

GREATER  
WASHINGTON

CATALOGUE FOR  
**PHILANTHROPY**

# Fundraising During COVID-19

Maintaining Support During a Crisis



7/23/20

# General Guidance

---

## Plan and Prepare



### Planning

- Impact from COVID-19 already changing nonprofit financial realities
- Nonprofits typically feel financial impacts later than for-profit businesses



### Widespread

- Over 75% of our nonprofit partners have had to change how they're fundraising
- 80% facing major disruptions or threats to stability
- 70%+ facing financial challenges



### All Relevant

- Regardless of your nonprofit's orientation to COVID-19 you need to be planning for the next few months of finances
- Current crisis could lead to shifts in institutional and individual giving

# Individual Donors

# Tip #1: Prioritize Donor Outreach

---

## Schedule Who, When, and How

### Who

- Focus first on top donors
- Second, on donors who give during this time typically
- Third, long-time donors or programmatic donors
- Finally, first time donors over \$250 from EOY 2019

### When

- If making an ask, be very specific about what it is for or why
- Donors face an uncertain financial future with jobs and stocks
- Need to cut through doubt with specificity

### How

- Give option of Zoom or call
- Send a short note or thank you card
- Pick a team of 2-4 people who can commit to 2-3 calls daily
- This results in 80-200 calls in a month

# Tip #2: Keep Asking

---

## Different But Familiar

### Mission

- Main mission, pitch, reason to care is likely same as before COVID-19
- Focus on others pieces to give lasting mission context and clarity

### Context

- Add urgency of situation to your pitch
- Could be expanded needs of clients, new needs of clients, or new challenges for organization

### Clarity

- Explain the pivot you are making and plans moving forward
- Reduce uncertainty
- Give specifics and try to track stories/perspectives from staff and/or clients

# Tip #3: Don't Ignore Grassroots Donors

---

## Ensuring All Can Be Engaged



### Regular

Send email monthly with engagement opportunities



### Involve

Give everyone something to do at home



### Positive

Overall tone should be positive and focused on change—when possible



### Sugarcoat

Be honest about challenges or issues during this time



### Silence

Don't ignore your supporters or stop sending updates

# Tip #4: Virtual Group Meetings

---

## Replicate Best Parts of In-Person

### Targeted

- Target the purpose, main points, and audience of event
- Invite 20-40 people, make it feel exclusive
- Have 2-3 main points to share
- Keep it to 45 minutes or less

### Facilitated

- Not just an open question and answer
- May have an opportunity to mix recorded and live
- If taking questions, use chat function
- Can use recorded interviews and still feels engaging

### Engaging

- Have some back and forth with audience
- Ask them to chat responses
- If small enough (12 or less) have them introduce themselves
- Give audience an action item at end of meeting

# Events



# Tip #1: Choose Your Direction

---

## Delay, Cancel, or Go Virtual



### Postpone

Tell stakeholders you will have the event later—this is getting more difficult to do



### Cancel

Due to uncertainty, simply not having the event



### Virtual

Shifting elements of the in-person event to an online gathering

# Tip #2: Pick your Method

---

## Three Ways to Go Online



### Livestream

- *What is it?* Broadcasting someone performing or speaking live to the audience for majority of event
- *Benefits:* Most urgent, best option is really engaging content
- *Cons:* Can be costly, challenge to produce, loses appeal if not watched live



### Recorded

- *What is it?* Sharing prompts or recorded videos with audience
- *Benefits:* Easy production, creative options, can most closely replicate event experience
- *Cons:* Tech limitations of audience, must keep them engaged, hard to evaluate



### Campaign

- *What is it?* Simply doing an online fundraising campaign at a specific time
- *Benefits:* Easiest for you and audience, expected course of action
- *Cons:* Could be transactional, lose engagement elements of event

# Foundations

# Tip #1: Look at Trends

---

## Foundations



### Reach Out

- Need to be engaged just like major donors
- Personal relationships with program officers best insulation against shifting priorities



### Priorities

- For the next year, some foundations like to shift focus solely to basic needs or health
- Most are doing something COVID-19 related, focus and impact on traditional funding varies
- Stocks will impact endowments but not until 2021 and 2022



### Shifts

- From recession, big shift was for larger, more competitive grants and more focus on impact
- Unclear yet but one emerging area is racial justice/systemic injustice
- May also be looking for more examples of collaboration/how you fit ecosystem

## Tip #2: Past, Present, Future

---

### Communicate Need Based on Variety of Perspectives

#### Past

When writing grants now, use past examples or stats to show program effectiveness

#### Now

Explain pivot and any success stories or impact stats you have from past few months

#### Next

Include main plan for rest of 2020 programming and any significant backup options

# Other Things to Add On

---

## Driving Group Engagement

**1**

### Goal

Set clear goals for rest of 2020

**2**

### Talk

Be in touch with donors and foundations now

**3**

### Plan

Use next 2 months to engage prior to end of year

**4**

### Creative

Donors want community and impact—find ways to offer it

**5**

### Context

Think of donors' lives—add kid content, relaxation, etc.

**6**

### Gamify

Add some type of game to engage audience