

Overview of Nonprofit Fundraising Sources and Approaches

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General Guidelines for Fundraising

In addition to the guidelines included in the large amount of other fundraising information referenced from the library:

- Ensure the board is strongly involved in fundraising planning and implementation
- Develop fundraising goals to be the resources needed to reach the strategic goals identified during strategic planning
- Identify a variety of funding sources for each goal and the particular fundraising strategies preferred by each of the sources (the above-mentioned Web page provides a good overview of various strategies and where they should be used)
- Ensure your plans specify who will be doing what fundraising, so you don't have sources who become overwhelmed or irritated by repeated solicitations from different people in your organization

"The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Management" by Smith, Bucklin and Associates suggests:

- The most important aspect of fundraising is excellent public relations, that is, ensuring that your community has a strong, positive impression of your organization
- Establish an organizational structure to implement the fundraising plan, including:

Board Executive Committee - Establishes priorities and goals and approves the plan

Outreach/Marketing Committee - Identifies potential donors and coordinates efforts to promote fundraising

Fundraising Committee - Leads development and implementation of the plan, and approaches donors

Volunteer Coordinator - Coordinates volunteer efforts, including identifying where volunteers might help, recruiting volunteers, ensuring they are effective and that they are recognized

Information processing - Assign staff to develop and maintain the fundraising database

Accounting - Be sure to include moneys raised in your accounting system

Donation processing - Have staff available to process donations (cashing checks, sending notes of appreciation, updating the fundraising database, etc.)

- Most fundraising is done in the fall of the year when corporations are doing their planning for the following year
- Corporations typically require a written proposal
- Foundations rarely fund operating costs, that is, costs to support central administration of an organization, rather than specific programs which directly deliver services
- Consider approaching a local advertising, marketing or public relations firm for pro bono advice. Regularly send these companies evidence of the successes of your organization to keep them up to date on your organization.
- Consider using third-class mailing, which is cheaper than first-class, but sometimes takes as much as two weeks longer to arrive. Expedite arrival of third-class mail by using bar codes and nine-digit zip codes.

Typical Funding Sources and Advantages/Disadvantages of Each

(Credit to Ellen M. Hatfield of the Twin Cities in Minnesota)

Source	Advantages	Disadvantages
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Largest source of giving · Ongoing source one can build · Once a giver, also an advocate · Volunteers are a good source of money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Costly to develop, small return per individual unit · Hard to generate unless broad-based direct service appeal · Risky for the inexperienced · Need significant assistance from the organization's board and volunteers
Large-Family Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Source of large sums of money · Accessible, professional staff · Clear guidelines, process · Most likely to research your request · Board volunteers can help, not always key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Start-up funds only · Lengthy process · More difficult to access through personal influence · Proposals may be more lengthy
Community Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Much like large-family foundations · Staff may be sufficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Host of foundations within foundations · Most money is earmarked, special funds
Small-Family Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · May fund ongoing operating expenses · Personal influence with board members helps · Guidelines often broad · Not very fussy about grant format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hard to access, no professional staff · Often not large sums of money · Without personal influence, may not be possible

Large Corporations / Corporate Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Can be source of large sums of money · Smaller amounts of money may be ongoing · Often accessible, professional staff · May be tied to volunteer involvement · Business strategy may be clear · Source of cause-related marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Large sums of money aren't ongoing · Hard to get around staff · Must be within their guidelines · Not likely to contribute if not headquartered locally or have a public consumer base · Often want board representation
Small Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Very informal approach · Money may be ongoing · Personal connections will suffice · Neighborhood focus will help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Small amounts of money · Narrow range of interest · Personal contacts are key
Federated Funds (United Ways, United Arts, Combined Health Appeal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Steady source of relatively large sums of money · Clear process · Professional staff, can be agency staff driven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Generally can't be a start-up organization · Must be social service and fit priority focus · Very lengthy entry process · Very time consuming as must be part of yearly fund raising process, with periodic in-depth review
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Large sums of money possible · Process is set, clear · Political clout helps · May be source of ongoing money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Application procedures may be long, tedious · May only pay by unit of service, fluctuates · Unspent monies may be returned · Difficult record keeping
Churches and Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Often looking for group projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In-kind services most likely · Need to fit their service focus, neighborhood or religious outlook

Information for Smaller Nonprofits

For smaller nonprofits (e.g., with budgets under \$100,000 or so), Smith, Bucklin and Associates (in "The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Management") recommend:

- Start with internal solicitations to board members, staff and members of your organization (if you are chartered on a membership basis).
- Look to the donors who can make the largest contributions. Write them, call them and arrange a visit. Offer a co-sponsorship to events.
- Next, prepare a detailed donor list and offer them a range of options.
- Then go to the smaller donations list.