

### Important considerations when planning a fundraising campaign

1. *Have a detailed budget that identifies funding needs for both essential (“base”) expenditures and target (“stretch”) expenditures* - ensure you have a plan for covering your base operating budget from reasonably consistent and reliable sources of income, then work toward raising additional funds to meet stretch goals that will advance your mission and strategic plan - identify items on your budget that could be provided in kind (such as printing) and actively seek out sponsors who will donate these items - keep in mind that reducing expenses has the same impact on the bottom line as increasing your funding
2. *Be clear about your vision and mission* - this is what will “sell” your organization to potential donors and sponsors - they need to understand what you are trying to accomplish and why their contribution matters - seek out financial supporters who are aligned with your goals
3. *Consider what the organization can offer financial supporters in exchange for their contributions* - develop your “value proposition” - why would a potential financial supporter donate to your cause? - explain how their contribution will help people - offer benefits like free event tickets, recognition of their contributions in brochures and on your website, complimentary membership, industry exclusivity, banners at events, etc. - recognize them publicly and privately as often as possible
4. *Engage the entire board in fundraising* - draw on board members' personal contacts - give them each funding targets - encourage personal donations for greater credibility with other potential financial supporters - make fundraising part of their job description
5. *Make it as easy as possible for potential financial supporters to make a contribution* - offer a range of payment options, accept in-kind donations, develop funding opportunities at different financial levels (from a few hundred dollars to thousands) and terms (one-time, event-specific, annual, multi-year)
6. *Find ways to engage your financial supporters in your work* - develop plans to keep them informed of your progress and successes, and consider ways to give them a more “hands-on” picture of how their contributions are helping the organization achieve its goals (for example, information sessions with board members, a tour of facilities or programs, input into planning for events they are sponsoring, etc.) - sponsors that feel more connected to your mission are more likely to renew their sponsorship commitment and may be willing to make additional contributions in times of need
7. *Don't overlook members as potential donors and sponsors* - people who have benefited from your programs and services may be willing to make in-kind or financial contributions over and above their membership fees - some employers may match employee donations
8. *HOWEVER, don't overtax your membership by excessively raising fees or program costs to balance your budget* - you may actually lose members and reduce program participation if too many of the costs are pushed back to the general membership and not funded by other sources - if your goal is to extend your outreach, higher membership costs may work against that objective

## Ideas for raising funds

1. *Consider raising membership fees, within reason* - while raising the cost of membership can be risky, this can sometimes be offset by providing additional membership benefits that justify the increase - look for low-cost ways to add value, like having a sponsor host a free networking event as a kick-off to your new season, or holding an annual “bring a friend for free” event which will allow members to introduce other potential members to your organization - it is important to canvass your members about their needs and wants from time to time, to identify extra benefits that members will perceive as giving them more value from their membership
2. *Expand your membership base* - Partnering with another organization with compatible objectives may allow both groups to expand their membership base, by offering discounted or joint memberships to members of each other's organization - this is one way to give members access to twice as many events at no extra cost to either organization, or to reduce the cost of programs and events by sharing the costs and workload with the other organization - find ways to welcome and engage new members (such as member visits and new member orientation) to increase connection and make it more likely they will renew
3. *Hold some fun networking events both to raise funds and to help members get to know each other better* - for example, a silent and live auction of donated items can be held in association with a family event at an interesting venue - this does not have to be an elaborate gala, but just something unusual and engaging, with activities that will help members connect with each other (skating party, art gallery visit, day at the zoo, dinner at a unique restaurant where it is easy for guests to mingle) - members who know each other personally and feel “part of the group” are more likely to renew their memberships and stay involved
4. *Hold a signature event annually* - many not-for-profit organizations have seen good financial results from hosting some kind of high profile event (not necessarily a gala) - if the event is held regularly, it often gathers momentum and attendance grows each time - benefits of a signature event include having a recurring source of income to fund your base budget, lots of opportunities to sell advertising and attract sponsors, ability to charge a higher ticket price than for other events and programs, possibility of attracting media coverage, opportunity to invite or attract non-members who may join your organization if they enjoy the event
5. *Create a sponsorship brochure (hard copy and/or online) as a marketing tool* - include an explanation of what your organization is all about, what it does, and how it helps the community you serve - set out the sponsorship opportunities available (both one-time and ongoing), the financial commitment required, and what the sponsor receives for the donation - may also set out in-kind needs and advertising opportunities (for example, cost to place ads of various sizes in an event brochure) - this gives board members a quick reference guide when speaking with potential sponsors, and allows sponsors to evaluate and compare the options offered to decide what suits them best - it is a good idea to develop a sponsorship agreement form that can be filled out and signed by both the organization and the sponsor, to ensure everyone knows what to expect from the sponsorship arrangement
6. *Cultivate relationships with organizations that may be willing to provide ongoing financial support* - multi-year commitments give your organization a degree of financial stability, to avoid the need to scramble every year to meet funding targets - ideally an organization should have several of these, with staggered terms, to ensure uninterrupted stream of income - relationships are important and take time - for example, the sponsor of a major event agreed to make a contribution sufficient to fund the event for several years, once the sponsor had become closely associated with the event - also, multi-year sponsors may be asked to participate on organizing committees for events so they can have a direct impact on the success of the event (and may be willing to increase their contributions so they can take some of the credit for improving the quality of the event) - having a few committed sponsors can have a significant financial impact