

# Fundraising Best Practices & Recommendations

for



PLANTING SEEDS TO GROW COMMUNITY

Authored by SIUE's Sociology of Grassroots Fundraising course

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**October 2, 2019**

*Acknowledgments:*

The bulk of information in this report is drawn from and adapted from the following two resources, which are noted throughout the report with in-text citations:

- Ertukel, Dee and Mary Jane Volk. 2011 (2009). *Making the Dough Rise: A manual for campaign fundraisers*. Washington, D.C.: Ertukel and Volk List.
- Klein, Kim. 2016. *Fundraising for Social Change (7E)*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing.

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# Welcome to Fundraising

You might be nervous about fundraising, but it is necessary to move your cause and organization forward. This section gives you some background about donors, donations, and why people give. Most U.S. adults donate to nonprofits. Why not give them the opportunity to direct those funds to helping get The Tiny Children's Garden off the ground?

## **The money is there** (Klein 2016)

Concerning questions come to mind when taking on a large fundraising project. Where does all this money come from? How will you get enough people to understand the importance of donating to your organization? This guide will help you get as much from your fundraising endeavors as possible.

Before you get started with fundraising, it is helpful to understand some foundational information about where nonprofits get their funding from and who donates to them. Nonprofit organizations receive monetary donations, make their own money, and also receive in-kind gifts of services and goods. You can encourage people to donate their time, money, physically help with the garden, and donate soil or seeds, all for the success of The Tiny Children's Garden.

### **Where does nonprofits' money come from?**

55% of all income for nonprofits is earned income. Earned income includes tuition and fees for services, payment for goods, and income from investments. Girl Scout cookies, Goodwill stores, calendars, and homemade cards are all examples of earned income.

32% of all income for nonprofits is from government funding.

The final 13% of all income for nonprofits comes from the private sector: individuals, foundations, and corporations. Within the private sector, individuals provide 80% of the total funding. This means most of your donations will likely come from individuals.

### **Who is giving?**

It is estimated that 7 out of 10 adults in the United States give away money. Yes, you read that correctly! This means more Americans give away money than vote. It is not just wealthy individuals who give. Those making less than \$90,000 a year are responsible for the majority of donations to nonprofits. Lower income and middle income U.S. adults do donate their money. Whether they make those donations to support The Tiny Children's Garden or solely towards other organizations is going to be up to you.

## Where do people donate?

Based on data from 2014, religious organizations receive the largest amount of contributions.

The next largest receiver of contribution is education, followed in order by health, gifts to foundations, human services, public-society benefit, art/culture/humanities, international affairs, environmental/animals, and finally grants for individuals. The Tiny Children's Garden could tap into a number of these areas, connecting with houses of worship in the community, framing its activities around educating kids about growing healthy foods, bringing together community, supporting the environment, and offering a direct service to community members. Connect your work ideologically to your prospective donors' interests and values.

### Churches as a model

Churches are famous for their successful fundraising efforts. Congregations ask for donations every single time they gather. They also make it very easy to donate. They may pass around a basket with envelopes, allowing people to make anonymous donation, or with their name attached. During this time the preacher often is informing the congregation on what these donations are benefiting, making individuals believe they are receiving as much, if not more than what they are giving, whether it is to support the church's basic operations or to update their playground for their children. Consider how you can emulate some of these practices in your fundraising efforts.

## Feel good about fundraising (Ertukel and Volk 2011; Klein 2016)

Asking people for money is vital in fundraising. Most people who donate to organizations do so because they were asked. Just like any other person, you might feel uncomfortable asking someone for money, even if it is to donate to The Tiny Children's Garden. However, you should work to remind yourself to feel good, not bad, about fundraising. There are plenty of ways a person can feel good about fundraising and keep that positive feeling.

What if you are worried people will say no? They will say no. This will happen. It is okay and you do not need to take it personally. There are many good reasons someone might not want to donate to your organization at that current time.

However, people often say yes. Have you ever given a donation to an organization? Why did you contribute? Maybe you wanted to support the work the person was doing that asked you, or maybe you wanted support the cause, or felt the organization was effective and that you could make a difference with your donation. When you ask someone to donate to your campaign, you are giving them an opportunity to choose to be part of it.

According to Kay Sprinkel Grace, "People don't give because we have needs; they give because we meet needs" (Klein 2016:32).

