

# Weathering COVID-19

*Fundraising Lessons Learned from the Past*

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**TUES APRIL 21 | 1PM ET | 12 CT | 10 AM PT**



# Nice to Meet You

- 25+ year career as a fundraiser, earning my stripes at big shops like Harvard, American Red Cross, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 5 years as a disaster fundraiser including during the American Red Cross' largest domestic disaster response
- CFRE, AFP Master Trainer, President, AFP Washington Area Metro Chapter
- Tailored 1:1 consulting on annual funds, major gifts, campaigns, assessments/studies, CEO/CDO coaching, and board training.



# What We'll Learn Today...



Philanthropic  
trends from  
past economic  
emergencies



Ways to  
assess your  
short-term and  
long-term  
funding needs



Tips to  
recalibrate your  
fundraising to  
maintain  
connection with  
your donors and  
audience



# What History Can Teach Us



# Honest Truth About the Coronavirus...

- Coronavirus is going to reduce charitable giving.
- We are wise to anticipate a forced economic recession when we come out of this global health crisis.
- The reduction could be a three-pronged, negative impact with lower real incomes, income volatility, and tax policies (if they raise the price of giving).
- Donors will be deciding their giving based on those on the front-line (essential human services, e.g.) versus tangential or non-Coronavirus related organizations.

**But the silver lining that history shows us is...**

# Over the last 60 years...

- **Average giving has grown.**

- According to Indiana University's School of Philanthropy, since 1956, average giving has grown 4.7% (adjusted for inflation) in times of economic growth and decreased by .5% in economic downturns.

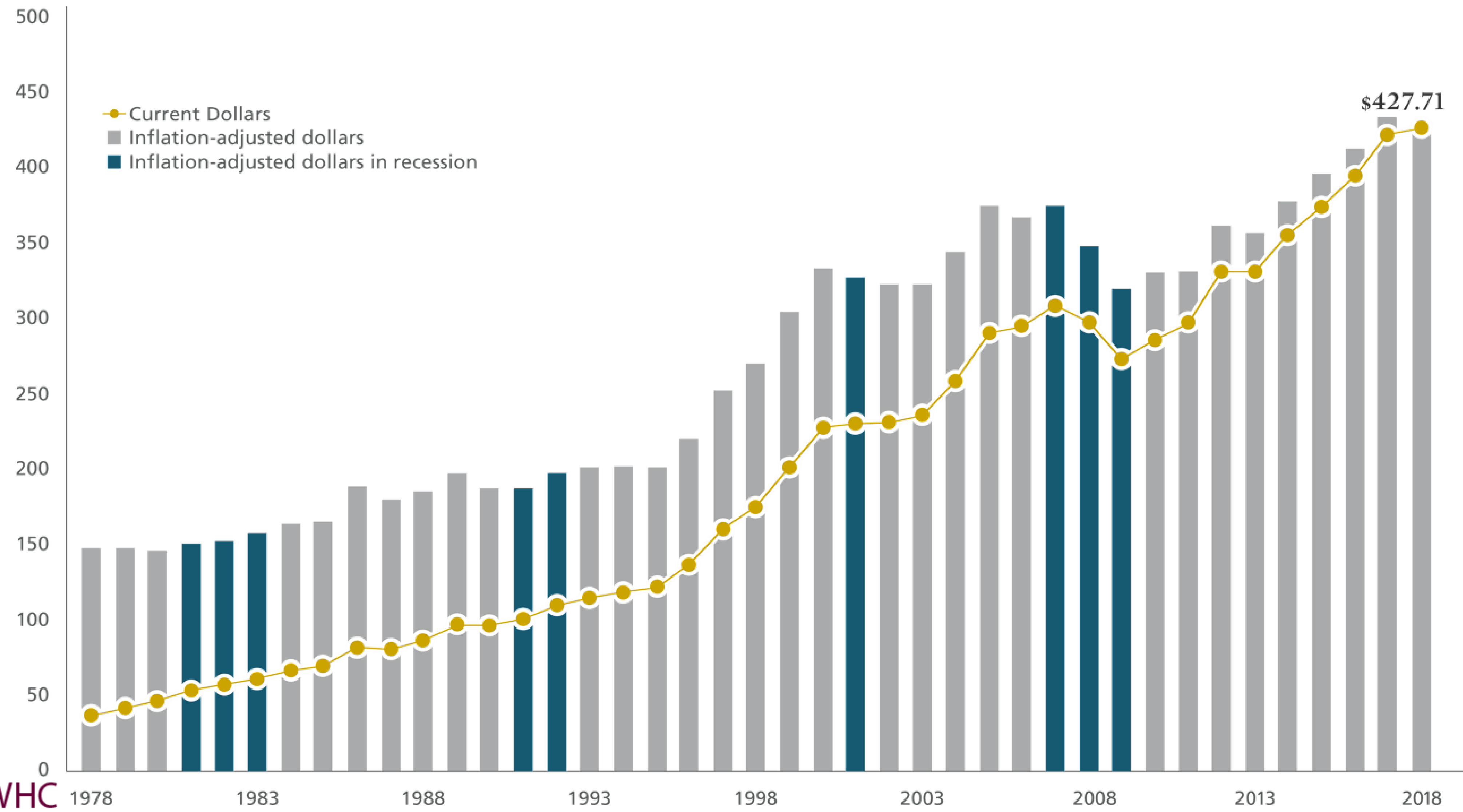
- **Lower to mid-level annual donors have seemed to remain the most steadfast.**

