Community Tree Leadership Forum

Fundraising and Development:

Finding Funds for Community Projects

Presented by

The National Arbor Day Foundation®

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research
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Fundraising and Development:
Finding Funds for Community Projects

FINDING FUNDS FOR
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS

Training Content

1. Understand the Broad Range of Fundraising Options for Nonprofits
2. Develop Grant-Seeking Skills, With an Emphasis on:
   - **Project development**
   - **Research**
   - **Building relationships with funders**
3. Develop Donor Fundraising Skills, Including:
   - Identifying prospects
   - Clarifying the "pitch"
   - Conducting face to face meetings with donors
4. Learn Strategies for Integrating Fundraising Into the Daily Work of the Organization

Resource Section

- Reference Books
- Websites
- Other resources

This material was compiled in cooperation with Andy Robinson, fundraising consultant and trainer.
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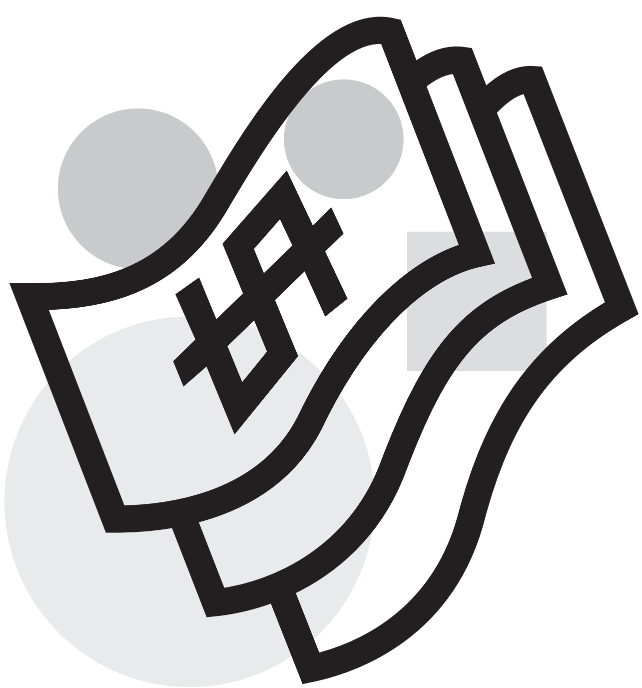
Introduction

FUNDRAISING: IT'S SIMPLER THAN YOU THINK

Fundraising is often viewed as complicated, mysterious, and scary. It's assumed that you need to hire someone with appropriate credentials, as one would hire an accountant, plumber, or lawyer. Another myth is that professional fundraisers show up with a list of rich people who always say yes, which means that volunteers and board members will not be forced into the awkward position of asking friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers for support.

Joan Flanagan, the author of *Successful Fundraising* and a pioneer in applying fundraising principles to the needs of grassroots organizations, says, "All the knowledge about fundraising can be summed up in 10 words—'Ask 'em, thank 'em, ask 'em again, thank 'em again.'"

At its heart, fundraising is one person asking another to get involved, provide help, take a stand, join a movement, *to feel good.* Successful fundraising combines both art and science: mastering tangible skills and responding to the needs of your donors in a respectful and thoughtful way. In the end, the most important attribute is *passion:* all the techniques in the world are useless without passion for the mission.



Smart organizations understand and explore the broad range of fundraising options available to them, including:

- Grants
- Individual donors
- Earned income (fees for service, etc.)

This section covers a variety of steps and strategies to help you improve your fundraising skills:

- Creating a fundraising case statement that effectively tells your story
- Developing fundable projects
- Researching prospective funders
- Working with prospects to build relationships
- Making the "ask"
- Integrating fundraising throughout the organization

In 2004, U.S. nonprofits collected more than *$250 billion* in donated income. This is a staggeringly large number—more than the economic activity of most countries. Whatever your financial needs, more than enough is money available. To collect your fair share, you will need to:

- Clarify the value you add to your community
- Organize an effective team
- Share your passion for the work
- Ask, ask, ask

The following material will help you begin with confidence. Go forth and prosper!

PHASE ONE: CLARIFYING THE CASE

Defining What You Do Best—Defining your specific expertise and mission can help you to stand out in the marketplace, effectively compete with other organizations, and help funders identify the best place to apply their dollars.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION DOES WELL.

What are you selling? Write down three things about your organization— accomplishments, structure, the people involved, etc.—that you're most proud of:

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Differentiation: What makes your group unique? What do you have or do that no one else has or does in your community?

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Audience: Who are you trying to reach…for any reason? List your different audiences:

What's your "sound bite"?

Given limited time, what words will you use to capture their attention? Write down phrases or sentences that describe what you do and provide an emotional appeal for the reader or listener.

Tell a compelling story.

PHASE TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND WEIGHING YOUR OPTIONS

Where's the Money? Philanthropy in America

In 2004, $249 billion in private money was given to U.S. nonprofits. Where did it come from?

- 11%—Foundations
- 5%—Corporations
- 76%—Individuals
- 8%—Bequests

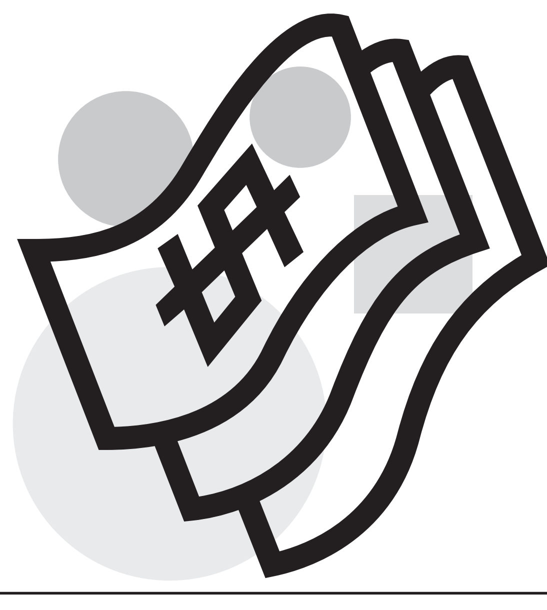
This includes contributions from private sources only; it does not include government funding or earned income—in other words, fees that organizations charge for their work.