People give because they care about the issue/organization's analysis of a problem and are invested in your vision towards a solution. Donating to an organization or cause gives people the sense of helping, of making a difference. It gives them an opportunity to demonstrate and act on their beliefs and values. The Tiny Children's Garden will help the

community out of the food desert they are in and incorporate more healthy food options back into the community. It will empower students and teach them about gardens, healthy foods,

community, and sustainability. When you ask people for donations, you are giving them a chance to be part of The Tiny Children's Garden becoming a reality. You are giving them a chance to support you and the work you are doing to grow your efforts beyond what you could do alone.

Think about the mission and goals of The Tiny Children's Garden. Reminding yourself about why you are fundraising and about what donations to the project are for can help you push yourself past your nerves and also feel better about making the ask to someone to be part of something you believe in. The Tiny Children's Garden will be a source of pride among the Washington Park community and children in the community. Asking people to contribute can help invest them in the project and give them the opportunity to be a co-creator in a beneficial project. If you ask, the worst that could happen is the prospective donor says no. But if you do not ask, you are denying them the opportunity to get involved and to make their own choice about whether to support the work you are doing and the community garden they would be helping create.

## Getting Started

To be a successful fundraiser, you need to know your organization and be able to communicate its core, you need to do background research, and you need to create a plan that will help you strategically fundraise and keep track of your finances as you work towards your vision.

### **Know your product** (Klein 2016)

To effectively fundraise, you have to be able to answer the question, “*Why* are you fundraising?” The answer to this has to do with the organization or cause you are fundraising for and what that organization does. To be able to effectively ask a donor for money, you should be knowledgeable about The Tiny Children’s Garden and prepared to answer questions about what it hopes to accomplish and how donations will be put to good use. Fundraisers should know the organization’s vision statement, *planting seeds to grow community*, which also serves as a great conversation starter. If you seem to know the organization well and sincerely communicate the organization’s promise, it increases the likelihood you will get donations when you ask for them. Knowing your product allows for trust to be built between you, the donor, and the organization. Having this knowledge helps assure a prospective donor that their money is going to be used effectively and turned into a real benefit towards your cause. Invest potential donors in the organization’s mission and vision, showing them that their money is going to an organization they should believe in, one that is working towards a shared vision that is bigger than either of you and that they can be a part of.

To help potential donors understand what you and your organization are about, you should develop a case statement. This case statement will help all key players understand what your organization does and why it exists, and empower them to be able to communicate that understanding to others. This is a document that clearly defines what your organization is all about. Vague statements (i.e. “To help people” or “To grow good”) are not convincing when asking someone to part with their money. The Tiny Children’s Garden already has a developed mission statement in place, which is a great start. You should also include a mission statement and values statements. There are also other components that can help further your cause. Case statements usually answer questions about how this organization helps people, what services are offered, what the organization’s track record is (in this case consider the track record of those leading the effort and/or of similar projects in other communities across the country or world), and why the organization deserves support. This allows you to build a case that portrays why you need donations and how the donors would benefit from donating to your cause. There are many examples of case statements online; take a look around to give yourself a sense of case statements so you can develop one that is a good fit for your organization.

## **Research, Planning, and Logistics**

### **How have others fundraised?**

Finding out what does and what does not work from existing organizations with similar issue areas or approaches to change is a great idea. If you are searching the web for fundraising advice, you may want to use keywords like “fundraising tips” or “grassroots fundraising”, combined with your area of interest. You will find a wealth of resources.

For example, the Vermont Community Garden Network ([vcgn.org](http://vcgn.org)) has a Garden Organizer Toolkit with a list of relevant grant programs for youth gardening and more generally for garden projects (<https://vcgn.org/garden-organizer-toolkit/garden-grants/>), tips with links to further resources on how to “Develop your garden budget and fundraising plan” (check out #6. At <https://vcgn.org/garden-organizer-toolkit/garden-grants/>), and a four page “Fundraising for Success” toolkit (<https://vcgn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Garden-Fundraising-tips-2013.pdf>).

You can also research what specific community garden projects have done. For example, the Lafayette Square Community Garden in St. Louis became part of the Gateway Greening Land Trust in 2008, helping to financially sustain the community garden (<https://lafayettesquare.org/community/lafayette-square-community-garden/>). The Lafayette Community Garden also raised \$20,000 in grant money and donations to fund their project.

