

“How to raise money when you're a local nonprofit organization?”

By: Katie Ragan – Community Services, Inc.

Introduction –

Nonprofits may receive grants from State, local or the Federal government and they need money to operate. Non-profit organization do not "make money" but they do collect it, and from the money they collect, they have costs, expenses and salaries for people who devote their full-time duties to running the organization. The nonprofit organization will need to spend a lot of time fundraising, collecting donations from individuals and other groups. If the nonprofit is a 501(c)(3) organization, individuals can make tax-deductible donations to it. Nonprofits can sell products and services. For 501(c)(3) nonprofits there are certain issues around receiving money from activities that are not related to its tax-exempt status (essentially its mission). Also, nonprofits generally work hard to keep their expenses down by utilizing volunteers and negotiating very favorable rates (and even donations) for services and items they need to operate.

Major Steps Taken –

The four major steps and the process taken: initiation, planning, implementation, and completion. Taken together, these phases represent the path a project takes from the beginning to its end and are generally referred to as the project “life cycle.” The initiation phase - the project objective or need is identified. The planning phase - the project solution is further developed in as much detail as possible and the steps necessary to meet the project’s objective are planned. In this step, the team identifies all the work to be done. The implementation phase - the project plan is put into motion and the work of the project is performed. It is important to maintain control and communicate as needed during implementation. Progress is continuously monitored, and appropriate adjustments are made and recorded as variances from the original plan. The closure phase - In the closure phase, you provide final deliverables, release project resources, and determine the success of the project.

Goals and Implementation –

The goals of the project are to lead conclusive recommendations and fulfill all deliverables. CSI will focus the efforts to specifically increase reach, boost engagement, and get the word out about the cause that will introduce new people to our organization and who may become donors in the future. The funds will go

toward the agency to have a greater opportunity to succeed and transition. The agency will have the ability to provide improved skills and increased knowledge. Our mission is to provide support services that empower and enrich low income individuals, families and communities.

Recommendations –

- Raffles - For small nonprofits, a raffle is an inexpensive fundraising idea that can generate a lot of funds for your nonprofit. This fun and inexpensive fundraiser can be tailored to fit any organization or project.
- T-Shirt Fundraising - Hosting a t-shirt fundraiser is a fantastic idea because not only do you raise money, but when people wear them, they help to promote your nonprofit and mission.
- Crowdfunding - Crowdfunding is an inexpensive fundraising idea that helps your nonprofit spread the word through social media.
- Walkathons - Walkathons are the most popular choice of fundraising by small non-profits, because they're the easiest to plan while having a high return.
- Advertisement on vehicles - Buses are a great medium for advertising. With their size and mobility, your advert can be seen all around cities and towns, reaching hundreds of potential customers again and again.

What I Learned –

- Patience - As someone who loves instant gratification, I understand it is easier said than done but I cannot emphasize enough the importance of patience.
- Time Management and Planning - There is nothing more satisfying to me than a well laid out plan. For me, this means meticulously creating and laying out weekly to do's and goals and daily to do's and goals in my planner.
- Organization - Spreadsheets are currently my best friend. it is ridiculously important to log all the information you have in order to be effective in your planning—calls you've made, emails you've sent, donations you've received (both monetary and physical), and your plans to reach your fundraising goal.
- Get over your fear of rejection. Why do I dislike all these things? Because I fear that people will reject me. That fear really hurt me while I was trying to fundraise because the reality is that you will get rejected sometimes and that's ok.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Help doesn't have to come in physically helping to plan and run fundraisers or even by giving money.
- People will show up in unexpected ways (and some won't and that's ok) - Even if the people closest to me didn't donate there were other ways they helped (i. e., different ideas and getting the word out about the events).
- Connections - Connections are important because it leads to better opportunities. Without connections, you would not get very far in any career path. Experience is the foundation of your career; connections are the highway.
- Money Management - One of the most important skills to have because it can be used across any life or career path. The business world is centered upon money. If you know how to manage money, you can be an asset to any organization.
- Remember who you're doing this for - Simply remember who you are fundraising for and why you are doing it.
- Always pass on what you have learned. Share Intellectual Property and expand footprint.

Results -

The volunteers and supporters around the county play a critical role in ensuring the organization has the resources needed to end poverty through peer-to-peer fundraising – including in-person events in your community and online fundraising. Fundraising is a great way to raise money, strengthen your group, and spread the word about your important work to end poverty.

Resources and Contact Information –

Project Participants:

- CSI Board of Directors
- Daniel Edwards, Sr., MPA President/CEO
- Katie Ragan, Assistant Director of Transportation
- Arelette Cobb, Office Manager
- Recommendation: Hire experienced development staff to drive the fund development process.