

Welcome to our Webinar

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Share in the chat your name, location, and cause or organization, (and the weather in your area)!



onecause® | WEBINAR

EMPOWERING FUNDRAISERS: Gain Confidence *and* Knowledge *to Make the Ask!*



Kiersten Hill
Director of Nonprofit Solutions
Firespring



Wednesday, March 12, 2025



Let's Get Started!

What's the biggest challenge you face when making the ask?

1. Lack of confidence
2. Connecting donor passion to your mission
3. Identifying the right donors
4. Overcoming donor fatigue



Beyond ^{the} Webinar

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Meet Kiersten

Kiersten Hill is the Director of Nonprofit Solutions at Firespring, where she educates, coaches, and guides nonprofit leaders on how to market their organizations effectively. With expertise in websites, printing, and strategic marketing, Kiersten helps nonprofits amplify their impact through powerful storytelling and branding.

An expert storyteller and former StoryBrand Certified Guide, Kiersten specializes in helping organizations craft clear, compelling narratives that connect with their audiences and make it easy to understand their mission.



Kiersten Hill

Director of Nonprofit Solutions
Firespring

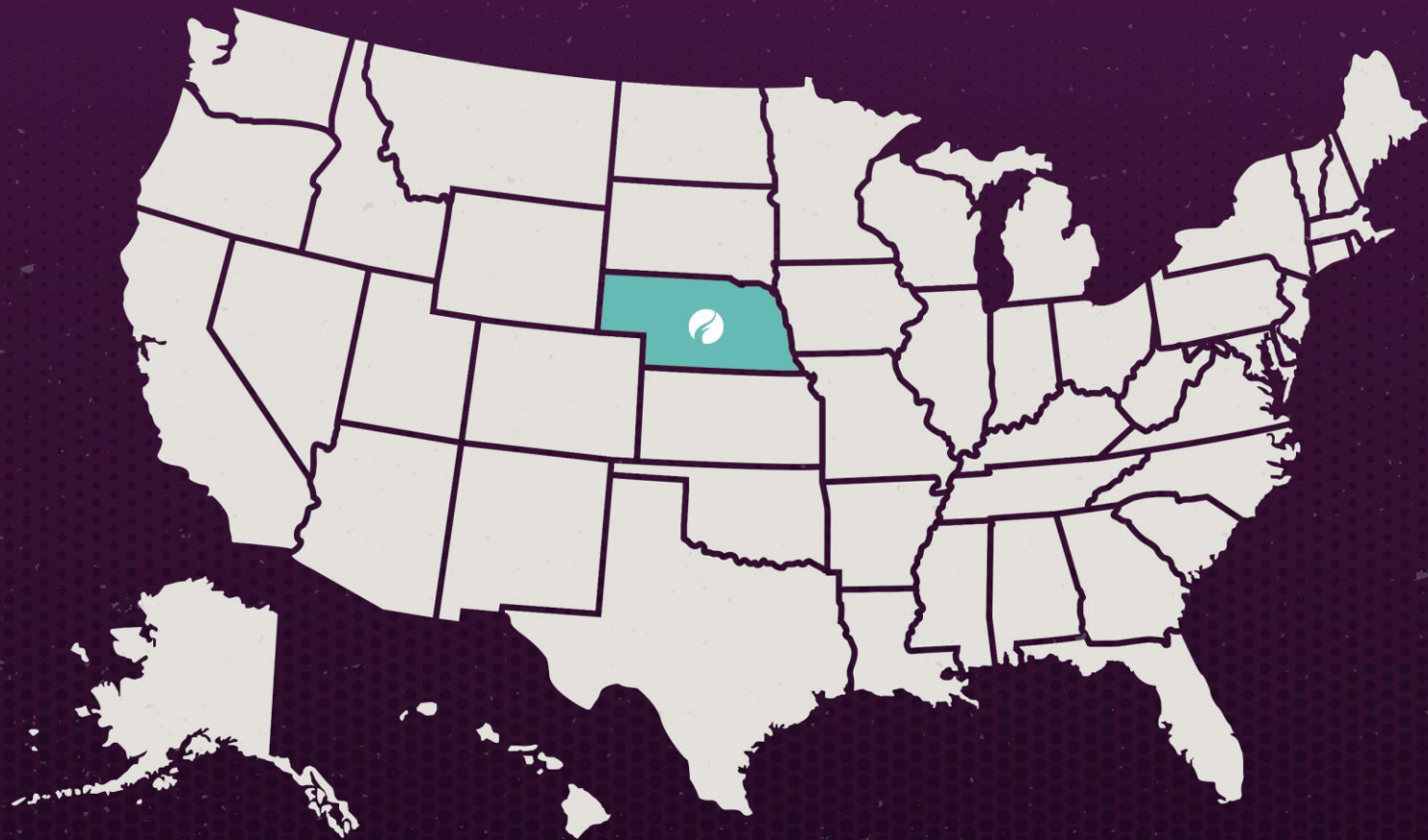


Empowering Fundraisers: A Practical Guide to Gain Confidence and Knowledge to Make the Ask!



Nebraska's
First B Corp™





Firespring provides strategic guidance activated through creative solutions in marketing, printing and technology to help businesses and nonprofits prosper.



OUR PURPOSE

WE LEVERAGE OUR
PEOPLE,
PRODUCTS
& PROFIT
— TO —
DO MORE
GOOD

POWER OF 3 PROGRAM

1% of our profits
(top-line revenue donated to NPOs)

2% of our products
(in-kind products and services)

3% of our people
(volunteer 1 day per month)



Empowering Fundraisers: A Practical Guide to Gain Confidence and Knowledge to Make the Ask!

1. Who is responsible for fundraising?
2. What processes and tools are needed to start?
3. The Donor-at-ions – donor giving cycle
4. The 10 most critical things an asker should do
5. Sponsorships
6. Hurdles to giving
7. Action steps | Q&A

If you're posting on social media today:
#poweredbypurpose | @firespring





**Great
askers of
cinema:
Which
