

Fundamentals of Fundraising: An Introduction

SCORE Webinar: September 25, 2025

Seminar Topics

Speaker Introduction

Basic Concepts

Common Techniques



What is Fundraising?

A POLL

What is Fundraising?

- **Asking for support (cash, in-kind, etc.)**
- **Inviting people to invest in your organization**
- **Asking someone to be a partner in your success**
- **Connecting your mission with the community**
- **Giving people the opportunity to do something meaningful for something they are passionate about**



Basic Concepts

Why do People Give?

A POLL

Basics

Why Do People Give?

- Love for the mission
- For personal recognition and benefits
- To make a difference
- Believe those with more should help those with less
- Because of personal experiences
- Like the benefits of giving
- Because they were asked



Basics

Why Do Businesses Give?



- **Community relations**
- **Marketing and/or brand building**
- **Prestige**

Basics

Private Donations: Who Gives

2024 Statistics

• Individuals	66%	\$392 billion ↑
• Foundations	19%	\$110 billion ↑
• Bequests	08%	\$46 billion
• Businesses/Corporations	07%	\$44 billion ↑

All data is the property of *Giving USA*,
The Annual Report on Philanthropy

Where do most private donations go?

A POLL

Basics

Private Donations: Who Gets

• Religion	23%	\$147 billion
• Human Services	14%	\$91 billion
• Education	14%	\$88 billion
• Grant-Making Foundations	11%	\$72 billion
• Public – Society Benefit	11%	\$67 billion
• Health	11%	\$61 billion
• International Affairs	06%	\$35 billion
• Arts/Culture/Humanities	04%	\$25 billion
• Individuals	04%	\$24 billion
• Environment/Animals	03%	\$22 billion

All data is the property of *Giving USA,*
The Annual Report on Philanthropy

Basics

A Few Essentials

- **Passion**
- **Relationships**
- **People give to people**
- **Story telling**
- **Research**
- **Integrity**
- **Respect**
- **Listen**
- **Keep accurate records**
- **Thank You!**



Understand Who You Are

- **What is the challenge your nonprofit addresses**
- **Who are you serving**
- **What are the ways your nonprofit addresses the challenge**
- **What outcomes are you seeking**
- **Who else is addressing the same problem and why are you different**

Basics

Key Steps

- **Decide what you need support for**
- **Identify the best donor prospects**
- **Choose the best strategy**
- **Make the request**
- **Thank you!**

- **Rinse and repeat 😊**



Common Techniques

Common Tactics

- **Individual giving (smaller gifts)**
- **Major giving (larger gifts)**
- **Events**
- **Grantwriting**
- **Other**

Common Techniques

What to Consider

- **What are your organization's needs?**
 - Operating support?
 - Project support?
 - In-kind support?
- **What is the organization's history of fundraising?**

Common Techniques

What to Consider (cont.)

- **What skills are already present?**
 - What are your staff resources?
 - What is your board/volunteer capacity?
- **How much do you need to raise?**
- **How quickly do you need the funds?**

Individuals

Direct Response: Mail, Email,
Phones, Etc.

Major Giving



Common Techniques

Direct Response

Pros:

- Can yield results fairly quickly
- Can be targeted
- Can be personalized
- Can be informative
- Can be measured easily
- Can start small and grow

Cons:

- Can have low response rates
- Can be ignored
- Can be expensive (postage, supplies, etc.)
- Can be competitive

Common Techniques
Direct Mail

Things to Consider with Direct Mail

- Is your need for funds based on a simple emotional appeal?
- Do you have a compelling immediate need for funds?
- Can you state your needs succinctly?
- Do you have a track record of success or a believable dream?

Common Techniques Direct Mail (cont.)

Parts of a Direct Mail Package

- The list
- The letter
- A reply form
- A reply envelope
- Enclosure(s)



Common Techniques

Email & Social Media

Email and Social Media

- Message should be brief and have strong impact (esp. social media)
- Be specific on what you want your donor to give
- Include a deadline and sense of immediacy
- Make it easy for your patron to respond by having an online ability to accept donations

Common Techniques

Telephone

- Have a strong script
- Message should be brief and have strong impact
- Be specific on what you want your donor to give
- Include a deadline and sense of immediacy
- Make it easy for your patron to respond





