

## **Fund Development and COVID-19: Some Suggested Ways Forward**

*Please remember there is no one size fits all. Please let your plan, your team, and your values be your guide*

### **Overall reminders**

- Values driven – this is why you have them
  - Stay connected to your values in your mission, message, and leadership.
  - Ask yourself and your team: *What footprint do you want to leave after this crisis?*
- Remember to **STOP\***
  - **Stay calm. Think it through. Observe. Plan and Prioritize** – revisit your development plan and reprioritize your fund development goals.

*\*Thanks to Heather Vogel Fredrick for the STOP acronym*
  - Bottom line – Think through your ideas carefully and make sure they are good right now.
  - **Bonus S: Support** – fund development is a team sport.
- Take the opportunity to move from “transactional” experiences and messages to “transformational” messages and opportunities for donors.
- Create ways for board/staff/donors to be part of a solution – create ways to focus on solutions “with” them, not “at” or “for” them.
- Have a clear definition of success with your team for every major effort.
- Stay in your lane – this is no time to be an expert in epidemiology or economics (unless you are). Focus your message on what you know and what you can do from your mission’s perspective.

### **Team up with your board so you have an accurate understanding of your financial situation**

- This is the time to remember that fund development is a team sport! Review your current and anticipated sources of revenue and your expenses with your board and make a plan for the near future. Know your numbers and alter your fund development plan accordingly and realistically.

### **Stay or get donor-centered and find the opportunities to connect with your donors**

- Check in with your donors. Remember, the more personal you can make the connection, the better. If time is an issue, start with your major donors and the donors who have supported your organization the longest.
- Many donors and volunteers have time and want to help. Suggest a few ways they can help your organization or the larger community that honor the requirements of “hunkering down” and physical distancing.

### **Re-imagine your in-person events or activities**

- Before canceling your event, consider holding it virtually or pushing the date out at least six months. There are risks and opportunities to each strategy and many examples of how to do this effectively. See the platforms below.

- If you cannot go virtual, consider re-allocating the time you would have spent planning your event and use that time to connect with donors in a personal way.
- If you cancel your event, send a clear message to ticket holders asking them to donate their ticket to mission. This must be a message that connects donor to mission to positive impact.
- Consider that this might be the opportunity you need to move away from events that cost a lot of time and money and never truly generated revenue in return. Tell the whole truth.

## **Consider what your “ask” is given your financial situation**

- We are going to be in this situation for a while (months/years, not weeks/days).
  - Don’t ask too quickly or too slowly.
  - Don’t under ask.
  - Take the time to know how philanthropic support will be balanced with government relief efforts.
  - Start with existing relationships – contact your existing corporate and foundation supporters. They are the ones to act the quickest. Start with existing individual donors.
  - Appropriately access larger community philanthropic funds.

## **Know the difference between crisis and urgency**

- Be clear about the difference between crisis and urgency.
  - Help your donors address the needs your mission focuses on.
  - Avoid the trap of the “overhead myth.”
  - Show your donors how their gift will make a difference now and don’t apologize for asking them.
- Many resources are available on how to write an emergency appeal – choose carefully.

## **Operate under the framework of a “culture of abundance”**

- Philanthropy, by definition, means the love of humankind. We’re all in this together, so reach out to your nonprofit peers, your funders, your constituents and others connected to your cause to check-in and see how you can support one another. Every organization’s mission is in flux—be part of the larger effort.

---

## **Sample Digital Fundraising Platforms (not vetted by or connected to Foraker)**

- [Auctria](#) – online fundraising/auction platform
- [CauseVid](#) – nonprofit stewardship video platform
- [Give Lively](#) – free fundraising platform
- [Funraise](#) – online fundraising platform/donor database
- [GiveSmart](#) – online auction/event software
- Example of a Virtual Gala: [Upaya Gala](#)