are you?**







Kinds of Asks



Direct Mail

Major Gift

Capital Campaign

Capacity Building

Workplace Giving

Recurring Giving

Grants

Annual Campaign

Planned Giving



Who is Responsible for Nonprofit Fundraising?

- A. Board of Directors
- B. Executive Director
- C. Development Team
- D. All Staff
- E. All of the Above





The Role of Board Members in Fundraising

- Board of Directors has 10 Responsibilities
- Most important: is protecting the assets and providing financial oversight
 - Know what goes into the budget and why
 - Learn the basics of the financial statements
 - Have a long-term view (reserves)

(Board Source: 10 Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards)





Fundraising Strategy: You Need It!

- Difference between strategy and tactics
- Fundraising strategy depends on size, capacity and goals of the nonprofit and the campaign(s) planned
- Identify the Key Elements of a Successful Fundraising Strategy (*Donorly - Fundraising Strategy for Beginners: How to Create Your Own*)





**What do you
need to know
and have before
you walk out
the door?**



Branding

When employees and volunteers embrace a common brand identity, it creates cohesion, concentrates focus and reinforces shared values.

(Stanford Social Innovation Review)



A man with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses is peeking over a white rectangular sign. He has a wide-eyed, curious expression. The background is a blurred bookshelf filled with books of various colors.

Showcase Your Brand Attributes

Visual appeal matters more than usability
for first impressions of a website.

Phillips, Christine & Chaparro, Barbara. Visual Appeal vs. Usability: Which One Influences User Perceptions of a Website More?. Softw. Usability Res. Lab. (SURL) A. T. Wichita State Univ. 11.



Good Branding Does 3 Things



Tells your story and illustrates your mission.



Demonstrates professionalism.



Gains confidence among potential supporters.



Do you know all of the ways that people can give?

- Paper forms
- Online donation
- Direct mail
- Email
- Grants
- Landing pages
- Crypto
- Gifts of stock
- Payroll deduction
- DAF
- Sponsorships
- Fees for goods or services
- Land
- Cars
- Wills and estate plans



Do you know all of the ways that people can give?