Brief Break

Common Techniques
Major Giving



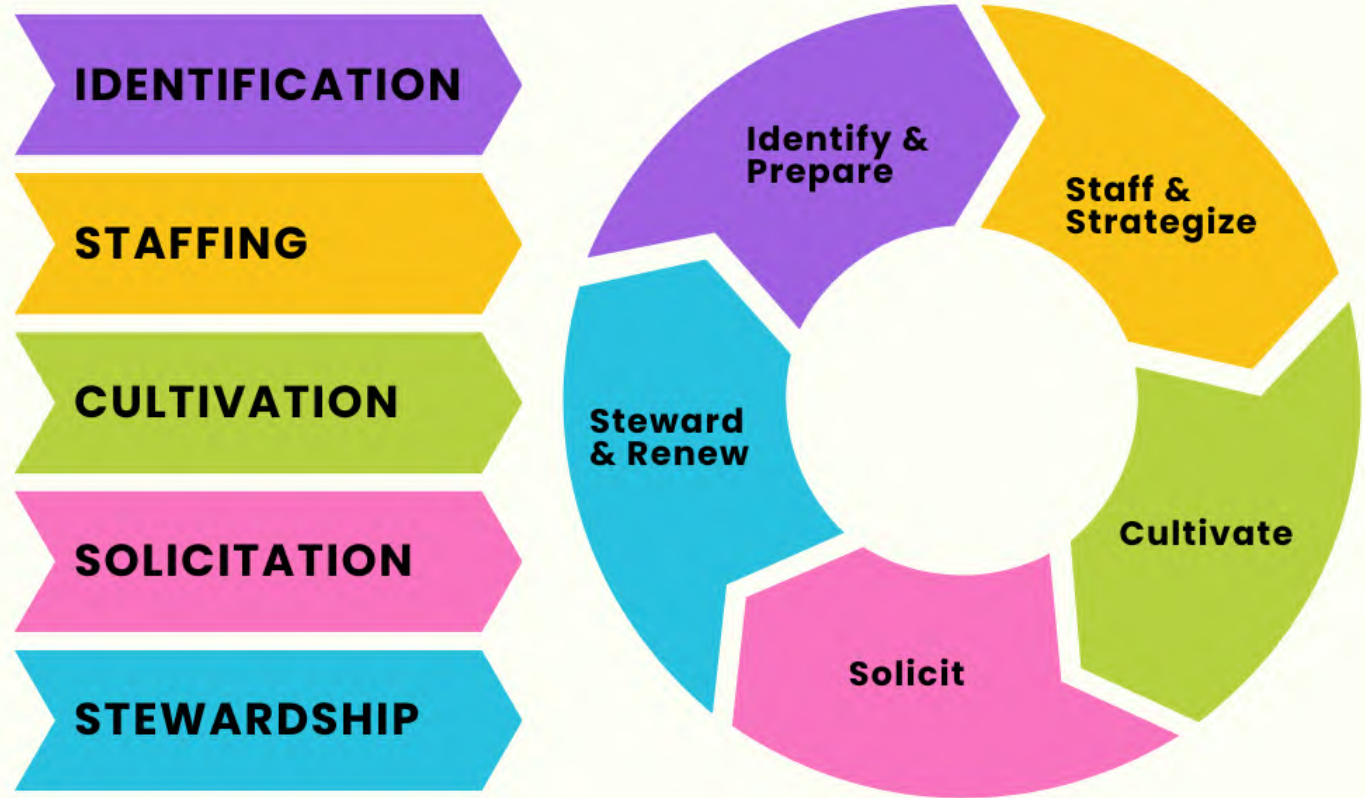
- **Donors who give a meaningful gift**
- **Donors who have the potential to make such gifts**

How Much is a Major Gift?

A POLL

Common Techniques
Major Giving
(cont.)

Major Giving Cycle



Common Techniques

Major Giving

(cont.)

Identify prospect

- Who may already be engaged
- Who may have a relationship with someone
- Who may have capacity and affinity

Prepare for first/next engagement

- Research previous engagement
- Research prospect background and giving
- Understand the prospect's preferred method of engagement

Staff the engagement

- Who has the best relationship
- Concept of portfolio

Common Techniques

Major Giving

(cont.)

Strategize the “interaction”

- What is the type of the next engagement (letter, phone call, meeting, etc.)
- Who should do the engagement
- Prepare all the appropriate materials

Cultivation methods

- Keep informed with various communications (impact report, updates, cards, etc.)
- Listening/learning meeting(s)
- Invite feedback/advice
- Invite to appropriate organizational activities
- Surprise and delight

Common Techniques

Major Giving

(cont.)

Solicit the prospective donor

- In-person, by letter, by phone, by email, etc.
- Who should do the engagement
- Have the prepared materials

Stewarding the donor after the request

- Promptly thank the donor in writing
- Keep informed with various communications
- Invite to appropriate organizational activities

Common Techniques

Major Giving

(cont.)