- High net worth individuals, foundations, and corporations have lowered their giving levels as the economy has contracted during slowdowns.

- **Giving has never completely stopped.**

- While the amount donors may give decreases during a slower economy, their giving has continued—especially to charities they have typically supported. This was true even during and after the Great Depression of the 1930s.

# Giving Bounces Back





# Don't Assume Your Donors' Answer



**93% felt that their donors will give less this year.**

**BUT**



# Don't Assume Your Donors' Answer



**50% of donors said they will give the same or more than they did in 2019.**

**25-30% plan to increase their giving this year.**

# 2 Short-term and Long-term Forecasting





# Take Stock

- Understand your organization's cash position to determine how many months of savings your organization has to operate with no additional income.

Cash + Cash equivalents + Accounts Receivable – (Restricted Cash + Restricted Receivables)

Typical Monthly Expenses

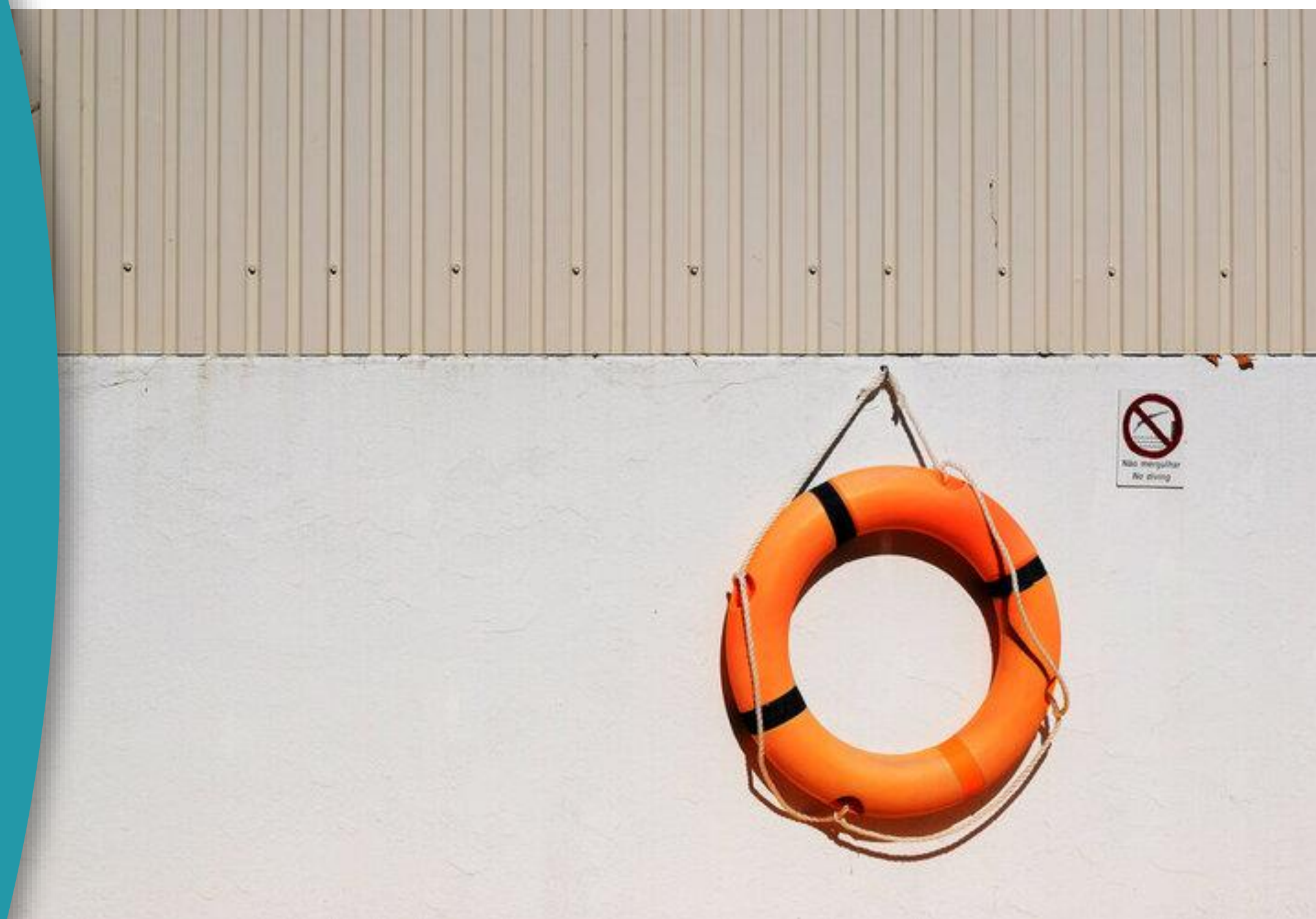
- Update your cash flow projections for the next 6 months assuming some revenue loss and identifying expenses you can trim.
- Calculate your revenue projections taking into account changes in event revenue or other fundraising activities that are either canceled or postponed including major gifts solicitations.