- Paper forms
- Online donation
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- Grants
- Landing pages
- Cryptocurrency
- Gifts of stock
- Payroll deduction
- IRAs
- Sponsorships
- Fees for goods or services
- Land
- Cars
- Wills and estate plans

**GIFT
ACCEPTANCE
POLICY**



Prepare Your Weapons

The 12 most important tools for your ask

1. Website (especially landing pages)
2. Brand Guide
3. Campaign Theme
4. Messaging
5. Case for Giving/Support
6. Donor Profiles



Prepare Your Weapons

The 12 most important tools for your ask

7. Training
8. Prospect Lists
9. Presentation & Accompanying Materials
10. Signage and Swag
11. Letters, email, text, voicemail templates
12. Sponsorship Kits





Train Your Troops

Examples of Fundraising Tools

- Messaging Kit
- Brand Guide
- Vision
- Values
- 3 Uniques
- Goals
- Personas
- Financial Information
- Key Messages/Talking Points
- Gift Receipt
- Strategies
- Org Chart



Samples of Tools from Nonprofits



Lincoln Children's Zoo – Love Your Zoo



Lincoln Children's Zoo – Love Your Zoo

REASONS TO



Your Zoo is the number one arts and cultural attraction in Lincoln, ranks third in the state with more than 218,000 guests in 2015.



Your Zoo is helping save endangered species like red pandas, Salt Creek tiger beetles and snow leopards.



Your Zoo is an economic development engine, with an estimated economic impact of \$8.7 million in 2015, according to research by the Bureau of Business Research at UNL.

YOUR GIFT

The Zoo's most recent capital campaign was in one of the most beloved family destinations again rally around the Zoo to broaden the support. Show your love for Lincoln Children's Zoo, by

WAYS TO GIVE A

Thank you for considering a generous gift to create experiences that last a lifetime—influencing and creating lifelong family memories. Choose the tax-deductible contribution.



**MULTI-YEAR
PLEDGES**



**STOCKS AND
SECURITIES**



**PLANNED
GIVING**



**FOUNDATION
GRANTS**



**REAL
ESTATE**



**GIFTS IN
KIND**



1222 S 27TH ST.
LINCOLN, NE 68502

EMAIL KIM
KLEMONS@LINCOLNCHILDRENSZOO.ORG

LOVE YOUR ZOO CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Ann and Nick Cusick
Amy and James Anderson

HONORARY CO-CHAIRS

Mary and Jim Abel
Holly and Tonn Ostergard

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR
Greg Dynek

VICE CHAIR
James Anderson

SECRETARY
Katie Ripa

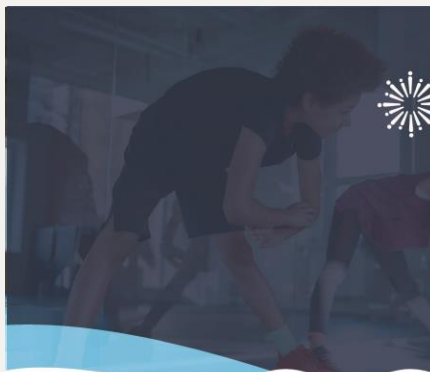
TREASURER
Hank Woods

Brad Anderson, Aaron Bell, Clark Bellin, Bob Caldwell, Brian Cintani, Megan Ehlers, Andy Frahm, Amanda Garner, Maja Harris, Fleur Johnson, Cary Kline, Derek Kotschwar, Matt Lehnert, Jeff McPeak, Bruce Meister, Ryan Nelson, Megan O'Connell, Amanda Ostergard, Keith Peters, Ricki Scully, Jon Sevenker, Jamie Tallman, Len Weyeneth, Shannon Wilkinson, Michaela Johanns Young

We hope your love for Lincoln Children's Zoo will inspire you to become involved in making this exciting opportunity a reality for your community.

On behalf of the millions of children who have experienced animals and nature firsthand, thank you!

