

Fundraising for a Cause: Raising Money for Non-Profit Organizations

This document is a tip sheet to support organizations in their fundraising efforts. It is geared towards targeting individual donors, however it might also be useful when considering grant applications and/or other program-level funding opportunities.

Why do people give?

Whether it is a donation of money, sharing time, or giving resources, humans benefit psychologically from supporting others. People want to donate their money to causes that meet the needs of their community.

In fact, one of the main reasons people give is simply because they are asked.

Studies show that the vast majority of charitable donations (about 85%) come from a direct request for donations.

(Tempel, E. R., Seiler, T.L., Burlingame, D. F., 2016).



Developing a connection

A fundraiser must match the needs of the organization with the needs and desires of the donor. Potential donors need to be shown how their own interests are met through the work of the organization. Fundraising then becomes mutually beneficial.

Are you approaching the right donors?

Three criteria to consider when selecting potential donors:

- 1 The donor has a link and/or significant connection with the organization or cause (e.g., benefiting directly from the organization's work, geographic proximity, a personal connection with someone involved with the organization)
- 2 They have the ability to make a donation
- 3 They are interested in the organization's work

Fundraising is about developing relationships between donors and the organization. These relationships can be cultivated and maintained through clear, consistent, and inclusive regular communication.

Questions to consider before approaching a potential donor:

- What is your reason, personally, for being involved in this organization?
- What makes the work of your organization important and unique?
- Why do you think that your organization deserves the donor's support?
- What do you/the organization hope to accomplish by using the funds raised, and how does the organization intend to carry out these plans?
- How will your organization ensure responsible management of these funds?

Making a proposal/request

The next step is to contact the potential donor for the first time. This can be done via phone call or letter/email to discuss the proposed program or project.

If you are using a template (see additional resources for examples), it is important to personalize the message, as this shows the donor that you are invested in them as an individual, and that you value their time and resources. Templates, while quick, can lack a "personal touch."

Following this initial contact, if a potential donor wishes to continue the discussion about supporting the organization, the fundraiser should share their proposal package.

Proposal Packages

Components of a proposal package will vary, however they should meet the needs of the donor. (See additional resources for more information on proposal packages). **A proposal package may include any of the following:**

- A cover letter, including contact information of the organization
- The cause addressed by the organization, and proposed ways to tackle the problem underlying this cause
- A summary of the request being made
- Expected results of the program/project being funded
- Assessment tools (if applicable/available)
- An overview of the organization's governance and staffing
- Budget and explanation of the budget
- Project schedule



What a donor may want to know about your organization

WHAT THEY WILL REQUEST	WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE
Mission statement	An overview of the cause of the non-profit organization
Goals	The desired outcome that solves the problem that the organization is trying to solve
Objectives	What will be accomplished, concretely, by achieving the goals
Programs & services	What the organization provides to people and how it is provided (e.g., testimonials from people who have received services)
Organizational finances	A clear and concise statement of the expenses related to the delivery of programs and services
Governance	The organizational make-up of the organization or an overview of its leadership and governance structure
Staffing	Staff qualifications and a description of employee culture
Provision of services	The benefits, strengths, and effectiveness of the organization's programs and how services are delivered
Planning & evaluation	Fundraising programs, plans, and evaluation processes that demonstrate the commitments, strengths, and impacts of the services provided
History	The story of the founders/organization, what drives them, and the credibility established over time



Things to consider

- Don't only target "big donors." Any amount of money, when combined, can create positive change.
- Smaller regular (monthly or quarterly) donations can be more sustainable over time than one-time, lump-sum donations.
- Individuals who have already donated their time or money are often likely to remain engaged if given the opportunity. Make sure to include these people in any future fundraising plans.

After the donation?

- Be grateful and immediately and appropriately thank the donor for their gift.
- Make sure to add the donor to the list of people who are periodically thanked for supporting the organization, and make sure they receive important updates and Annual Reports.
- Show the donor how their contribution enables the operations of the organization, and give examples of the positive outcomes it has allowed the organization to achieve.
- Invest in donors as individuals (i.e., personalize letters or emails, make phone calls, and ask them for input). This will allow them to feel like they are a part of something bigger, and also means that they are more likely to continue to support the organization.



Additional resources:

<https://sbccimplementationkits.org/resource-mobilization/lessons/writing-a-fundraising-proposal/>

https://charityvillage.com/how_to_write_the_perfect_fundraising_letter/

Source:

Tempel, E. R., Seiler, T. L. & Burlingame, D. F. (2016). *Achieving Excellence In Fundraising*. John Wiley & Sons.