Do not forget to use available resources and ask for help. You can reach out to those affiliated with these organizations or particular community gardens to find out what they have done to make their fundraising successful and how they raised the capital to get off the ground. The American Community Gardening Association has a mapped listing of community gardens (<https://www.communitygarden.org/garden>), including contact information. There are 160 listed in the greater St. Louis area, including community gardens in Alton, Belleville, East St. Louis, Granite City, and O’Fallon.

### **Budgets and Bookkeeping**

Once you have figured out why you are fundraising and researched what other people have done, the next step is to create a plan your fundraising strategy. This involves putting together a budget of your expected expenses and potential strategies and sources for revenue. You should first

**Planning tip:** While effective nonprofit organizations operate strategically and in a smart manner, but they are set apart by their continued focus on goals orientation (Crutchfield and Grant 2012).<sup>1</sup> In order to stay focused on the bigger picture while getting closer to your vision, it is necessary to engage in smaller tasks that move towards that vision. Creating SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable and Relevant or Ambitious yet Realistic, Time-bound) that are supported by step by step plans can lead you down the path towards your goals. These can be used for your organization as a whole but also for you fundraising efforts and implementation of your fundraising plan. You can find SMART goal templates online (e.g. see <http://templatelab.com/smart-goals/>).

<sup>1</sup> Crutchfield, Leslie and Heather McLeod Grant. 2012. *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits* (2E). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



figure out what materials you will need, how much they will cost, and how much money you may be able to raise. When you create a table with your expenses, it is helpful to include three columns: the minimum needed for that item/area, a middle amount, and an optimal number if you had more money or resources than you expect. There are a number of budget templates online (e.g. <https://www.smartsheet.com/top-excel-budget-templates>) that help you track donations, expenses, and their relationship. There are also sample budgets and guides to budgeting for community gardens online (e.g. see the Vermont Community Garden Network resource above).

It is easy to lose track of money you need versus what you have already spent. Having a plan and a place to track what goes into your budget, materials you need, where you received donations from, etc. allows you to see what you are spending and if it correlated with an actual priority. This in turn allows you to help reach your financial goals because you have now set a plan for your organization to follow. There are a number of helpful applications, including free ones, that you can use for budgeting. Some possible applications include QuickBooks, BudgetPulse, Mint, GnuCash, Microsoft Excel, or other banking tools.

While some people will give you cash donations, you want to be able to deposit these into an account, not keep cash for the project lying around. You also will want to be able to accept checks and credit and debit card payments. Increasingly people use mobile apps to make payments such as CashApp or Venmo. The organization can set up its own bank account, though students may still want to set up their own so that they can have authorization to easily accept funds they are trying to gather (e.g. at a bake sale). As a start-up organization, it may also be useful to partner with a parent organization that is already an established 501(c)3 non-profit organization or otherwise tax-exempt organization (such as St. Clair County government or SIUE).

**Students:****Create a Bank Account on Campus**

You can create a bank account at the Bank of Edwardsville in the MUC. It is relatively quick and easy. You may want to have at least two individuals on the account for accountability and accessibility purposes. Be ready to provide personal information- social security numbers, previous addresses, and your student ID. Make sure to ask about fees, online banking, and if there is a minimum amount of time the account has to stay open.



## Finding Donors

This section explains how to identify potential donors and the logistics of setting up a prospective donor list.

### **Potential Donor Groups**

#### **The Importance of Knowing Who Will Give**

Identifying your organization's prospective donors is a crucial step in the fundraising process. Sure, if you just planned on going door-to-door or making calls out of a phone book, making a list of prospective donors would not be necessary. However, as discussed later in this report, cold contacts are a relatively inefficient and unproductive way to fundraise. Creating a list of potential donors helps you to focus your fundraising efforts on real donor leads, and hopefully, produce more donations in a relatively easy manner.

#### **Hot, Warm and Cold Lists (Klein 2016)**

People who have already donated to your campaign, assuming you have put their money to good use and stayed in touch with them, are likely going to be repeat donors (if asked again in the future). They have already shown they have a commitment to your organization. While this is useful to keep in mind once you have an initial set of donors, you can also brainstorm likely donors based on the non-monetary contributions or commitments people have made to your project, including statements of support. This list of contacts that have already had contact with the organization are known as your hot, warm, and cold lists. The hotter the list, the better your fundraising will likely go with the group. Think about how you can get people onto this list, and how you can heat them up from cold to warm to hot. Also keep these lists in mind as you contact potential donors. Your success rate going through a cold list is going to be a lot lower than your success rate with a hot list. If you are expecting this, it will be less frustrating for you, and you can also keep in mind that the successes you do have are new donors who may become sustaining members of The Tiny Children's Garden.