Seward Wellness Center – Case for Support



Seward residents need and want a facility to keep all ages healthy and active. A comprehensive wellness center will meet the needs of young and old alike to live happier, healthier lives.

➤ A Wellness Center has been identified as one of the Top 3 things needed in Seward by Active People Healthy Seward

➤ Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership named a Wellness Center a Top 5 priority



This project is for S

SEWARD WELLNESS CENTER IS FOR ADULTS

- The expansion of group fitness classes will benefit adults of all ages.
- The wellness center will provide unique fitness classes and training opportunities.
- An accessible SWC will allow individuals to utilize ADA compliant fitness machines.

SEWARD WELLNESS CENTER IS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

- The facility will provide an accessible wellness center for active older adults as well as young individuals who have limited mobility.
- It will be a place of community. A vibrant wellness center is not just about getting exercise, it is about interacting socially—sharing a sense of community over a cup of coffee and talking about the news of the day.
- Additional fitness rooms allow for expansion of our active older adult wellness program.

SEWARD
IS FOR
Then
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and c

SEWARD
IS FOR

➤ Group
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empl
attit
healt
➤ The I
recre
poten
➤ Incre
Welli
local



Proposed location North of Seward Middle School

include our modern more sedentary work settings, the adults, larger numbers of elderly persons who require after joint replacements and cardiac events. An attract center is an overdue necessity to meet the needs of ci

OUR CHALLENGE

The International YMCA organization and its branch in Lincoln do not have the resources or plans to serve the residents of Seward with a YMCA facility within Seward County.

Therefore, a group of community leaders born from the Active People Healthy Seward Summit, has developed a committee for the Seward Wellness Center. They have researched, planned and will implement a major fundraising effort.

ADDRESSING THE NEED

Completion of the Seward Wellness Center will allow the county to serve its residents better by offering:

Mission Statement

To provide local health and wellness opportunities for the entire county. We offer a facility to promote an active lifestyle and contribute to the health and well-being of all ages.

Vision Statement

Seward Wellness Center is dedicated to help the community achieve a healthy and balanced lifestyle. We will provide a fun and supportive environment filled with options that promote healthy living principles in an educational and caring way executed with a positive attitude.