Additional Thoughts

- Built on relationships – and each relationship is its own “campaign”
- Don’t assume a prospective donor will or will not give
- Rule of 90 – 10 (used to be 80-20)
- 2-3 years between first gift and first major gift
- 5 or more years between first gift and leadership gift

Common Techniques

Direct Response & Major Giving (cont.)

Follow-Up

- Thank donors promptly
- Collect donor and donation information in a database or at least a spreadsheet
- Start planning the next engagement, campaign, communication, etc.

Events



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Common Techniques

Events

Pros:

- Can raise a lot of money
- May be a good venue for communication
- May be more comfortable for volunteers
- Can raise public awareness
- Can provide face time and engagement

Cons:

- Labor intensive
- May require networking
- May be complicated and require great organization

Common Techniques Events



Use the chat feature to share different types of events.

Common Techniques

Events

(cont.)

Types of events

- Pledge events (walk, ride, run, swim, etc.)
- Golf tournament
- Gala dinner/dance
- Luncheon
- Auction (stand alone or as part of an event)
- Raffle (stand alone or as part of an event)
- Benefit or lecture
- Cocktail party
- Recognition or awards ceremony
- Rummage sale, flea market, bake sale
- House party
- House, garden, and/or studio tour

Common Techniques

Events

(cont.)

What to Consider in Choosing an Event

- What are your goals
- What is your networking capacity
- What is your risk tolerance and how much are you willing to spend
- Who is your audience
- What is your time frame

Grantwriting



Common Techniques
Grantmaking

Pros:

- Sums can be large
- Multi-year funding is possible
- Good for project support

Cons:

- Rarely for general operating support
- Time can be lengthy to receive the grant
- Extensive paperwork and reporting possible

Common Techniques

Grantmaking

(cont.)

Parts of a Standard Proposal

- Executive summary
- Statement of need
- Goals / outcomes / objectives
- Project design / description / activities
- Organization overview / history
- Budget (project and/or total organization)
- Conclusion
- Attachments

Common Techniques

Grantmaking

(cont.)

Attachments

- IRS determination letter
- Audited financial statements
- Form 990
- Organization's annual budget
- Board list
- Others

Common Techniques
Grantmaking
(cont.)

Frequently Asked Questions

- With whom does the organization collaborate?
- Who else funds your organization/project (or to whom else have you applied for support)?
- What happens if the organization does not receive the grant or receives less than requested?
- What community priority does the project address?
- How does the project fit within the funder's priorities and/or guidelines?
- How does the project fit with the organization's mission?

Other Fundraising Strategies



- Membership
- Planned giving
- Capital campaigns
- Rounding up
- “Buckets”

Other Strategies

Membership

Pros:

- Good source of unrestricted funds
- Generally reliable ongoing support
- Helps build deeper relationships

Cons:

- Requires a benefit program with ongoing fulfillment
- Not effective with a small audience
- Requires staff resources to assist a larger audience

Other Strategies

Planned Giving

Pros:

- Gifts can be large
- Excellent long-term support
- Additional tax advantages for donors
- Starting a simple program is not complicated

Cons:

- Gifts may take years to be realized
- More ideal for endowment support
- Requires ongoing planning and communication
- A legacy group requires stewardship

Other Strategies

Capital Campaigns

Pros:

- Can raise large sums
- Can attract new donors
- Create a vision for the future and excitement for the organization
- Build something big

Cons:

- Time consuming for staff
- Can distract from operational support
- Only for capital projects (endowment, building, etc.)
- Require an established track record

Other Strategies

Rounding Up

Pros:

- Easy way to convert a client to a donor
- Can raise money quickly
- Gives people a chance to demonstrate a connection

Cons:

- Gifts may be quite small
- Gifts may not be repeated
- Potentially a lot of paperwork for small gifts

Other Strategies
“Buckets”

Pros:

- Captures gifts when people are most excited and/or
- Can raise money quickly

Cons:

- Contact information is rarely captured
- Gifts cannot be repeated

Online Resources

- **Association of Fundraising Professionals (afpglobal.org)**
- **Candid (candid.org)**
 - Foundation Center
 - GuideStar
- **ProPublica (propublica.org)**
- **National Council of Nonprofits (councilofnonprofits.org)**
- **TechSoup (techsoup.org)**
- **Chronicle of Philanthropy (philanthropy.com)**
- **Canva.com**
- **Pixabay.com**



Questions?