<p>Your <b>hot list</b> is comprised of people who have already made some sort of commitment to your organization. Not only are they important for direct contributions, they may be able to help you network and expand your donor list. Oftentimes, friends of donors fall into this category, considering the fact that</p>	<p>Your <b>warm list</b> consists of people who have donated or contributed to organizations or causes similar to yours. The list can also include those who have some familiarity with The Tiny Children's Garden, even if they have not made a commitment yet to support it. They may have come to an informational meeting or event where the project was</p>	<p>Your <b>cold list</b> includes people who may have contributed or been in conversation with you in the past, but that you have not had contact with for quite some time. For this project, this list may consist of people that you pitched your idea to upon its initial creation that seemed interested, but who did not stay updated on the project. The cold list can also consist of those located near the garden site or</p>
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friends generally share similar values and beliefs.	discussed or otherwise heard about the project.	local schools who you have not yet been in touch with.
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### **Networks of Benefit** (Ertukel and Volk 2011)

The Emily’s List campaign fundraising manual contains another tool for grouping prospective donors. It helps fundraisers organize donors, set priorities, and understand what motivates donors to give. These different groups have different motivations for donating and therefore also necessitate different strategies for outreach and asks. Again, people donate to a campaign because they want to and see some benefit in doing so. Each of these groups get a different “benefit” from donating to the campaign. The groups are ordered from prospects that will take the least time and energy to get donations from to those who will require more effort, and from those who will have the most immediate buy-in with your project to those who will need to be more convinced that the garden is viable and will be or is successful. The networks of benefits outlined in the campaign manual is geared towards electoral politics. The table below presents a modified version of this typology to make it more applicable to fundraising for The Tiny Children’s Garden. It includes an explanation of the types of people in the four different groups and examples of who this might be for your project.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Types of Donors</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Personal Network	Donors have a close relationship with the project creators and are loyal	Family, friends, close colleagues
Ideological Network	Donors share similar beliefs and ideologies	Teachers in the district, advocates for healthy eating, environmentalists
Against- Opposition Network	Donors who would be affected if the project was not successful	Citizens negatively impacted by illegal waste-dumping, local community advocates
Power Network	Donors whose image or economic well-being would be positively impacted	Elected officials, school principals, business leaders

## **Potential Donor Lists**

### **Recognizing potential donors: The ABC method** (Klein 2016)

The first step to making a potential donor list is to brainstorm who to put on it. The above approaches that categorize donors can help with that. This method can aid you in constructing your own donor list. Not everyone you brainstorm as a potential donor is someone who is a strong prospect. Successful asks are generally of persons who meet three criteria. Kim Klein has a relatively straightforward process for evaluating whether or not an individual should be considered a potential donor. Called the “ABC method,” you proceed through three steps. Despite the name, the order in which to follow actually goes **CBA** – **C**ontact, **B**elief, **A**bility. If someone does not meet one of these criteria, they could still be a potential donor, but they are not a strong lead. Do not be surprised if you ask and they say no, and if you have more viable prospects, focus your energy there first.

<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b>Belief</b>	<b>Ability</b>
The first ‘step’ is to have a connection with the individual you are hoping will donate. You need a contact within your organization or network that connects that individual to your organization. This contact may be the best person to make a direct ask to the prospective donor, but even if they are not the one to make the ask, it help to have that contact and they can connect you to the potential donor.	The second question to consider when evaluating if someone is a potential donor is whether or not you think this person <b>believes</b> in your cause. If they do not believe in your cause, they have very little reason to donate to said cause. Considering the networks of benefit above, remember that belief can come in many forms.	If you have a connection to the potential donor and you believe they support your cause, the final step is to ask if they realistically have the <b>ability</b> to donate the amount (or the ballpark amount) that you are asking them to donate. If you know someone cannot donate \$5,000, that level would be an inappropriate ask. That being said, be careful not to make assumptions about people’s financial situations and ability to donate.