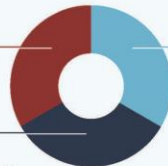
CAPITAL PLANS

Initial cost projections

\$5 Million
in Private Donations

\$5 Million

Up to 1/2 of a percent local sales tax

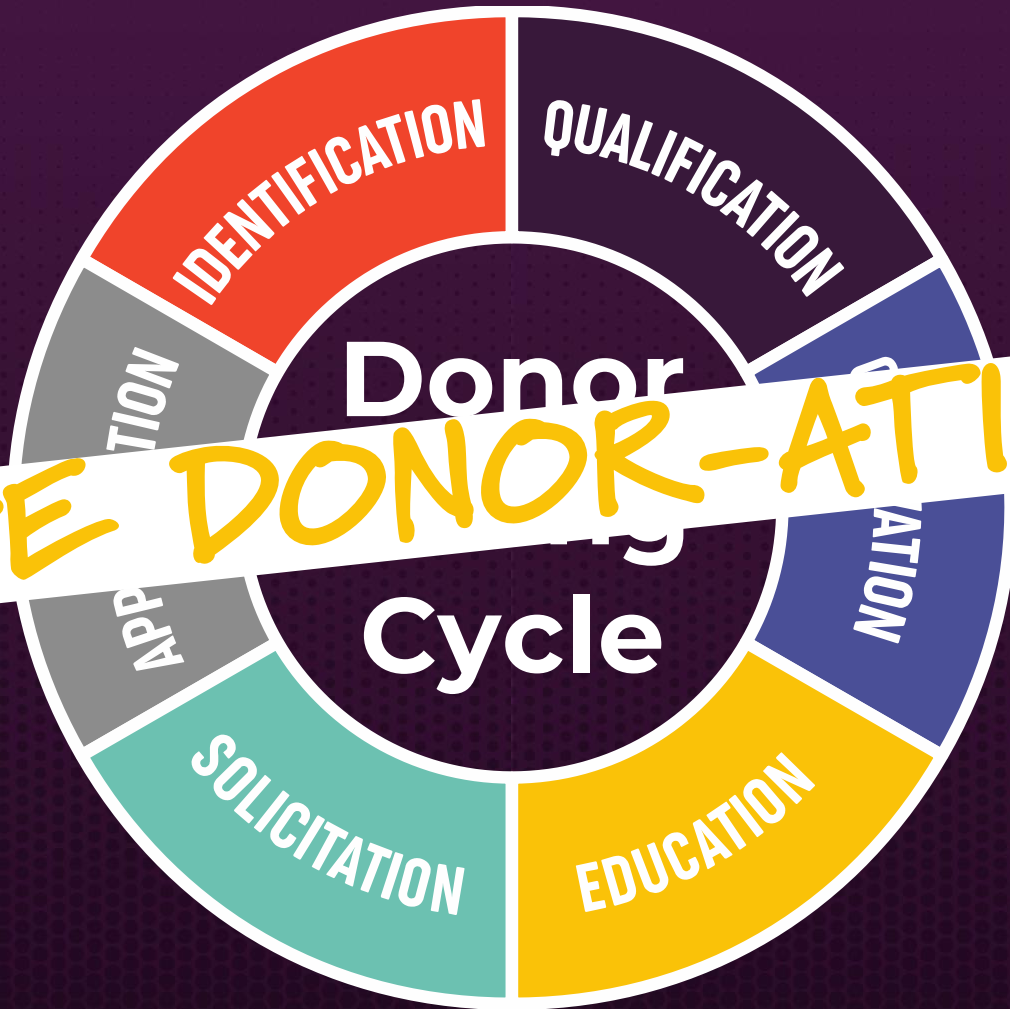


\$5 Million
in funding from grants
and foundations

Seward County residents need and want a facility to keep citizens of all ages healthy and active. A comprehensive wellness center will meet the needs of young and old alike to live happier, healthier lives.



THE DONOR-ATIONS!



Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!

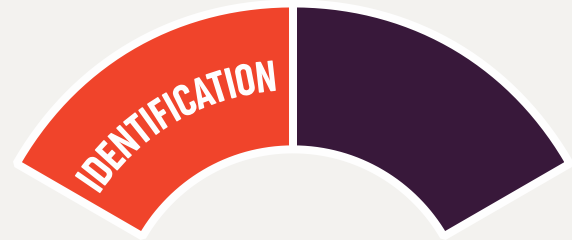


Identification



Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!



Qualification



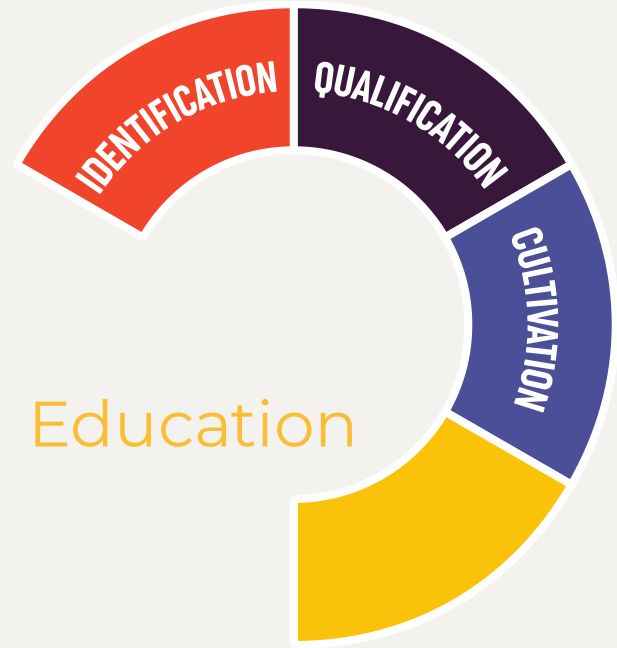
Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!



Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!