More than half of this money was donated by middle class, working class, and poor people—in other words, people like you.

- Of U.S. households, 70% contribute to nonprofits.
- The typical household supports 5–10 organizations per year.
- The median amount contributed per household is $1,300–$2,000 per year.

Sources: Giving USA, American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, www.aafrc.org; Grassroots Fundraising Journal,

www.grassrootsfundraising.org; National Center for Charitable Statistics, nccsdataweb.urban.org.



Building a Diverse Funding Base

Nonprofit funding comes from a wide variety of sources. The healthiest organizations, like the healthiest ecosystems, have the most diversity. How many of these categories are relevant for your group? How many prospective donors are you involving in your work and soliciting for support?

Grants

- Foundations
- Corporations
- Government
- Service clubs
- Faith-based

Individuals

- Membership
- Major gifts
- Monthly giving
- Benefit events
- Workplace giving
- Planned gifts

Earned Income

- Goods sold
- Fees for services
- Publications
- Investment income
- Cause-related marketing

Adapted from Andy Robinson, Selling Social Change (Without Selling Out): Earned Income Strategies for Nonprofits, Jossey-Bass, 2002. Used with permission of the author.

GRANTSEEKING, STEP 1: Designing Fundable Projects

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

Sometimes I call this discussion "grant-thinking." It's based on the premise that most of us are too close to our work to see it objectively, as grantmakers do. Unless we can learn to see our programs and organizations from the outside in, we will be blind to potential weaknesses and questions that can torpedo our projects and sink our fundraising.

1. Gather 5–8 people in a semicircle around an easel, chalkboard, or something large you can write on. Include at least a few people not actively involved with your group; they will bring a different set of assumptions and experiences.

2. Identify one person (the presenter) willing to have his or her project idea discussed and critiqued.

3. Ask another person to facilitate the process and take notes; you can split this into two jobs if you wish. The facilitator/note taker marks three columns on the paper or chalkboard as follows: +, -, ? (See the worksheet on the next page.)

4. The presenter takes two or three minutes to explain the proposed project: the need it addresses, who will be involved, how much it will cost, anticipated results, etc. The participants can ask clarifying questions to sort out the details.

5. After answering a few basic questions, the presenter stops speaking (this is very difficult to do) and all attention is directed to the board. The facilitator asks for feedback from the group and marks responses under the appropriate columns. Structure the responses as follows:

   - **Strengths (+):** What's interesting about this project; what's the "hook?" How is it unique? Does it offer a new take on an old problem, or perhaps a new combination of players? Does it suggest an emotionally compelling story or good handles for public education? Do we know of any "role model" groups that have tried something similar? Is the solution realistic? How about the budget? Is this a reputable group? Do you know any of these folks?

   - **Weaknesses (-):** Do they face opposition? Is the idea controversial? Has it been tried before? How does public opinion line up on this subject? Is the project feasible? Are they asking for enough money? Who are these people, anyway?

- **Questions (?):** What information are we lacking to make a good assessment?

Participants are encouraged to respond in any order; it isn't necessary to itemize all the strengths before moving on to weaknesses. The presenter will have a strong urge to defend every weakness and answer every question verbally, but must resist this urge, or the exercise bogs down. Simply note any concerns and questions in the appropriate columns.

6. When all responses have been teased out of the group—this typically takes 10 to 20 minutes—the presenter gets the last word.

The goal of the exercise is to teach you how to think like a funder. Most of us are too close to our own work to see it with any objectivity. A group of engaged outsiders will see strengths you didn't know you had, identify weaknesses you've been avoiding, and ask a whole lot of questions you didn't think to ask.

In short, this is what a funding officer does when reviewing your proposal. To the degree that you can build on your strengths, address your weaknesses, and anticipate and answer any questions, you will create a much stronger project and a more fundable proposal.

Adapted from Andy Robinson, Grassroots Grant, Second Edition: An Activis'ts Guide to Grantseeking, Jossey-Bass, 2004. Used with permission of the author.

Worksheet for Grantseeking: Step 1

Designing Fundable Projects

After completing this form, use the insight you've gained to rework your project (and your funding proposal) to make it better.

+

Write down all the things
the project has going for it.

-

Write down all the things working
against the project's success.

?

Write down all the unanswered
questions about your project

GRANTSEEKING, STEP 2:
Do Your Homework! The Value of Grants Research

Fewer than 20% of grant proposals are funded; most fail because they are submitted to the wrong funders for the wrong projects at the wrong time. Here are some effective research strategies to get you started.

- Collect newsletters, programs, and annual reports from other nonprofits. Most groups publicly acknowledge their supporters in these publications.
- Talk with colleagues at other groups and ask for leads. (Information about institutional funders – foundations, corporations, faith organizations, government agencies – is on the public record, so secrecy doesn't work.)
- Talk with funders, especially those who support your work, and ask for leads.
- Internet research; sample Websites include:
  - www.fdncenter.org (Foundation Center)
  - www.cof.org (Council on Foundations)
  - www.ega.org (Environmental Grantmakers Association)
  - www.nfg.org (Neighborhood Funders Group)
  - www.guidestar.org (Guidestar: listing of tax returns for nonprofits, including many grant making foundations.
- Library research. The Foundation Center provides grant research materials to 200 public and university libraries spread across the country. A current listing is on their website, www.fdncenter.org.

