

Grassroots Convening 2014

Swap Meet Discussion Notes

Changing Funding Environment

It's urgent for us not be dependent on a few foundations and their changing priorities. It's better to be dependent on smaller donations (mailing an appeal letter and electronic campaign) while also growing your major donor base.

- Build legacy and bequest program for when major donor dies
- Go to your local community foundation and see if any donor-directed funds might be interested in your work.

Let no crisis go unused; crisis provides the opportunity for donors to do what's important. How can we grab on to current events that donors might be interested in supporting, such as the drought, recession, climate change etc., to get more money?

- Suggestions include: build an educational campaign (with a beginning, middle and end) on how important it is to grow your own food in a time of drought
- Difficult balancing campaign with organizational identity

Major Donors

Our organization needs to raise a lot of money. We have wealthy people in the area but don't know how to cultivate them. Suggestions:

- do your homework and identify the best leads by looking at the annual reports, event programs, list of board of directors, and Linked In contacts of related organizations
- Mine your network: choose 5-10 people to talk to. Give them a range of options for how to be involved (including donating money).
- Keep track of information for the people you're meeting with and trying to cultivate.
- Engage potential donors in your efforts

Boards and Fundraising

Have fun; use peer pressure and, if needed, shame to motivate board members to give. Acknowledge those who do.

Crowdfunding and Social Media

Crowdfunding

- Platforms include: Indiegogo, CauseVox and Crowdrise.
- Organize a launch party to get people excited and start supporting the cause
- Need a catchy idea, something that will motivate people to give. (Example: a new health bar to raise money for undocumented immigrants)
- Provide incentives for people to give, though this can also turn people off

Social Media

- Creating a niche online
- Build an online presence without bombarding people
- Cultivate the base before crowdfunding
- Need some 'bling' to grab people's attention

Collaborative Fundraising

Our organization is involved in many collaboratives. Challenges include: allocation of funds raised and who takes credit for work done. Benefits include: bringing different capacities and skill sets to a project and splitting staff time to work toward a common goal.

- What is the best way to do asset mapping of our member groups?
- Gives us credibility to be connected with academic institutions and public health departments
- By offering to be the lead organization on an ask, it shows our investment in the work and builds our relationships
- Hold collaborative funding events
- To avoid competing with our allies for money, we're in the process of developing protocols for collaborative fundraising and clarify roles for each partner involved.
- Recognize the collective power of a community, people's assets, including: legal, media, and education. Get funding for all these pieces but from different funders.

Grassroots collaboration offers a blend of activism and education/awareness, where you make a practical connection to people's lives.

Rural Fundraising

We operate in these communities. Our strength is finding common concern for a diverse group. We find that we need to stay neutral on controversial issues.

- Barriers: geography, low-income communities, seasonal occupants

- Benefits: more personal connections with collaborators, elected officials

What have we tried for fundraising:

- Donor letters, events (it's hard to attract 50 people), lectures, trainings
- Events with fundraising component (pass the hat)

Finding Volunteers

- Network with similar groups to find common thread
- Develop an idea sheet with list of how to engage people based on their strengths