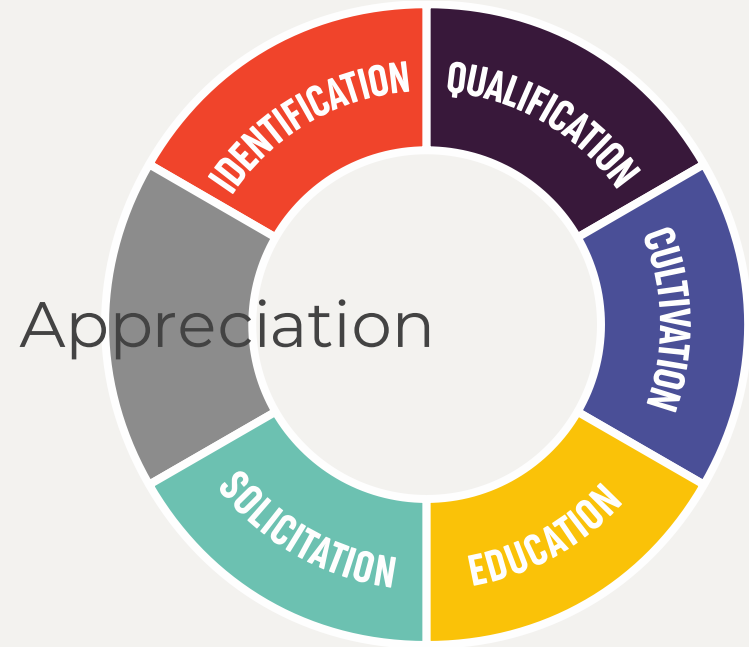
Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!



Donor Giving Cycle

THE DONOR-ATIONS!





10 Most Critical Things an Asker Should Do

1

Understand
the Mission

3

Embrace the Case
for Giving

2

Know
the Donor

4

Be Aware of the Various
Tools for Giving



10 Most Critical Things an Asker Should Do

5

Practice Listening to Understand
not to Respond

6

Know the Value
of Transparency



10 Most Critical Things an Asker Should Do

7

Focus on Building Relationships

9

Always Act with Ethics and Integrity

8

Practice, Practice, Practice

10

Be Brave



Factors in Determining the Ask Amount

1. Donor Research
2. Donor Capacity
3. Relationship Strength
4. Giving Preferences
5. Impact Alignment
6. Ask Strategy
(range of size gifts, payoff over time,
combination of giving vehicles)
7. Customization (*donor recognition*)
8. Sensitivity and Respect



1. Introduction & Gratitude
2. Confirm Alignment with Funding Priorities
3. Impact & Vision
4. Critical Need
5. Unique Opportunity
6. Donor Recognition Customization
7. Long-term Partnership
8. Previous Success Stories
9. Invitation to Engage
10. Specific Ask

Anatomy of an Ask





Providing Support for Volunteer Fundraisers

- Training and guidance
- Clear communication
- Empowerment
- Recognition and appreciation
- Feedback and support
- Collaboration
- Mentoring





Providing Support for Staff in Fundraising

- Set clear expectations
- Training and guidance
- Foster a culture of philanthropy
- Offer strategic guidance
- Assist and support donor cultivation
- Advocate and network
- Monitor progress
- Celebrate success





Sponsorship Fundraising

- Tied to events, programs or initiatives as opposed to donations which may be more general or unrestricted
- Sponsors typically receive tangible benefits in return for their support such as brand visibility, marketing opportunities, networking, etc. These are outlined in the sponsorship packages.
- Relationship that is mutually beneficial to achieve shared goals and objectives
- Time-bound - limited in duration
- Recognition - thanked publicly through branding, logo placement, mentions and acknowledgement





Best Sponsorship Strategies

- Research prospects
- Create compelling sponsorship packages
- Focus on impact and ROI
- Personalize outreach
- Engage Board members and volunteers
- Offer Value-Added opportunities
- Stewardship and relationship building





Exclusivity = Slippery Slope

PRO:

- Larger amounts for longer terms.
- Can deepen donor relationships.
- Can provide marketing opportunities.

CON:

- May limit opportunities to partner with other great businesses.
- Impacts donor relationships.