Once this phase of the research is completed, grantseekers should contact the funder directly, via phone, mail, fax, or e-mail, and request:

- **Guidelines**—How to apply, when to apply, format
- **Annual report**—What the funder cares about, in their own words
- **List of grantees**—Who's gotten money in the past

Study these materials carefully, trying to match your programs with the funders' interests. Do they describe the problem you're trying to solve in a similar way? If not, can you use their language and feel comfortable with it? Do they emphasize the same strategies? Do they focus on the same constituencies?

If the answer to these questions is no, you probably don't fit the guidelines…which means you shouldn't submit the proposal. On the other hand, if the answer is yes, you might have a good fit. It's time to pick up the phone.

GRANTSEEKING, STEP 3:
Developing Professional Relationships With Grantmakers

EXERCISE: PHONING THE FUNDER

The purpose of this role play is to help you:
1. Learn to describe your work clearly and briefly, leaving out unnecessary details.
2. Negotiate a next step with the funder.
3. Increase your comfort level.

Parts to be played:
1. **The grantseeker**
2. **The foundation officer:** a staff member whose job is to read and screen proposals, meet with grantseekers as time allows, do "background checks" on applicant groups, and make recommendations to the final decision-makers: typically the foundation board.

Find a partner to work with in person or by phone. If you're working in person, turn your chairs back to back so you can't see each other (this simulates a phone call). One person plays the grantseeker; the other, the foundation officer. Assume that you've completed your preliminary research and identified this funder as a good match.

If you're playing the grantseeker, take a few moments of silence and ask yourself, "What's my goal with this phone call?" When you're ready to start, make the phone ring (yes, you can say "ring, ring") and your partner will respond by answering.

Over the next **three minutes**, your job is to:

a. Introduce yourself.
b. Make sure you're talking to the right person ("I'm working on a tree planting and community garden project in my urban neighborhood in Cleveland; who would be the best person to speak with?")
c. Find out what, if anything, the foundation officer knows about your work or your issue.
d. Describe your organization and your project briefly!
e. Ask a question or two to gauge the funder's interest.
f. Complete the call by getting the grantmaker to agree to a next step; options include:
   - **Summary**—review a summary or introductory letter (letter of inquiry)
   - **Proposal**—review a full proposal
   - **Meeting**—schedule a meeting
   - **Leads**—suggest other sources of funding (especially if the grantmaker decides your program is not a good fit)

To "debrief" this exercise:

1. The grantseeker goes first. S/he says *two things about the phone call that went well and one thing that could have worked better, with an idea for how to improve it.*
2. The foundation officer goes next, following the same format.

After debriefing, switch roles and start again.

Adapted from Andy Robinson, Grassroots Grants, Second Edition: An Activists Guide to Grantseeking, Jossey-Bass, 2004. Used with permission of the author.

GRANTSEEKING, STEP 4:
Writing the Proposal

Use the form below as an outline to rough out your grant application. Then adapt what you've written to meet the specific format requirements of each funder.

MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

1. Mission: why do you exist?

2. Constituency: who do you work with?

3. Accomplishments: what have you done to meet your mission? (If appropriate, discuss the relevant skills and expertise of individuals involved with the group.)

Problem statement. Define the problem you're trying to solve. Be as specific as possible—talk about how this problem affects real people in your community. Tell stories. Avoid clichés. If you have statistics, this is a good place to include them.

Goal. In tackling this problem, what's your goal? (Hint: what will your community look and feel like once the problem is completely solved?) If this ends up sounding like your mission statement, fine.

Developing Project Objectives.

The key to creating objectives is making them **specific** and **measurable.** They serve as strong indicators for evaluating your progress and your success. For example: the number of students enrolled, number of trees planted, successfully passing a tree ordinance, number of people attending an Arbor Day event.

List Your Project Objectives Here.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Methods.

What specific tasks or strategies can help you reach your goal? What's the schedule for each task?

Describe Each Project Task.	Start Date	Completion Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Budget Worksheet

List how much money you will need to complete the project (expenses) and how you plan to raise the money (revenue). List all prospective funding sources—individuals, foundation, government agencies, program fees, benefit events, etc.—and the status of funding from each.

Expense Items	**$ Amount**	**Details**
Revenue (Funding Sources)	**$ Amount**	**Status**

DONOR FUNDRAISING, STEP 1: Understanding the Basic Principles

1. **Identifying your prospects.** In general, prospective donors must meet the following three qualifications:

Ability	Do they have any available money to give?
Belief	Do they care about your issue, programs, etc.?
Contact	Do they have a relationship with any of your board members, staff, or major donors? Are they already involved with your group?

2. **The closer you get, the more you raise.** As the old saying goes, people give money to people, not organizations. Therefore, you want as much human contact with the donor as is reasonably possible. In terms of solicitation strategies, the following list descends from most effective to least effective:

- Personal face-to-face; team of two preferred over one
- Personal letter on personal stationery; telephone follow-up will improve results
- Personal phone call; follow letter will improve results
- Personalized letter
- Impersonal letter (direct mail)
- Impersonal telephone (telemarketing)
- Fundraising benefit/special event
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Media/advertising

3. **The gift range chart.** In a typical annual campaign—the money that organizations raise each year for general support:

- 10% of the donors yield 60% of the money
- 20% of the donors yield 20% of the money
- 70% of the donors yield 20% of the money

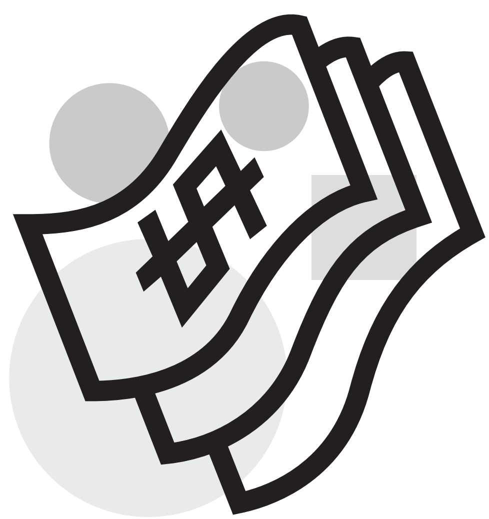
In other words, most organizations rely on a handful of major donors to generate the majority of their unrestricted income. Using this principle, you can set your goal and then calculate how many donations at each level you'll need to meet that goal.

