

The Fund Development Series of ONEpages provides three levels for growing your fundraising program. This ONEpage looks at the final stage in fund development. At this point, the development team works with local support as well as a growing regional or national reputation.

Managing your donor pipeline

You should have a steady flow of prospects coming in to the pipeline and your team is nurturing new donors to loyal donors to major donors. Make sure your donor management system identifies where each donor is along this pipeline and your team is clear on how each donor should be nurtured – generally as well as uniquely.

The entire fund development effort hinges on relationship building. While the team still carries the major portion of donor development, many current donors can also play their parts. Encourage donors to play the ambassadorial role and forward prospect contact information to you. Continue to do your part to connect each donor to kindred spirits as well as to the overall cause and purpose of the organization.

Capital campaigns & planned giving

Big dreams and big projects may be in the works, and you'll likely be called upon for major money. Work with major donors and grant funders as you plan a capital campaign. Look into best practices for running a capital campaign and talk to others in the area who have done this successfully.

Also, start a planned giving program. You don't need to be a financial planning expert. Let donors consult their own finance people for proper investment products. Concern yourself with nurturing your connections with loyal donors to secure a gift in their will and to continue to steward the relationship so that the planned gift stays in their will.

Grants

With your expanding reputation and reach, larger foundations may be expressing interest in your inquiries. Talk about projects and far-reaching campaigns with program officers from large, national foundations. Industry colleagues can play an important role in your network, so seek cooperating and collaborative partners in other cities.

Grant fulfillment concerns will grow as well. Spend more time attending to compliance and evaluation, guiding and checking-in with various colleagues.

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Events

If you're lucky, your niche event has taken on a life of its own: sponsors automatically renew and periodically raise their sponsorship, wishful sponsors stay on your waiting list, donors vie for a limited number of tickets, and the logistics get easier year after year. It's a significant and highly-anticipated event for everyone involved.

Most organizations are not that lucky. And, even if you are, your niche event has a lifecycle. So, keep doing other donor recognition and friendraising events – some will be better than others. However, experience and good documentation means less required staff time to make them happen.

Board involvement

A board position with your organization may be a plumb for anyone in the community. So, once elected, each board member may quickly become an enthusiastic ambassador for the organization and its cause. Help them understand the unique value the organization brings to the community. Many board members travel and know that the organization has an emerging regional and national reputation, so help them carry the message outside your community to inspire others and raise the area's reputation.

Donor Communications

The organization may be recognized as a gem of the community. Encourage organizational leaders to speak periodically at area service clubs as well as industry conferences. Hold practice sessions to ensure they are good speakers (search TEDx Speaker Guide). Extend donor communications beyond the boundaries of your community and make sure that content reflects this broader reach. Spend more time developing the message and ensure it's relevant to various audiences.