Don't Forget About These Ways to Ask

- Online Fundraising Strategies
- Direct Mail Campaigns
- Peer-to-Peer Fundraising
- Event Fundraising



A photograph of a hurdle on a red running track. The hurdle has a white frame and a black and white striped top bar. It is positioned on the track, with a metal fence visible in the background.

Hurdles to Potential Giving

Forbes Nonprofit Council

20 Expert panelists weighed in:

1. No clear call to action
2. A lack of evidential support
3. They don't see who or how the money is helping
4. They don't know your need and impact
5. Believe the size of their gift won't make an impact
6. Lacking something: information, connection to the cause, excitement
8. No follow-up after donations
9. Lack of trust
10. Donor experience is not user friendly



A photograph of a hurdle on a red running track. The hurdle has a silver metal frame and a black and white striped top bar. It is positioned on a red track with white lane markings. In the background, there is a metal fence and some greenery.

Hurdles to Potential Giving

- 11. The organization doesn't fit into their giving priorities
- 12. Economic Uncertainty/Election year

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesnonprofitcouncil/2024/03/07/20-barriers-standing-in-the-way-of-potential-nonprofit-donors/?sh=37608b4956dc>



Don't Forget the Thank You

56%

Donor attrition in 2021

44%

Retention

Retention

Year-to-Date Nonprofit Sector Trends 01/01/2020–12/31/2020



Highlights

Compared to the metrics on the prior page, these retention metrics are reporting on the changes in the percentages and not the number of donors in each category.

With fluctuations in the numbers of donors these retention metrics are illustrative of how effective we are at engaging our donors.

Year-to-date retention metrics indicate what percentage of existing and lapsed donors from previous years are giving again.



Repeat Donor
Retention Rate
(YTD) 59.6%

↓ -3.9%
YTD Change



New Donors
Retention Rate
(YTD) 19.3%

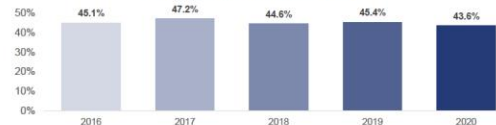
↓ -9.2%
YTD Change



Recapture Rate
(YTD) 4.3%

↑ +1.8%
YTD Change

Overall Donor Retention YTD



Year-to-date Fundraising Performance. All Rights Reserved.





Don't treat your community like an ATM.

Your focus should be on *stewarding* those donors, so you're in a position to *leverage* them.