Sample Chart for $50,000 annual campaign

For example, here's a sample chart for a $50,000 annual campaign:

$ Gift Range	# Gifts	# Prospects	Total $ per Range
$2,500	2	10 (5:1)	$5,000
$1,000	5	25 (5:1)	$5,000
$ 750	10	40 (4:1)	$7,500
$ 500	15	60 (4:1)	$7,500
$ 250	20	60 (3:1)	$5,000
10% of donors			*50% of goal*
$ 100	100	300 (3:1)	$10,000
20% of donors			*20% of goal*
under $100	350	700 (2:1)	$10,000
70% of donors			*20% of goal*

This is an idealized chart; reality is never so orderly. Use this tool to plan, guide, and evaluate your fundraising campaign.



DONOR FUNDRAISING, STEP 2
Creating a Prospect List

The average American adult knows 150–200 people; many of them meet the definition of a prospect (see previous section). They can and should be asked to support your organization. To quote author and trainer Kim Klein, "You already know all the people you need to know to raise all the money you need to raise."

Share this form with your staff, board, volunteers, and key donors, and ask them to fill it out.

Prospect Name & Address	Relationship to Me	Believes in Cause?	Gives Money?	Gift Range ($)

DONOR FUNDRAISING, STEP 3
What's the Most Effective Way to Reach a Donor?
Prioritizing Your Fundraising Strategies

The following strategies appear in random order. See if you can rank them by effectiveness. Which strategies bring in the most money for the time and money spent?

- ❑ Impersonal telephone call (telemarketing)
- ❑ Fundraising benefit/special event
- ❑ Face-to-face request; team of two askers
- ❑ Impersonal form letter (direct mail)
- ❑ Media/advertising (for example, paid newspaper ads)
- ❑ Personal letter on personal stationery
- ❑ Door-to-door canvassing (with paid canvassers)
- ❑ Personalized form letter (hand-signed with note)
- ❑ Face-to-face request; one asker
- ❑ Personal telephone call

(For the answers, see "Understanding the Basic Principles" on page 15.)

DONOR FUNDRAISING, STEP 4:
Choosing a Strategy: Major Gifts Fundraising

As you've learned, the effective way to raise money is to look people in the face and ask. Unfortunately, this is also the most uncomfortable way to raise money. In other words, the strategy that works best is the one we are most likely to avoid.

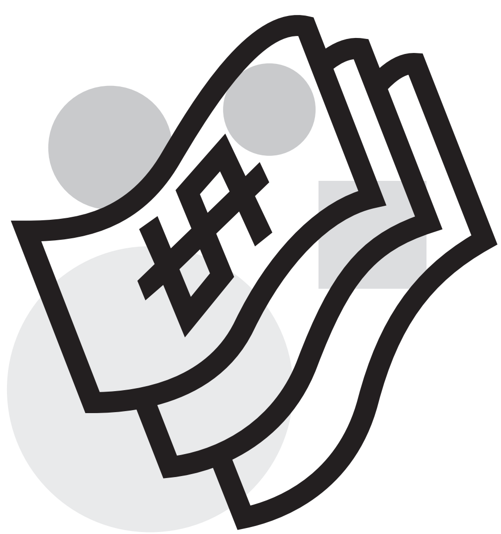
The most ethical and effective way to solicit major gifts—say, gifts of $500 and up—is through a three-stage process:

1. A **letter** that outlines your fundraising goals and asks for the meeting.
2. A **phone call** to follow up the letter and make an appointment to meet.
3. A **visit** where you uncover the donor's needs and interest, present your programs, and ask for the gift.

On the next several pages, you'll find:

- A sample letter
- Responses to common objections you hear on the telephone
- A structured role play to help you practice your face-to-face request.

Use these tools to help prepare for your major gifts fundraising.



Sample Donor Letter
Setting Up the Face-to-Face Ask

Martina Jones
123 Main Street
Des Moines, IA 55555

Dear Martina,

It's that time of year again—we're doing our annual fundraising campaign in support of (brief description of your mission). Last year, you made a very generous donation of $500, which is a big gift for us, and we really appreciate your support. Contributions from people like you helped us to accomplish the following:

- (Big, impressive accomplishment)
- (Not so big, but still impressive)
- (Something interesting the donor is unlikely to know about)

This year, we face a number of challenges:

- (Big, scary challenge—maybe increased demand for your services?)
- (Not so big, but still impressive)
- (Perhaps something related to organizational development, rather than external factors)

To meet these challenges, we are asking our most generous supporters to consider doubling their gifts, which in your case would be a contribution of $1,000. I appreciate that this is a big commitment, so before you decide, I would love the chance to meet with you, give you an update, learn more about your interest in our work, and ask for your support.

I will be calling you next week to set up an appointment.

Again, thank you for your generous and loyal support. I look forward to speaking with you and meeting with you, very soon.

Warm regards,

If you're uncomfortable naming a number, consider language like this:

> We're asking for gifts of between $500 and $5,000 toward a campaign goal of $50,000. To be honest, I have no idea how much to ask you for, so let's sit down together, discuss it, and you can tell me how much would be appropriate.

