

# Fundraising

Fundraising is important to ensure your pantry is sustainable. Relying on food donations alone is not a reliable way to continue operating your pantry. Having different methods of resource collection is important and will help you build a more sustainable pantry operation for years to come. See below for resources provided by our Individual Giving/Philanthropy Team. Click on each area to be directed to the right section.

## [Creating a Fundraising Plan](#)

Creating a fundraising plan involves a review of your current state of fundraising and helps set a clear path for working towards your fundraising goals and objectives. You can find steps to creating a fundraising plan [here](#).

## [Sample Sponsorship Letters](#)

Asking businesses, individuals, and organizations to consider sponsoring your event or activity will help them know what you need and how it will make a difference. You can find sample sponsorship letters [here](#).

## [Resources and Helpful Links](#)

There are plenty of online resources, associations, and trainings you can take part in to learn more about meeting the fundraising needs of your organization. You can find links [here](#).

# Creating a Fundraising Plan

Creating a fundraising plan involves a review of your current state of fundraising and helps set a clear path for working towards your fundraising goals and objectives. Below are the steps you must consider to create your fundraising plan.

## **Step 1: Identify Your Financial Goals**

1. What would you need financially to support or grow your mission?
2. Review last year's fundraising: How much did you raise? What were your greatest successes? What were your biggest challenges?
3. What do you anticipate being your greatest challenges this year?

## **Step 2: Identify Your Resources**

1. What is your budget for fundraising?
  - Having in-kind donations can help stretch your dollars further, however, it is likely you will have some financial costs to achieve certain goals. It's important to factor in hard costs along with labor/time when determining the Return On Investment (ROI) for any fundraising activities– consider costs for printing, postage, event logistics (food, decorations, venue, etc.)
2. Which staff or volunteer resources are available to you? What is their experience with fundraising?
  - Training opportunities may be available for little to no cost to help individuals responsible for fundraising activities to feel comfortable and confident with fundraising activities for your organization.

## **Step 2: Identify Your Resources (continued)**

3. What system will you use to track your progress?

- Do you have existing donors and contact information that you can use to contact them about your financial needs?
- Whether you invest in a donor information software program or use spreadsheets, it is important to track contact information and gift history along with any donor communications or interactions.
- Building a database will also help you to be more effective with future fundraising and communication plans and activities.

4. Who are the individuals, businesses, or organizations that have an interest in your mission?

- Do you have a connection with them? If not, is there someone that can help facilitate an introduction?
- To create donor partnerships, it's important to consider how a donor is linked to your mission and their level of interest in supporting it.
- Look first to those that are already closely connected to you such as volunteers, vendors, and local individuals or businesses that have shared values.

## **Step 3: Identify Activities and Opportunities**

These are things you likely already have! They can help you to attract, retain/renew, and upgrade donors

1. Fundraising activities you may consider include events, campaigns, social media challenges, call-a-thons, direct mail, face-to-face meetings, and other activities that involve asking donors and potential donors to make a gift.

### **Step 3: Identify Activities and Opportunities (continued)**

2. What will you do to market to new donors? – social media, direct mail, word-of-mouth are all opportunities to let people know about your organization and your financial needs.

- NOTE: it is much more cost effective to retain existing donors – How will you communicate with them about their impact? Consider reaching out to existing donors for feedback on your programs or communication approaches. Make it easy for them to continue to support your mission through recurring gifts.

3. Upgrade donors are those existing donors who increase their gift from the previous year. There are many ways you can ask donors to make an additional gift or increase their recurring gift. Direct asks are best. You can also consider using direct mail/email appeals.

### **Step 4: Create Goals for Each Activity**

1. Dollars raised: Use data from previous years along with any known obstacles or opportunities that may impact your fundraising this year.

2. Donors: It's important to know how many donors you currently have to set targets for how many new donors you want to engage along with setting goals for retention of donors.

3. Board participation: Board involvement in giving, advocating, and connecting with donors is key. These are your strongest advocates. Set a clear goal and expectations for each Board Member to actively participate and contribute to your fundraising priorities.



## **Step 5: Identify Your Fundraising Plan Focus Areas**

1. Once you have completed your review of your current state of fundraising you can build a plan that will help you achieve your goals. Identify up to 3-4 areas that you want to focus on for the year.
2. Ensure that each of your goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) and that they will serve to further your overall organization mission. Include who will be responsible for each area and what steps will be taken to keep everyone accountable.

## **Step 6: Implement and Assess Your Fundraising Plan**

1. Now that you have established your goals, be sure to communicate them to organization staff and key volunteers (i.e. Board members).
2. Set deadlines and be sure to follow-up throughout the year to report on progress towards each goal on a regular basis.
3. Solicit feedback from staff and volunteers about the process and consider opportunities to improve or change when needed to stay on track to achieving your goals.
4. Celebrate successes and recognize staff and volunteers that are actively involved in fundraising activities to keep them motivated.
5. Revisit your plan annually to assess your overall progress and create goals for the next year.



# Sponsorship Letters

Asking businesses, individuals, and organizations to consider sponsoring your event or activity will help them know what you need and how it will make a difference.

