story, focuses on the donor, and is ready for inbox stardom, use this template to jot down the key parts of your appeal letter.

From

Your appeal should come from a real person, or at least use the full name of your organization. Acronyms, technical jargon or a “do not reply” style email address will make your message more likely to be deleted.

Subject Line

The subject line is the most important part of your email appeal. Its purpose is to make your message stand out in a reader’s inbox and entice them to open your message. Keep your subject line short, relevant and compelling. Front load your subject line with key terms in the first 50 characters, to account for the way different email programs might display your message.

Salutation

If possible, use the recipient’s name, spelled correctly.

The emotional, interesting opening

Don't start with the typical "we need your help". Open your appeal with a vivid, emotional image that illustrates the need or the impact a gift could have. Or show supporters the difference they are making. Try to focus on an individual story rather than overwhelming the reader with mind-numbing statistics or massive scale.

1st call to action

Include a short call to action that allows readers to quickly click make a donation. Vague calls to action like "support us" are more likely to confuse than to motivate.

Example: "Please make a year-end gift so more children like John can graduate this year" with a big donate button next to that call to action.

How to help

Provide detail about what the donor's gift could make possible. Clarity and specificity are vital. This is where you can suggest a gift amount and designation.

Example: "Your gift of \$100 will mean one student like John will be tutored every day till graduation this school year," or "Your donation will help us buy

sonogram machines and vitamins to ensure every mom and baby is healthy.” Include information on the specific impact a donation will have, but be sure not to mislead your reader if donations will go into a general fund instead of being earmarked for a specific individual.

2nd call to action

Provide a clear call to action that tells the donor exactly what you want them to do and how they can do it.

Example “Click here to make your tax-deductible donation now.”

Closing

Thank the reader for their attention and sign a real person’s name, along with several ways for your donors to contact you: i.e., by replying to your email, your phone number as well as listing your physical address.

P.S.

In the P.S. reinforce the sense of urgency.

Example, “Remember, you are our best partner in advocating for abducted children. Please give now so we can train 600 police this year” or “We are nearly to our goal. Your gift will help put us over the top. Thanks for your support.”

Beyond Your Appeal

After you get your appeal just right, your work doesn't stop there. Don't let your efforts go to waste by ignoring what comes after the appeal.

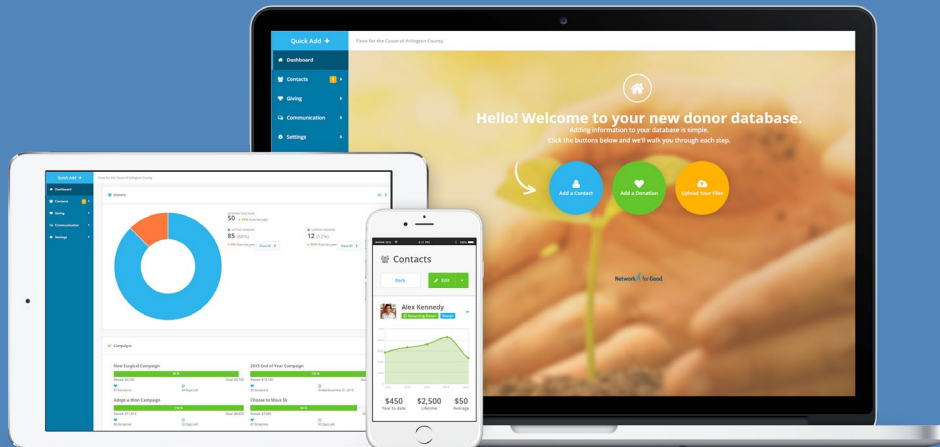
Your online donation experience should:

1. Make giving easy. This can't be stressed enough, so we'll say it again and again. Don't make your donors think too hard about giving to your organization. This includes enabling your supporters to quickly interact via mobile and social: does your [donation page](#) offer donors easy ways to give and share on the go?

2. Keep donors in the moment of giving. When a prospective donor lands on your [donation page](#), each component should reinforce their decision to give while making it quick and easy to complete their donation. This means it should closely match your nonprofit's branding, campaign materials, and message. Make your donation page an extension of the conversation you're having with your potential donors so there's no disconnect.

3. Start your donor relationships off right. Donor retention really begins before a donation is made. If it's confusing, difficult, or frustrating to give to your cause, you're not starting your donor's experience with your organization on a positive note. Your donation page should also help you quickly thank donors with a powerful post-donation experience and email acknowledgement, plus give you the information you need to cultivate these supporters over time.

WRITE GREAT APPEALS, RAISE MORE MONEY



Network for Good is helping 6,000 emerging nonprofits create more successful fundraising campaigns; we want to help you, too.

Network for Good combines fundraising expertise with simple-to-use technology to provide smarter fundraising software with all the support and coaching you need to get the most out of your investment.



**FUNDRAISING
PAGES**



**DONOR
MANAGEMENT**



**FUNDRAISING
COACHING**

Our suite of tools includes everything you need to grow results, not expenses. Schedule a time to talk with a fundraising consultant today!

SCHEDULE A DEMO NOW