If you're soliciting a new prospect, the relevant paragraphs might be:

> As you might know, I'm on the board of Trees for Everybody, which works to (brief description of your mission). Our organization has a long history of success, including (insert bulleted items here).
>
> One of my tasks as a board member is to identify new supporters for our work. We've set a goal of $_______ and we're seeking donations of between $_____ and $_____ to help meet that goal. I'd like to arrange an appointment so we can discuss the work and see if you'd like to contribute.

Use these letters as templates by adapting the language and tone as you see fit. In writing the letter, keep the following points in mind:

- It's **brief**—no more than one page.
- It says **"thank you."** It acknowledges past support or, in the case of new prospects, it thanks them for considering a gift.
- It's **explicitly about fundraising.** It doesn't hint or use code words—your intentions are clear from the start.
- It **includes numbers.** It mentions the amount you seek or suggests a range of gifts.
- **The purpose of this letter is not to get money, but rather to get a meeting.**

It's not necessary to craft a piece of great literature—after all, this is a one-page "I want to meet with you" letter—so don't strive for perfection. It might make sense for one person, perhaps a staff member, to prepare a standard letter that board members and other solicitors then customize. Get it done and mail it out.

Adapted from Andy Robinson, Big Gifts for Small Groups: A Board Member's 1-Hour Guide to Securing Gifts of $500 to $5,000, Emerson & Church, 2004. Used with permission of the author.

DO I HEAR ANY OBJECTIONS?
Responses to Common Put-Offs on the Telephone

Sooner or later you will have this experience. After a few words of explanation—"Hi Leroy, this is Andy. I'm following up on the letter I sent about our fall fundraising campaign"—the person on the other end of the phone will say, "Sure, I'd love to get together. When's a good time for you?" Until that day, however, you must learn to respond to the most common objections.

I don't mean to imply that this is one conversation and you have to handle eight or nine put-offs in a row. However, the general rule is that you should respond to at least three before you give up.

Objection: *"I don't have time to talk right now."*
Response: "When would be a good time to call?"

Objection: *"You sent me a letter? What letter?" (Or alternatively, "There's a pile of mail on the kitchen table—bills and such—and I've been avoiding it.")*
Response: "Well, let me tell you about the letter."

Objection: *"I don't really have the time to meet. Can't we just do this over the phone?"*
Response: "That's up to you. The meeting takes about 20 minutes, and I'll make it as convenient as possible—I can come to your home or office, whatever works for you. This just works better if we meet face to face. But if you'd prefer, we can talk about it now."

Objection: *"I can't afford the amount you're asking for."*
Response: "The amount is completely up to you. Let's sit down together, discuss it, and then you'll decide."

Objection: *"You know, I generally make charitable decisions with my spouse/partner/financial advisor/eight-year-old child/psychic friend."*
Response: "Is it appropriate for the three of us to sit down together? If so, when would be a good time? If not, how can I help you to have that discussion—maybe the two of us could meet first?"

Objection: *"You know, I support so many other groups and I'm tapped out for this year."*
Response: "I know the feeling. Tell you what—let's take the money off the table. I'd still like to meet with you because a) I'd like to thank you for your generous support last year, and b) when you're budgeting for next year, perhaps you could remember us then. So let's assume you won't be giving now—I hear that. But I'd still like to meet. When would be a good time?"

Objection: *"I gave because of your work on ____, but I don't like the position you've taken on ____."*
Response: "You know, I'd like to hear more about your concerns. Frankly, I don't like everything the organization does, but overall I believe that the mission and the work are very important. Let's get together and talk about it; then you'll decide. If you choose not to give, I certainly respect that. When would be a good time to meet?"

Objection: *"We're down to one income and we don't have the money."*
Response: "I'm sorry to hear that. Is there some other way you'd like to be involved in our work?"

Objection: *"This is just not a priority right now."*
Response: "Well, your past support has meant a lot to us. Shall we keep you on the mailing list? Is it appropriate to contact you again in the future?"

You're probably thinking, "What's wrong with this guy? Can't he take 'no' for an answer?" My response: "When people say no—*"We don't have the money"* or *"This is not a priority right now"*—I hear them say no. But when they say, *"That's more than I can afford,"* or *"I have to talk with my spouse first,"* that doesn't mean that they don't want to give—it means that they want to choose the amount or would prefer to consult with someone else before making a decision.

The Three Rules of Telephone Appointment-Making:

1. **Whatever the objection, take it literally.** Rather than making assumptions about what other people mean, take them at their word. The corollary is this: if they say no—a clear, explicit no—you have to honor that.

2. **Assume success.** Don't say, "Do you want to meet?" Ask, "*When* do you want to meet?" This is a subtle distinction, but it makes a big difference.

3. **Keep bringing it back to your agenda.** "When do you want to meet?"

You have to find your own comfort level. If these suggestions seem a bit too assertive for your taste, back off a little. Strive for a balance between assertiveness and humility, between boldness and fear. If you give in to the fear—if you backpedal at the first objection—you do a disservice to yourself, your group, and your donors. Be bold and watch what happens.

Adapted from Andy Robinson, Big Gifts for Small Groups: A Board Member's 1-Hour Guide to Securing Gifts of $500 to $5,000, Emerson & Church, 2004. Used with permission of the author.

"THE ASK": MEETING WITH YOUR PROSPECT
A Structured Role Play for Major Gifts Fundraisers

The purpose of this role play is to help you:

1. Develop confidence and clarity in your "pitch"—how you present your work
2. Develop empathy for the person on the other side of the relationship—the prospective donor
3. Improve your listening skills

Parts to be played

1. The asker (or solicitor). A volunteer or staff member who helps with fundraising.
2. The prospect. A current or prospective donor who is known to the asker – in other words, they have a direct personal relationship.
3. The observer: who gets to watch and comment (after the role play is over).

By the end of the exercise, everyone will have the opportunity to play all three roles.