“ Don’t default to a worst-case scenario. Defensive responses like cutting as many expenses as possible—especially fundraising staff and expenses—have never positioned organizations for long-term success in past emergencies. ”



# 3

## Recalibrate Your Fundraising



# Redefine Your Case



**Ask  
Yourself**

What about your organization's mission is of most value now in light of the Coronavirus? How does your work change because of or responds to increased needs as a result of this global crisis?

What will you need to do more of or pivot to do to position your organization in light of the emerging needs of the community because of this pandemic?

How does this translate to increased funding needs that you can present to your donors as opportunities for them to help?



“ Fundraising under-performance, therefore,  
is actually a failure to communicate. ”

—Penelope Burk, *Donor-Centered Fundraising*

# Recalibrate Your Fundraising

**Give people a sense of agency—in times of disaster, people want to control what they can. Supporting charities they love helps them as much as it helps you.**

## 1

### Stay close to your donors.

- Email updates that are proactive and open about your response to the Coronavirus and where you need their help the most.
- Focus on donor retention and donor file size.

## 2

### Call your top donors/volunteers.

- Top annual and major donors
- Donors who have been giving to you 3+ years
- Monthly donors
- Volunteers
- New donors this fiscal year (ideally) or at minimum within the last two months
- Those who open your newsletters/engage with you on social.

## 3

### Be Creative with Digital

- Use videos, stories, and testimonials from beneficiaries or volunteers.
- Schedule 1:1 donor video meetings.
- Hold a virtual town hall or virtual parties to keep connected with your donors during this period of social distancing.



# Ignite Your Donors' Sense of Agency

- Give them ways to exercise their “agency” which is the feeling they are in control:
  - ✓ Set up their own Peer-to-Peer fundraising effort to help one of your beneficiaries or one of your programs.
  - ✓ Volunteer in other ways that benefit your program and are in line with social distancing.
  - ✓ Help take the sting out of the loneliness of ‘social distancing” by telephoning and checking in on some of your older donors while thanking them for their support.
  - ✓ Hosting their own virtual happy hour fundraiser for your organization.
  - ✓ Make a gift to you (membership renewal, gift cards, online shop orders, financial assistance, emergency funds, etc.



“Be the roll of toilet paper your donors are looking for...”

Roger Craver

# Counter the Myths

**“I can’t ask my donors for money now. It feels insensitive.”**

**“My organization’s mission isn’t directly responding to the Coronavirus.”**

**“Most of our revenue was raised through events. Now what?”**

**“We’re going to have to scale back our expenses which means cutting staff.”**

- Your donors want you to succeed and know you are affected by this pandemic and economic downturn. They are waiting for you to ask them for help.
- If your organization was important to your community before this disaster, it will be important after during and after this time is behind us. Consider yourself a “second responder.” Think long-term.
- Effective fundraising is about relationships. Now’s the time to rethink how you connect with your donors. Clarify your case, plan intentional outreach by phone, email, video to your top tiers of your audience.
- Don’t default to the worst case scenario. Are wide-scale staff cuts really necessary? If so, don’t cut your fundraising staff. You need them as a revenue driver.

