

COVID-19 Response Options

1. For those nonprofits with debt: Contact your lender to determine what options are available during this crisis to allow your organization to protect cash reserves. Is a temporary (90-day) deferment or interest only payments an option?
2. Upcoming events and fundraisers: If you have collected sponsorships or donations for an upcoming event, communicate with your donors. Request that the sponsorship be used to cover expenses related to the crisis and/or cancellation of the event.
3. Recently awarded grants or recent donations: Reach out to funders/donors of all grants/donations in the past 6 months to request the conversion of these funds from program/capital to operations. Due to specific considerations or internal controls this might not be an option.
4. Donors that are currently being cultivated: Reach out to any donors who are currently being courted to request a call/meeting to seek assistance to avoid taking on new/emergency debt – an attempt to close a deal during the crisis.
5. Develop a crisis response committee and include your three most important donors on the committee: Include a few of your closest donors in on some of the real time decisions that the organization is facing to assure they are fully aware of the ramifications of the crisis and the short term and long term challenges the organization will face in the next 18-36 months. There are some obvious risks with this option.

Fundraising Tips:

1. Can you turn the event into an online opportunity to continue the conversation and connection? An “ungala” or “silent” gala, maybe it’s a “virtual” race or a “Hibernation happy hour” that people attend from their homes?
 - a. How can you connect and include your donors in communication and engagement as they are most likely in social isolation as well? Can you simply call and check in on any of your top donors to express concern, lend an ear, be there for them as they have been there for your organization.
 - b. Do not take the mindset that you “shouldn’t be bothering your supporters,” you should be expressing your needs and ask for their support in times like this. Those that can give, will!
2. Keep your major donors informed (use texts, photos, video updates, zoom meetings, FaceTime, Google Hangouts etc.) on the actions you are taking, the needs you have and express in your ask how their support will address this current need. Your strongest donors believe in the work that you do, and when called upon, are the most likely to offer the highest amount of support.
 - a. Why act now? What’s your expected impact?
 - b. Can you create specific donation amounts tied to certain needs or services provided?
 - c. Are CEOs, Board Presidents and/or local celebrities willing to make calls on the Organizations’ behalf?
3. Provide clarity on what the funding is going to be used for in relation to each ask:
 - a. Who’s the audience?
 - b. What’s your message?
 - c. What’s your approach? (Don’t be afraid to make direct phone calls - be personable and authentic.)

* Keep in mind, the community’s needs may change over time. The process of recovery is a marathon, not a sprint.

Don’t hesitate to contact the Nonprofit & Community Assistance Center with any further questions:

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