Setting up the role play

The asker reviews the prospect list that he or she filled out earlier and chooses one person on the list. The asker then trains the prospect to "be" that person by describing the prospect's current level of knowledge and involvement with the organization.

For example, the asker might say, "I want you to be my Aunt Rita. She always talks to me about my work and seems very interested. She came to our open house event last year but has never given. I know she attends church, which makes me think she is charitable, and when I was at the theatre I saw her listed in the program as a $250 donor."

Where to meet: You decide. Your options include the prospect's home or office, your home or office, or a neutral location (such as a restaurant).

Asker

Your goal is to:

1. Introduce the work of your organization.
2. By asking questions, find out what the prospect cares about and how your work might address his or her interests.
3. Encourage the prospect to agree to a next step; this could include:
    a. Make a gift or a pledge.

b. Suggest other prospects.
c. Volunteer to help with program or fundraising needs.

Bonus points: show and tell (visual aids)

Prospect

Your goal is to:

1. Learn more about this group without spending a lot of time.
2. If you can, identify one aspect of the group, the project, or the presentation that grabs your attention.
3. Provide a few objections or obstacles for the solicitor to address.
4. Based on the conversation, decide if you will:
   a. Contribute or pledge today.
   b. Delay your decision ("I'd like to think about it.")
   c. Decline to donate.
   d. Become involved in some other way.

Bonus points: Unexpected distractions (phone calls, pagers, other people going in and out, etc.) are allowed.

Observer

Your goal is to:

1. Watch, listen, take notes, and be prepared to talk about what you see and hear.

Bonus points: Save your comments for the debriefing period.

Structure of the Meeting (instructions for the asker)

1. Briefly build rapport with the prospect by discussing any mutual interests, friends, etc
2. Uncover the prospect's needs and interests. Why does he or she care about your issue or programs? If the prospect were to give, what would s/he want in return?
3. Make a brief presentation about your work, allowing the prospect to participate and ask questions.
4. Ask for the gift, naming a specific amount or a range. After "the ask," keep quiet and wait for the prospect to respond.
5. Deal with any concerns or objections.
6. Close the meeting by re-stating and clarifying any agreements or next steps.

To "Debrief" This Exercise

1. The asker goes first. *S/he says two things about the meeting that went well and one thing that could have worked better, with an idea for how to improve it.*
2. The prospect goes next, following the same format.
3. Finally, the observer offers comments, following the same format.

Timing: Each side of this triangle (role play plus debriefing) takes 15–20 minutes. Then all participants rotate to a new role. Total time: 45–60 minutes. The facilitator will keep track of the clock and announce when it's time to switch roles.

AFTER YOU GET THE MONEY: TIPS FOR FUNDER AND DONOR RELATIONS

For All Donors

Say thank you. Thank donors through the mail—an official letter on your letterhead is standard procedure—but you can also add personal notes, pick up the phone, thank them in person, etc.

Keep good books. Keep accurate track of the money. Be prepared to report on how the money was spent and its impact on your work and the community at large.

Take lots of notes. You can't accurately update donors unless you keep track of what you do. Without documentation, you will also find it difficult to analyze your work. How many people are you reaching? What's working and what isn't? What are you learning? Collect lots of data. Document everything.

Save all articles, reviews, etc. If your project is covered in the local paper, clip and save the article. Enclose it with relevant grant reports and mail copies to individual donors.

For Grants and Grantmakers

Honor the reporting requirements. Before you apply for a grant, study the reporting requirement—data collected, deadlines, etc.—to make sure you can meet them. If you can't, you shouldn't apply in the first place.

Follow instructions. Foundations and government funders always tell you what to include in your final report. Give them what they want.

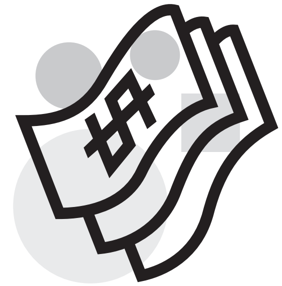
Keep it simple. Grants officers don't have time to wade through piles of paper. Be selective about what you write and attach. For most grant reports, two pages of narrative, a budget detailing actual spending, and one or two attachments is plenty of information.

For Individual Donors

Make it personal. Look for ways to customize your thanks to meet their specific needs. For example, some donors don't want to be called on the phone, while others appreciate the personal contact.

Invite them to participate. Create opportunities for your donors to be personally involved in your work: as volunteers, leaders, prospectors, etc.

Stay in touch. Individuals don't publish reporting requirements or deadlines, so it's easy to forget them. Create your own deadlines: set up a calendar to update and engage your best donors. Remember, 80% of the work in fundraising is after you get the gift.



GREENSCAPE OF JACKSONVILLE: The Flowering Tree Sale

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Greenscape annual fundraiser—$20,000
- Increase public awareness about the value of trees
- Increase name recognition and publicity for Greenscape
- Attract over 5,000 consumers

THE CONCEPT: HIGH QUALITY TREES AT LOW PRICES

Since 1988, Greenscape has organized The Flowering Tree Sale and cultivated relationships with wholesale nurseries to provide high-quality trees at low prices. Only suppliers that offer their best inventory for the sale are invited to participate. With high visibility and strong community participation, the sale represents excellent advertising and exposure for the wholesale nurseries. The Flowering Tree Sale project components:

- Collaborative effort with local government, community, and neighborhood groups
- The event is held on a Saturday with a pre-event sale on Friday
- Trees are sold on consignment
- Nurseries deliver the tree inventory, provide technical assistance to buyers, and take back any inventory not sold
- A wide variety of trees and a few unique shrubs are offered
- The City of Jacksonville provides free mulch to buyers

Strategy: By pricing low, Greenspace achieves Big Fundraising Results

The inventory is priced according to size and species. Trees and shrubs are marked with color-coded tags that indicate the price. Each nursery staff member stays with its inventory to answer customer questions.