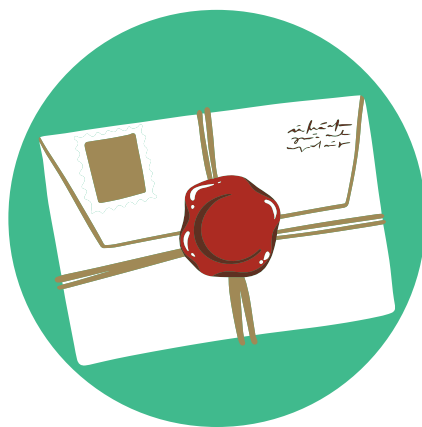
Here are some sample letters you may want to adapt for your use. It is best to send letters on organization letterhead or use an official email. Be sure to include contact information for follow-up. You may also want to include any relevant information about the event along with photos or data from the previous year to show examples of what they can expect if they choose to partner with you.

It helps to send letters (mail or email) and then follow-up with a phone call or email to ensure the intended recipient received your letter and to help build the connection. If the business, individual, or organization does sponsor your event/activity, make sure to follow-up with them after it takes place to share the outcomes, celebrate successes, and ask for their feedback about the experience.

## Click on the Letters to View Them



**SAMPLE 1**



**SAMPLE 2**



**SAMPLE 3**

# Sample Letter 1

Dear [sponsor's name],

We at [nonprofit's name] work hard each year to provide [positive impact of nonprofit] and improve the lives of [relate this to your nonprofit's mission].

Currently, we are working hard to raise [fundraising goal] in order to [specific nonprofit goal, for example: host this next event, bring food to this many homeless people]. That's why we are currently looking for sponsors to help us reach our goal.

Would you be willing to help us by sponsoring our project with [a specific donation amount or a percentage of the total expenses]? We can offer you [incentive, for example: recognition in our project's printed materials and signage].

Your generosity means the world to us. The support from our past sponsors helped us host our most successful event yet, [past event and description], where we [achievement of event, for example: a record-breaking amount of money] for our mission. If we raise [\$ amount] this year, we can accomplish [physical impact of nonprofit mission]. Imagine what we can do with your help!

We would love to discuss a relationship for the future. To get involved or if you have any questions about our organization, please contact [contact name and information].

Thank you so much!

[Name]

# Sample Letter 2

Dear [sponsor's name],

We are [nonprofit's name] and we work hard every year to help fight [nonprofit cause example] and provide resources for [nonprofit cause example]. This cause is so important to us, and the strides we have made so far wouldn't have been possible without supporters in our community like you.

This year, we are asking for sponsors to help our team in making even more of a difference. Would you be willing to help our project with [a specific donation amount or a percentage of the total expenses]? We can offer you [incentive, for example: branding on promotional material or in our online communications and speeches at an event].

Your support of [specific dollar amount] may not seem like a lot, but it would directly enable us to [project, event, or goal], with the ultimate impact of [impact of your mission].

This year we need to raise [fundraising goal] in order for our team to launch [new campaign, initiative, or fundraising event]. As a thank you for your support, we at [nonprofit's name] would like to offer you [incentive]. Can we count on you?

Please contact us at [email/phone number] if you'd like to discuss our project or mission.

Thank you,

[Name]



# Sample Letter 3

Dear [sponsor's name],

My name is [name] and I am a [member/leader/pastor] of [church's name]. I am writing to let you know that we are working on a new project and hope to complete it by [date]. [Describe the project, for example: a new youth program or an event hosted by the church]

Our church has been working to accomplish [project's goals] with this new project and hope to bring [potential benefits] to our community. However, to reach our goal and have [project] come to life, we need to call on the help of supporters like you.

Would you consider sponsoring our church and help us work towards our mission? A sponsorship of [specific donation amount] can help bring us so much closer to achieving our goals. Together, we're sure to [project's major goal].

If you cannot help us financially, please consider providing in-kind support like [resources, for example: food, clothing].

If you'd like to support our project, please feel free to contact us at [phone/email]. If you want to stop by as well, we would love to talk in person. Visit us at [address].

Thanks again for supporting our mission,

[Name]

# Resources

## Donor Stewardship

### **Donor Relations Guru**

<https://www.donorrelations.com/newlibrary>

Library with free examples from other organization for thank you letters, annual reports, and impact reports. You will need to subscribe to newsletters to receive access to free resources.

## Networking and Education

### **Center for Nonprofit Management**

<https://www.cnm.org/>

Access to trainings, partnerships, and resources for nonprofit organizations. Membership levels vary based on your organizations budget size. Some offerings are available to nonmember organizations for an additional fee.

### **Association of Fundraising Professionals, Nashville Chapter**

<https://www.afpnashville.org/>

Hosts networking and educational opportunities for nonprofit organizations on a monthly basis. Membership is recommended. Guests are able to attend monthly meetings for a nominal cost.

## Online Learning Programs

### **Nonprofit Ready**

<https://www.nonprofitready.org/>

Online database of free courses, videos, and downloadable guides for a variety of subject areas to aid nonprofit organizations.