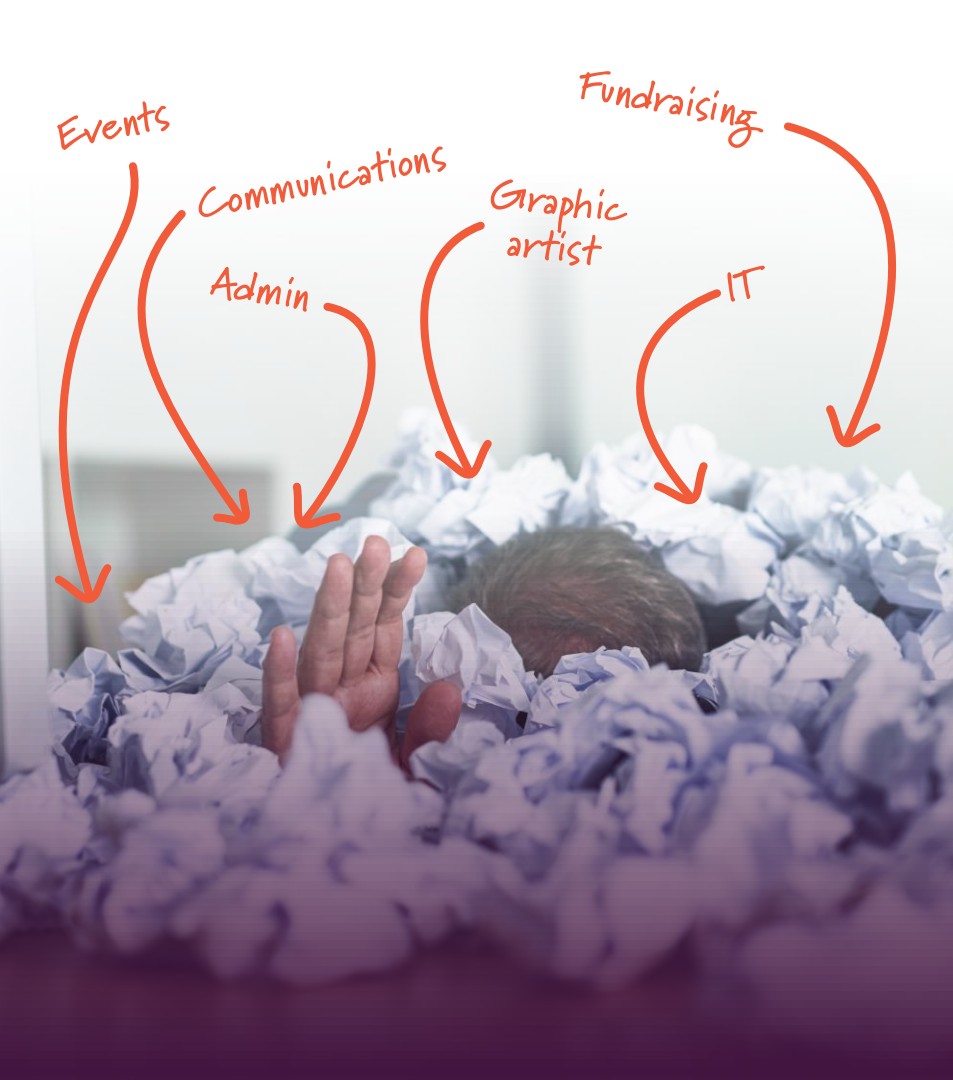
Follow-up and thank you are critical!



Action Steps

1. Review your **gift acceptance** policy
2. Review the Donor-ations to make sure you have a **strategy** for every stage of the cycle
3. Prepare your **training** materials
4. Refresh your **sponsorship** materials
5. Make a list of **5 donors** and determine their ask amounts
6. Remove the **hurdles** for donors to give easily
7. Make sure all askers are using **ethical** practices
8. Keep learning! Attend more **WEBINARS** from Firespring.





Feeling buried?

Let your website do the heavy lifting and dig you out.



Your mission management system



THE TOOLS YOU NEED IN ONE CENTRAL PLACE

- ✓ LEGENDARY SUPPORT & TRAINING
- ✓ CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
- ✓ MOBILE FRIENDLY WEB DESIGNS
- ✓ FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS (WITH RECURRING DONATIONS)
- ✓ BLOG TOOLS & NEWSFEEDS
- ✓ TURNKEY LANDING PAGES
- ✓ STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY LIBRARY
- ✓ SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION
- ✓ EMAIL MARKETING AUTOMATION
- ✓ EVENT REGISTRATION
- ✓ ECOMMERCE
- ✓ COMMUNICATION PORTALS

(FOR YOUR STAFF, BOARD, MEMBERS, DONORS)



**Nonprofit
Websites**

Marketing

Printing

**Strategic
Guidance**

- Custom website design
- Search engine optimization
- Search engine marketing
- Social media posts & optimization
- Impact strategy

- Engagement campaigns
- Landing page development
- Email marketing automation
- Branding & creative services
- Strategic marketing campaigns

Yep, all under one roof.



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 in/hillkiersten



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“This was one of the best webinars that I’ve attended. I love that it was super practical and not sales-pitchy!!”

“Thank you for sharing a ton of invaluable information today. I am writing a report to share with my team!”

“This was seriously one of the best webinars that I have attended. It was relevant, packed with great information, lots of energy, and lots of great questions from the attendees.”





Raise[®] 2025

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San Antonio, TX | September 8 & 9, 2025

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CELEBRATING
150
EPISODES

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The Podcast for Fearless Fundraisers



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to Raise and Reach More

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