- Prices range from about $8–$50
- Customers understand that they would pay considerably more at a commercial nursery for similar plants
- Greenscape adds just a few dollars to each tree price

Logistics: Event location is key component of project success

Greenscape staff allow many months to acquire the best possible location each year. A major factor to consider is that an ideal event location often gets commercially developed, physically altered, or is no longer available for the event. An ideal event location:

- Is easy to find and highly accessible
- Offers ample parking
- Can accommodate portable toilets
- Is safe for children and adults

Promotion: Effective publicity planning from beginning to end

To attract thousands of consumers and achieve its fundraising objectives, Greenscape makes publicity planning a major priority.

- Staff maintain ongoing relationships with local media
- A newspaper and television station serve as media sponsors
- The newspaper runs free display ads and garden section reporters write feature articles
- The television station produces public service announcements (PSAs) and several stations feature live coverage of the event

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. Expenses. Up-front costs include off-duty police for traffic control and security; rentals on tables, tents, toilets, and printing for signs and tickets. 2004 expenses were approximately $30,000. Each year 8,000–10,000 trees are sold, raising over $50,000. After expenses, Greenspace nets approximately $20,000.

2. About 100 volunteers make the event possible, including nursery owners, local landscaping experts, board members, and the employees of corporate sponsors. Volunteers set up prior to the sale, assist customers during the event, and provide other help. All volunteers receive an event T-shirt. Corporate sponsor employee volunteers are invited to a pre-sale on Friday evening. Remember to train your volunteers and thank them too.

3. Make the selling system as simple as possible. Greenscape found that using a color-coded system for pricing greatly streamlined the process. In addition, there are not a lot of different price levels—thousands of trees are sold for the same price. Using a two-part checkout system, with a checker tallying the price and cashier accepting payment, has worked best for them.

4. Cultivate corporate sponsor relationships. Communicate with your sponsors throughout the year and make sponsor recognition and thank-you notes a priority.

5. Work with nurseries that are trustworthy and sell their top merchandise at your sale.

6. Work with the media. It's important to sell your event.

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Program Model: Fundraising

TREES FOR HOUSTON: The Root Ball

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Host a successful fundraiser
- Increase visibility for Trees For Houston

THE CONCEPT: HOST ANNUAL GALA—THE ROOT BALL

Since 1995, Trees For Houston has hosted a successful gala, the Root Ball, to raise money and increase the visibility of the organization in the crowded social world of Houston. Trees For Houston's mission is the orderly planting of street trees along Houston's major arterial streets and freeways. Since its inception in 1983, it has been responsible for the planting and monitoring of almost 178,000 street trees and seedlings.

The Root Ball is all about having fun. Held under a tent on the Houston Polo Grounds, the event features a live band with dancing, beverages (including a marTREEni bar), appetizers, a buffet dinner, and a raffle.

STRATEGY & LOGISTICS

The event is typically co-chaired by two people who oversee a committee devoted to the event. Staff is instrumental in taking care of the logistics for the event, including mailing the approximately 4,000 invitations, decorating the site, and handling all the catering tasks.

Letters soliciting underwriting donations are sent in November. Reminder letters are sent in January, and the actual invitations are mailed about a month before the April event. Underwriter categories range from $25,000 for a table of 10 to $200 for individual seats. See the Website at www.treesforhouston.org for a full listing of underwriter categories.

RESULTS

In 2005 the Root Ball attracted 650 guests and raised $177,000 after expenses. One of most exciting aspects of the Root Ball is that it brings in a significant number of new attendees each year.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Make your event a one-of-a-kind. The Root Ball is unique in Houston because of its informal party atmosphere. Most events of similar organizations in the city are more formal and feature awards. The Root Ball has a more festive, relaxed atmosphere.

2. Choose chairpersons for the event who can draw in the participants you want. Trees For Houston often, but not always, taps board members to chair the gala. Staff makes a point of noticing who in the community is active in this type of event and tries to tap them early in the year to serve as chairpersons.

3. Actively seek out young people who are new to your organization to become members and to attend your events. While it's important to keep your old membership, it is equally important to bring in new and younger participants. In July 2001, Trees For Houston formed a new membership group, the RedBuds, for young Houstonians (ages 21–39).

4. Remember that such an event can be a great marketing outreach for your organization beyond the money raised that one night. Pay attention to details—from the invitations to the decorations to the food and music. This is the image your organization will have in the community. Word-of-mouth about last year's event is the most effective marketing strategy for the next year's gala.

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DELAWARE CENTER FOR HORTICULTURE: Working with Community Block Grant Funds

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Secure additional grant-based funding
- Work in a public/private partnership for project funding
- Increase funding for street tree planting and maintenance

THE CONCEPT: SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION THROUGH TREE PLANTING

The Delaware Center for Horticulture (DCH), through a partnership with the City of Wilmington, receives $50,000 a year in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for street tree planting and maintenance. This allows DCH to expand its planting efforts and to reinforce the connection between greening programs and community revitalization.

BACKGROUND AND COMPONENTS

Originally founded as the Garden Club of Wilmington in 1977, the Delaware Center for Horticulture promotes the knowledge and appreciation of gardening, horticulture and conservation through greening initiatives such as community gardens, public landscaping and tree programs, and educational efforts.

From its inception, DCH has been interested not only in increasing the number of trees planted in Wilmington, but also in encouraging neighborhood residents to take pride in their communities and their environment. At its onset, DCH sponsored tree plantings at which volunteers provided the labor and DCH provided the trees. In addition, DCH sponsored an annual city gardens contest to bolster neighborhood pride. These programs gave DCH a significant amount of local visibility.

