

fact sheet #2

for Friends and Foundations

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

Friends often embark on fundraising campaigns for special library needs. It can be a small campaign to help purchase new equipment or to bring professional programming to the library, or it can be a major campaign to support library automation or even a new library.

If the campaign is for a significant amount of money, you should seriously consider consulting a professional fundraiser. While these experts won't go out and raise the money for you, they will help you design the campaign, select potential donors, help you make the case for the campaign and teach you how to make "the ask." In the meantime, here are some tips on running a successful fundraising campaign.

1. If you are not already a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, begin this process before embarking on a fundraising campaign. This will prevent you from having to pay taxes on the money you raise and it will allow donors to write the value of their gifts to you off their taxes. Check the Friends and Foundations Zone on United for Libraries' website (www.ala.org/united) for Toolkit #4, "Incorporating and Tax Exempting Procedures for Friends," for information on what you'll need to get tax-exempt status. You will probably want to engage an attorney to help with the process.
2. There is always competition with other worthy projects. Consider the timing of your campaign. If there is another high-profile campaign already in progress, you might want to wait until it concludes.
3. Engage high-profile community leaders to "head" the campaign – this will help give your efforts higher status and more credibility. These leaders only need to lend their names, they don't have to do the work.
4. Develop a "Case Statement." This is the written articulation for why you are raising money. Present your case with facts, benefits, and reasons for giving. Be sure all volunteers have the Case Statement to share with potential donors.
5. Consider local foundations and corporations as potential donors.
6. Though you will want to include community-wide fundraising at the end of your campaign, begin with asking potential high level donors in person. Two volunteers can visit a potential donor together. Be sure that the volunteers have a specific amount to ask for and are prepared to articulate the need (case statement).

7. Leadership gifts are important. Go after the biggest donors first. Send the right person(s) at the right time to the right prospect for the right amount.
8. After the potential large donors have been approached, take your campaign community-wide. Address all the community organizations you can such as women's clubs, veterans' organizations, civic clubs, church and synagogue groups, library groups, and PTAs.
9. Follow up with a community-wide event or initiative that will give everyone the opportunity to contribute.
10. Accept cash, checks, credit cards, and pledges. Ninety percent of the people who make pledges honor them. In-kind gifts are appropriate, as are memorials and endowments.
11. Finally – DON'T FORGET TO SAY THANK YOU to both workers and donors!

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