The GiveMN Guide to

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

gtmd

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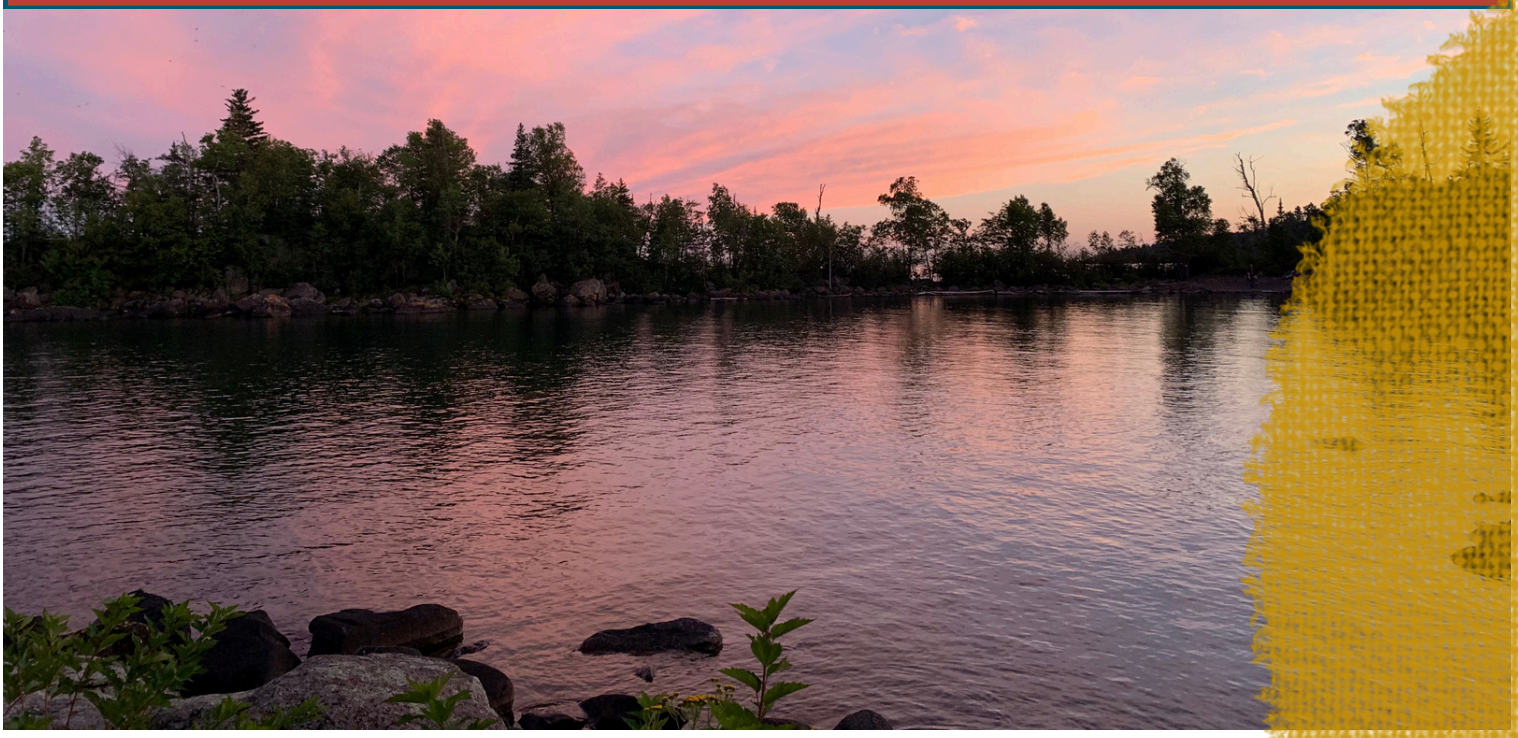
Turning Passion Into Action

A fundraising campaign is a focused effort to raise money for a cause. On GiveMN.org, campaigns help you tell your story, inspire donors, and track progress in real time, making it easier to rally your community and maximize your impact.



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KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Let's start by thinking about who you're talking to during your campaign. Knowing your audience will help you build a unique story that captures peoples' attention and speak to their values. When we center authentic stories, we can move people to action!

While you're filling out the prompts below, think back to previous campaigns your organization has done. What worked well? What did people respond to best? Use any previous campaign information you have to help inform your current campaign!

Ask Yourself These Questions

- **Who is your audience? Who exactly are you talking to?**
- **What do they love about your mission? Why do they care?**
- **What do they respond to? Through which communication channels have you had the most success?**
- **How do you want to make people feel?**

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BUILD A STORY WITH AN ANSWER

A compelling story is the cornerstone of a strong fundraising campaign. Now that you've identified who you're talking to, the following questions will help walk through the components of building a story that your audience can get involved in. Write your answers below!