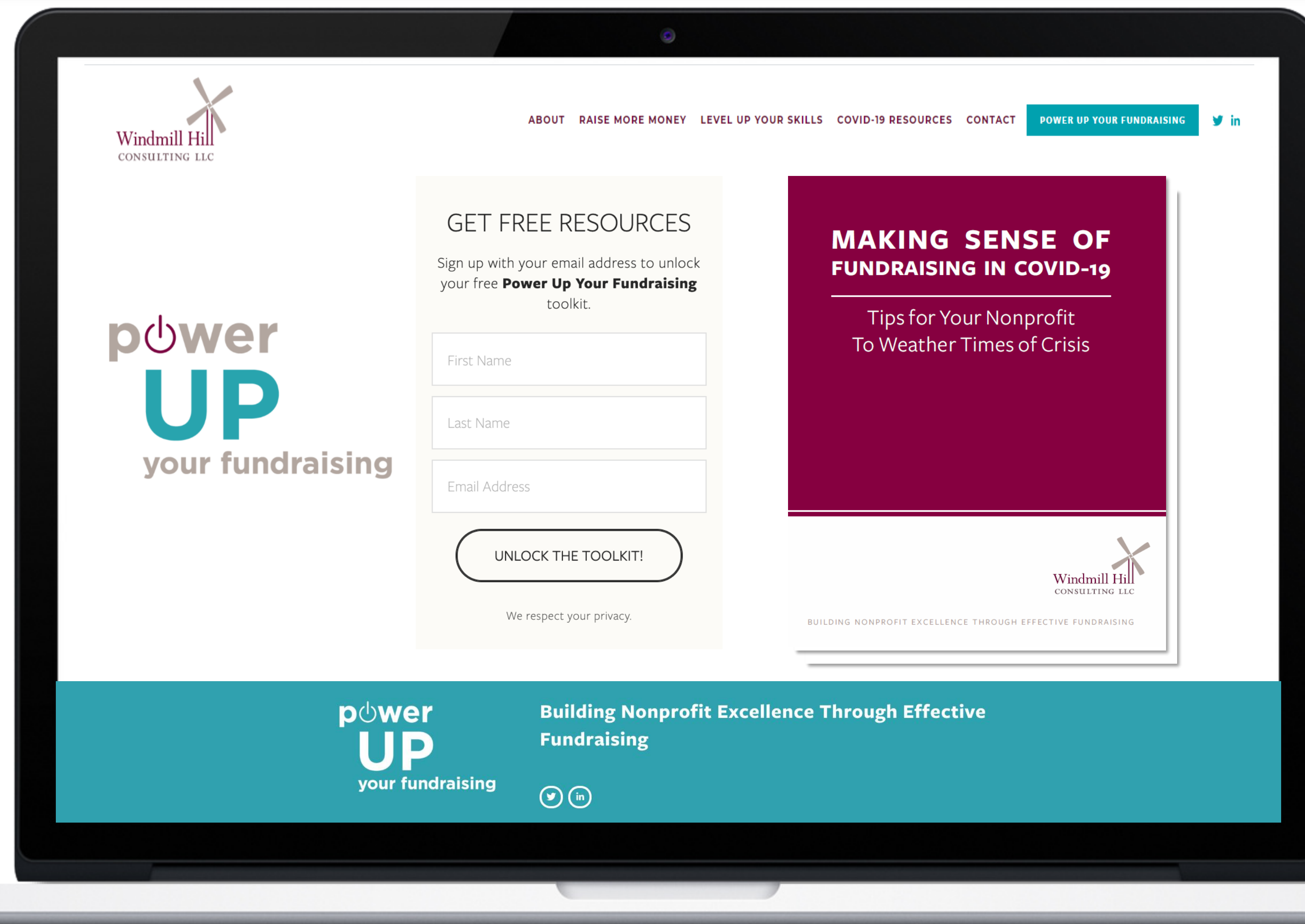


“ Don’t assume your donors won’t give to you.

History has not shown that donors don’t stop giving to organizations they care about in times of crisis.

Their timing and amount might only change. ”

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# Questions?





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FUNDAMENTALS OF

# Facebook Live

*Tools for a Digital Pivot*

**THURSDAY APRIL 23 | 2PM ET | 1PM CT | 11AM PT**





# Communication & Donor Engagement Strategies

DURING COVID-19

THURSDAY APRIL 30 | 1PM ET | 12PM CT | 10AM PT





# Let's Stay Connected

## Want to chat further?

Email me [boreilly@whillconsulting.com](mailto:boreilly@whillconsulting.com)

## Interested in more resources?

[www.whillconsulting.com/power-up-your-fundraising](http://www.whillconsulting.com/power-up-your-fundraising)

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