

Highlights of Council Fund Development Administration

Introduction

Council generated contributions (FOS, project sales, net special events, foundations and trusts, and other direct support) may not be as continuous and dependable as they have been in the past for many councils. Traditional donor bases are decreasing and new donors are becoming more challenging to acquire.

Reliance on the community-at-large funding all our needs simply because we have a great program without ensuring basic fundraising fundamentals are in place is a losing proposition. There are many organizations with great programs performing wonderful services for our communities who are in competition for donor funds.

Fundamentals

- **Board members** – One of the primary responsibilities of the council executive board is to raise funds adequate to achieve the objectives of Scouting. Council board members must be eager to use their professional skills and community contacts to help identify new sources of revenue. The emphasis must be on individual donors rather than on corporate and community resources. Most councils set expectations for board members' participation in FOS and other appeals.
- **Development committee** – Key responsibilities of fundraising should be assigned to a council development committee that is appointed by the council president and approved by the executive board as one of the board standing committees. The committee should be comprised of board members and may include non-board members who work closely with the Scout executive and the executive board to assure adequate financial resources. Attention should be paid to identifying, cultivating, and soliciting donors at all levels (operating, capital, and endowment) who are supportive of the mission and values of Scouting. This committee will support the efforts of the council FOS chair (who may be a member of the committee) and other key volunteers in order to achieve the fundraising goals of the council.

Steering committee - This special committee's primary objective is to assure successful, on-time completion of a specific campaign. This is done by identifying, cultivating and selecting top campaign leadership, analyzing the status of the campaign progress and making adjustments when and where needed to guarantee success.

Prospect and evaluation committee - This committee includes volunteers engaged in reviewing current contributors and determining optimum ask amounts, deleting those who are no longer viable donors, correcting inaccurate information, adding new prospects, evaluating the determined ask amount for all new prospects, assigning all prospects to volunteer campaign workers and ensuring there are enough prospects identified to reach the campaign goal.

- **Development plan** – A council must develop and manage a coordinated, well thought out and written overall fundraising plan and campaign timetable with appropriate disciplines. The plan should include the development and implementation of a moves management program which cultivates individuals who contribute to the family and community levels for participation at higher levels of giving. It should also include a systematic approach to identify, recruit and engage fundraising volunteers at all levels of the council's development efforts.
- **District fundraising** – Districts need to have reasonable fundraising goals that are in alignment with the council's development plan. The same elements of successful council fundraising apply to the districts in recruiting sufficient volunteers, involving steering committees and prospecting and evaluating new donors.

- **Relationship fundraising** - Our best successes come from relationship fundraising where we recruit donors through building interpersonal relationships and keeping long-term relationships with them. Councils should develop and manage, as a part of an overall development plan, a strategy to explore the interests and motivations to giving of current donors. It should include a formal tracking system that ensures donors receive some form of communication or contact a minimum of seven times between asks for support. Touches could include thank you telephone calls from board members to \$500 and above donors and, handwritten thank you notes to all \$250 and above donors. It is also a best practice for councils to implement a systematic, yearly plan to cultivate and build relationships with the council's top 100 donors through face-to-face visits which do not include the meeting to ask for support.

Board/Council Resource

The "Orientation Guide for Council Officers and Executive Board Members", No. 33161 states the following:

- One condition when granting a charter to a BSA local council is willingness and ability to provide adequate budgetary resources to deliver a sustainable council operation. The council should also have pride in meeting all its obligations on time. Just as the local council is a method of mobilizing people and organizational resources, it is also a method of mobilizing local dollars for the successful and sustainable operation of the Scouting program.
- The responsibilities of raising, managing, and investing finances is assigned to the council development and finance committees, under the supervision and general guidance of the council executive board, council president, and Scout executive.
- Particular attention will need to be paid to identify, cultivate, and solicit donors at all levels (operating, capital, and endowment) who are supportive of the mission and values of Scouting. The emphasis must be on individual donors rather than on corporate and community resources. Councils must build an endowment fund sufficient to stabilize council finances in the face of annual funding cycles.

Delineating roles and responsibilities

One cause for discord in some councils could be confusion over fundraising roles. Who is actually responsible for bringing in donations, and who determines the overall fundraising strategy? What tasks belong to the staff, and what duties are carried out by the board? Without a true understanding of fundraising as part of the overall financial plan and without appropriate division of labor, it's difficult to secure a strong fiscal base for the council. The board and Scout executive need to be on the same page on this issue and need to understand that a professional Scouter can only be successful if he or she has enough of the right volunteers helping to open doors and spread the good news of Scouting.

For additional council fund development resources go to:

<http://www.scouting.org/FinanceImpact/Council%20Fund%20Development.aspx>

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