1

What is the **specific** challenge or obstacle your organization is addressing?

Example: Every day, dozens of Whoville kids start their morning without a meal, jeopardizing not only their health but their ability to learn. To make matters worse, hardworking students like Sam are bullied for eating a free breakfast at school.

2

Why is it **urgently** important that this challenge is addressed?

Example: Kids who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to get better grades in school, have lower rates of absenteeism, and experience better emotional health.

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3

Why is **your organization** the one to address this issue?

Example: That's where Whoville Nutrition volunteers come in. Every week, they leave backpacks full of healthy breakfast food in the lockers of Whoville Middle School students facing food insecurity. These backpacks ensure kids like Sam have the nutritious food they need to help them succeed in school.

4

What does your organization **need** to solve the problem?

Example: With the rising costs of food, Whoville needs $5,000 of extra funding this school year to feed every child that needs our help.

5

Make your ask!

Example: Will you donate $100 now to help us reach our $5,000 goal and feed more school children this year?

6

Close your story by centering the **community** you work with.

Example: A simple breakfast is more than just food - it's the opportunity for kids in our community to dream bigger and reach their full potential. Together, one backpack at a time, we can help students strive for a brighter future!

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SET A GOAL

Think of setting your campaign goal like buying a car: you may think you can only afford something completely run down, but your board of directors is asking you for something big and fancy. **How can you compromise and get something achievable?**

Getting to Your Achievable Goal

Let's say you need $3,000 to fund your program for the year. Last year, you raised $1,500 during Give to the Max. A goal of $5,000 for this year's giving day might not be reasonable. Based on your past success, perhaps $1,750 or $2,000 is a good place to start.

No matter what amount you choose, we encourage you to keep the following in mind:

- **Make it achievable and aspirational!**
  - Try to find the balance between ambitious and unachievable. Setting a goal too low and hitting it early in your campaign might send the signal to donors that you don't need their help. Setting a goal too high and not hitting it might be disheartening to your supporters. Striking the right balance is important!
- **Keep it relevant to your story**
  - How does your goal tie in to your story? What will the money be used for?

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Use the workspace below to brainstorm some ideas for your campaign goal. Think about the following:

- How much money do you need to meet your budget?
- How have previous campaigns performed? How much did you raise?
- What do you consider a realistic aspiration for this campaign?

$ Raised Last GTMD:

Stretch Goal:

Low Goal:

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CONSIDER A MATCHING GIFT

For more guidance on matching gifts, check out this guide.

Matching funds are one of the most effective ways to drive donations to your campaign.

Check the items below that apply to your organization:

- ☐ We have previously used a matching gift **successfully** during a campaign.
- ☐ **We have a relationship** with an individual, foundation, or company that is willing to provide matching gift funds.
- ☐ Our **board is willing** to provide matching funds.
- ☐ **We *might* have a relationship** with an individual, foundation, or company that would be willing to provide matching gift funds.
- ☐ Our fundraising team has the **capacity to maintain a relationship** with a donor(s) if they were to make a large donation to provide a matching gift fund.
- ☐ Our fundraising team has the **capacity to communicate the matching gift opportunity** with our donor audience during the fundraising campaign with urgency, consistency, and a compelling story.

If you checked two or more boxes, then a matching gift might be a great tool for you! If you did not check at least two boxes, that doesn't mean that a matching gift isn't the right strategy for you. Be sure to evaluate how much time you have before your campaign and how much capacity you have to secure the matching funds ahead of time!

There are two big questions to answer for a matching gift strategy:

- Whom will you ask to fund your matching gift pool?
- How much will be offered as part of the matching gift pool?

GiveMN tip! If you don't have one donor that can singlehandedly provide your matching gift fund, think about asking multiple people to pool their gifts and create a fund together!

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IDENTIFY YOUR CORE SUPPORTERS



You might have donors you know really well, new donors you're still getting to know, and donors who fall somewhere in between. Identifying which supporters are going to be the most engaged with your campaign is a major key to your fundraising success!

Consider the following categories, hot, medium, and cold, to help identify your strongest supporters.

Hot

Hot prospects know and understand your work. They already give in one or more ways and feel connected to your mission. Focus on maintaining and deepening your relationships with this category as they're likely to support you time-and-time again!

Medium

Medium prospects have some understanding of your work, but need to be engaged more before they donate.

Cold

Cold prospects may not understand your work and may or may not care about what you do. We recommend not spending time here until you've activated all your hot and medium options!

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BUILD YOUR TEAM

For more tips on board engagement, check out this guide

Fundraising is most successful when we all come together to activate our networks. Helping others feel empowered to advocate for your mission can significantly increase your reach into the community and your fundraising results!

Who can you ask to help raise support for your organization?

- ☐ Board members
- ☐ Organization staff (other than fundraising staff)
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Donors

Board members are the most important advocates for your organization!