As a result, two local government officials realized that DCH's efforts were a tool for community revitalization and would be an appropriate use of CDBG funds. In the late 1970s, their efforts led to the City of Wilmington setting aside a portion of its CDBG funds for tree planting and maintenance.

The current allocation of $50,000 is used for both labor and trees. DCH oversees the plantings in conjunction with neighborhood and community organizations in the targeted communities. Neighborhood residents assist in determining where trees will be planted. DCH subcontracts the planting to professional landscapers. Neighborhood residents provide the maintenance required.

DCH is a citywide organization and continues to help neighborhoods that do not qualify for CDBG funding. In addition, DCH operates a community garden program for vacant lots and public spaces, provides landscaping at major public areas and parks, sponsors a number of special events including the annual city gardens contest, and offers educational opportunities.

RESULTS

DCH plants about 350 street trees in the City of Wilmington annually (over 4,000 in the past decade), using funds from state legislator contracts and CDBG. Approximately 60 of these trees are funded through CDBG. In addition, each year CDBG monies are used to remove about 10 diseased trees and to prune approximately five to 10 trees.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. A comprehensive city street tree inventory is a very powerful tool when seeking funding. Being able to quantify the need for plantings and maintenance is key. In 2002, DCH was able to conduct an inventory for Wilmington through a U.S. Forest Service grant.

2. Since CDBG funds tend to focus on housing activities, partnering with local housing organizations such as Habitat for Humanity greatly enhances your ability to attract CDBG funds. It is important to show how trees are integral to the property and to property improvement and community revitalization efforts. Emphasize how a property is not the house alone, but the entire area, including landscaping and trees.

3. Involve neighborhood residents from the start in any tree-planting effort because they will be the people who maintain the trees over their lifetime. Without community buy-in and support, tree plantings are not successful over the long term.

4. CDBG funds are restricted to certain neighborhoods based on federal guidelines and local priorities. As a result, other funds must be found for neighborhoods that do not qualify for CDBG funds. More affluent neighborhoods typically do not qualify for CDBG funds but, at the same time, they are often the areas with the oldest trees that have the highest maintenance needs.

5. Local governments are more likely to use CDBG funds for tree plantings and maintenance if their constituents support these efforts. Encourage the community to let their local officials know that they want and care about these programs.

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Website: www.dehort.org

Fundraising Resources

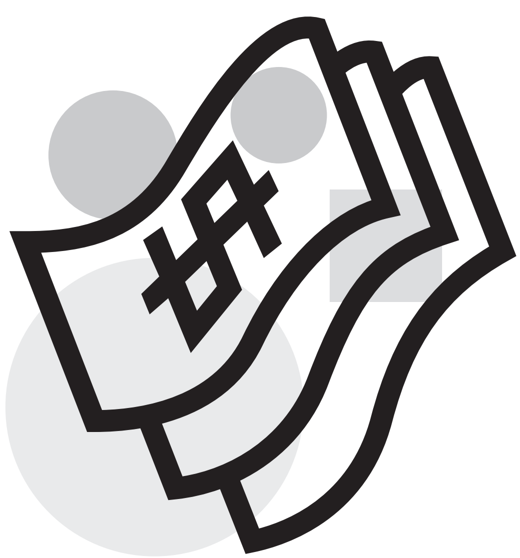
Books

The Accidental Fundraiser: Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Money for Your Cause
by Stephanie Roth and Mimi Ho
Jossey-Bass, 2005

Big Gifts for Small Group: A Board Member's 1-Hour Guide to Securing Gifts of $500 to $5,000
by Andy Robinson
Emerson & Church, 2004

Boards That Love Fundraising: A How-To Guide for Your Board
by Robert Zimmerman and Ann Lehman
Jossey-Bass, 2004

Fundraising for Social Change, 4th Edition
by Kim Klein
Jossey-Bass, 2000



Fundraising for the Long Haul
by Kim Klein
Jossey-Bass, 2000

Fundraising Regulation: A State by State Handbook of Registration Forms, Requirements, and Procedures
by Seth Perlman and Betsy Hills Bush
John Wiley & Sons Press

Grassroots Grants, Second Edition: An Activists Guide to Grantseeking
by Andy Robinson
Jossey-Bass, 2004

National Guide to Funding for the Environment and Animal Welfare, 7th Edition
Foundation Center, 2004

The Nonprofit Membership Toolkit
by Ellis Robinson and Kim Klein
Jossey-Bass, 2003

Selling Social Change (Without Selling Out): Earned Income Strategies, for Nonprofits
by Andy Robinson
Jossey-Bass, 2002

The Simple Act of Planting a Tree
by Andy and Katie Lipkis
Tarcher, 1990
(A classic book that provides tips for grassroots fundraising for start up groups.)

Web Resources

www.aafrc.org
Sources: Giving USA, American Association of Fundraising Council

www.arborday/programstreecitybulletinbrowse.cfm This link will help you find issue(s) of the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City Bulletins that are related to this topic.

www.cof.org
Council on Foundations

www.ega
Environmental Grantmakers Association

www.fdncenter.org
Foundation Center. The Foundation Center provides grant research materials to 200 public and university libraries spread across the country.

www.grassrootsfundraising.org
Grassroots Fundraising Journal

www.guidestar.org
Guidestar: listing of tax returns for nonprofits, including many grantmaking foundations

www.josseybass.com
Jossey-Bass Press (publishers that specialize in nonprofits and community organizing)

http://nccsdataweb.urban.org
National Center for Charitable Statistics

www.nfg.org
Neighborhood Funders Group

www.stateforesters.org
The National Association of State Foresters provides links to all the state agencies engaged in urban and community forestry. Most state "U&CF" programs offer cost-share grants for local projects.

www.wiley.com
John Wiley & Sons Publishers (publishers on a host of nonprofit topics).