Here are the top things they can do to support your campaign:



DONATE: Ask them to make a personal donation



SHARE: Ask them to spread the word to their friends & family



THANK: Ask them to make thank you calls or write thank you notes to other donors

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS!

- **What actions will you ask your board members to take?**
- **What will board members need to be successful** (thank you call script, social media posts, etc.)?

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PREPARE YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

You've identified your audience, your story, and your goal...now it's time to figure out how you'll spread the word. You know your audience best, so select communication channels that will resonate with them the most.

Which communication channels are most successful with your audience?

Which channels do your donors respond to the best? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter / X
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Phone or video calls
- ☐ Postal mail letters
- ☐ Handwritten notes or cards
- ☐ Virtual or in-person gatherings
- ☐ Text messages
- ☐ Recorded video messages
- ☐ Your website
- ☐ Your GiveMN.org page
- ☐ Other:

Of the options you checked above, which would be the top three most impactful channels for your campaign?

What do you need to effectively engage donors through your top three channels?

- ☐ Photos (and photo use consent)
- ☐ Story and/or appeal copy
- ☐ Quotes or testimonials (and story use consent)
- ☐ Video content (and video/audio use consent)
- ☐ Organization logos and/or graphics
- ☐ Images sized for email and/or social media
- ☐ Address, phone, and/or emails of your donors
- ☐ Other:

GiveMN tip! If you're working with a communications professional to manage your organization's social media, emails, etc., be sure to include them in your planning process! They'll have great content and connection ideas and can help you plan realistic timelines. And don't stop posting your organization's regular content! During a campaign it's good to vary your fundraising asks with other mission related content.

Finally, don't forget the power of spending a small amount of money on social media advertising! Investing even $20 can dramatically increase the reach of your best Facebook posts, including to prospective donors who don't yet follow your organization!

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MAKE AN APPRECIATION PLAN

For more stewardship templates & tips, check out this guide.

Which methods will you use to celebrate and thank your supporters?

Choose every feasible strategy! You can never have enough gratitude.

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Social media posts
- ☐ Thank you call
- ☐ Thank you card or postcard
- ☐ Thank you letter
- ☐ Celebration video

Will every donor be thanked and engaged in the same way?

If not, plan out how various groups of donors will be appreciated and invited to stay involved.

Board Members

Example: Executive Director will call board members to thank them

Major Donors*

Example: Director of Development will make thank you calls to donors of $500 and up

First-Time Supporters

Example: New donors will receive a welcome email thanking them for their gift

All Other Donors

Example: All donors will receive a thank you postcard via postal mail

**What might qualify as a major gift at one organization might not work for you. Define your own parameters and made it custom to your mission and values!*

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SKETCH OUT YOUR PLAN

Your campaign has a lot of moving pieces! Plan out the work of launching, maintaining, and following up on your campaign below.

Two Months Ahead	***One Month Ahead***
Week Before Launch	***During the Campaign***
Immediate Follow-Up	***Ongoing Engagment***

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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM



You've told amazing stories and engaged lots of donors, hopefully raising much-needed support for your organization. Congratulations! However, as nonprofit leaders, we're usually taking care of others. It's just as important to take care of ourselves and our colleagues, too! Make a plan for how you will celebrate your success and recharge for your next campaign.

What will you do to recharge and celebrate your hard work after you complete this campaign?

What will you do the check in with your colleagues and help them celebrate their success?

What will you do to thank board members and volunteers while sharing the news about your successes?

Self-care doesn't always mean going on vacation or taking a bubble bath (though those things can definitely be included!). Here are some ideas for taking care of yourself and your team:

- [ ] Find a **quiet place** to take deep breaths and reset your mind and body
- [ ] **Take a walk** alone or with a friend, or find space outside to soak up some sunshine
- [ ] Make a list of **things you're proud of** from your campaign and save them to refer to later when you need a boost
- [ ] **Treat yourself** to your favorite drink, snack, or activity

Remember that advocating for yourself is also self-care! It's okay to ask for help as you plan your campaign...fundraising is a team activity!

- [ ] **Communicate honestly and openly** with your leaders & board members about your needs
- [ ] **Ask the GiveMN Help Team** for support at help@givemn.org
- [ ] **Connect with other fundraising peers** to get fresh perspective or creative ideas

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What's next?

This fundraising guide can help anytime you're planning a fundraising campaign!

Consider some of these ideas:

- Preparing your calendar year-end or fiscal year-end fundraising appeal
- Launching a spring donation campaign
- Running an acquisition (new donor) campaign
- Sprucing up your annual fundraising campaign
- Creating an additional gift appeal (asking current donors to give an additional gift)

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Reach out to our team of technology experts at Help@GiveMN.org anytime or visit the GTMD26 Resources area on GiveMN.org for more templates, guides, and tools to help make your campaign the best it can be.

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