In terms of ability, remember that in-kind donations are also valuable, and that there may be organizations and companies, as well as individuals, with goods and/or skills they could potentially donate that match your needs. Companies and organizations can donate their services or goods for free or at a discounted rate. The difference between market rates and a discounted rate that is not universally offered to similar organizations is considered an in-kind contribution and should be tracked as such. In-kind contributions could be directly for the garden (e.g. soil, seeds, or gloves), but it could also be to support fundraising efforts or other informational goods. For example, if you wanted to create and sell organizational calendars with planting and harvesting schedules, you may need a photographer, good sturdy paper, something to hold all the pages together, and somewhere to print the calendar pages off. You could talk to places about donating these things individually. This allows different companies to pitch in, and as incentive you could acknowledge their contributions and put an advertisement for them in the calendar.

### **Making a potential donor list**

Creating a list of people to contact in hopes of getting them to donate is a very effective and efficient way to raise money. It also can be organized to streamline the “ABC” questions all into one place. Making asks for donations is crucial to your organization’s fundraising efforts. Creating a call list gives you a structured way to prepare for direct asks, make the asks, and keep track of them. A potential donor list can (and should) include friends and family. Friends and family already check off at least one criterion in the ABC method: they are a contact to someone in the organization (you). They very may well also believe in your cause, or at least believe in supporting your efforts and work towards the cause you believe in or are working hard for. They may even be happy to help and participate in something that is so special to you. If you do not ask, you’ll never know – so don’t shy away from asking those closest to you. Indeed, sometimes

family and friends are offended when people raising money for a cause ask everyone but those close to them. They want to be included in your life and your work, not excluded from it.

Below is an example of a potential donor list. Maureen Green is helping fundraise for The Tiny Children's Garden. Maureen put together the list below of people they now personally and that they have had previous contact with who could be a strong potential donor. Maureen is considering both monetary donations as well as some in-kind donations like fruit trees and rain barrels. If someone commits to a donation, that goes in the pledge column. Fundraising does not stop when you get to a pledge. Your next job is to turn that into a received donation. When the prospective donor makes the payment, that goes in the received column.

**Fundraiser / Organizational contact person:** *Maureen Green*

Potential donor (Name and description)	Contact information	Ask Amount (Consider ability)	Believe in cause?	Regular donor to causes? (Giving history)	Pledge (Amount & Date)	Received (Amount & Date)	Notes from interactions (list ask attempts and next step)
Rose Planter (close friend)	618-123-4567; RPlant@siue.edu	\$50	Yes	No			Emailed 9/18/19, scheduled mtg. for coffee for 9/21/19
Squash Blossoms plant nursery in Godfrey (Contact Constance Queen, previous classmate/group partner who also works there)	618-111-1111; cqueen@gmail.com	10 bags of planting soil and two apple trees	Yes	Business donates to silent auctions			Called 9/14/19, went well, she will talk to owner about donation possibility. Follow up next week.
Jo Plumtree (Principal's assistant at Washington Park Elementary School)	314-333-3333; jo.pt@wpes.net	\$90	Yes	Yes	\$50, 9/16/19		Called 9/9/19, set up mtg. Met in-person 9/16/19, she is setting up a meeting with the principal and superintendent; will e-mail back with a date later this week (Follow up on how to give then, too)
Willow Smith (old colleague)	314-007-1007; no email	\$2,500	Maybe	Not sure			Will assign another organization member to make contact; meeting recommended
Dean Green (cousin)	302-603-1212	\$5	Yes	Not sure			Left message 9/15/19, will try again next week

## Fundraising Methods

This section focuses on some of the different ways organizations use to raise money. The most effective way to get donations from people is to **ask them to donate**. Although that might sound like common sense, often people avoid making these direct asks. There are also other methods for fundraising. Many organizations put on fundraising events, which are good for networking and engaging supporters, but require a lot of time and energy with often little financial payoff. Organizations also make use of phone-a-thons, mail, voluntary fees, and, increasingly, online strategies. Not all methods are equally efficient or even recommended. This section contains information on a broad variety of ways to raise money, along with tips on what to do and what not to do.

### **Direct Asks** (Ertukel and Volk 2011; Klein 2016)

#### ► **The Importance of Asking**

Making direct asks is the most effective and efficient way to fundraise. Personal solicitation should be a key component of your fundraising plan. When people are asked why they made their most recent donation, four out of five answer “Because someone asked me” (Klein 2016:75). The response rate you receive from personal asks is much higher than you can get from any other fundraising strategy. Direct asks are made for initial donation asks as well as for asks for repeat, increased, or different gifts.

Ask your friends for donations. This will not negatively impact your friendship. When asking, make it clear that while yes is the answer you are looking for, no is also acceptable. For example, you could say to your friend, “I don’t know what your other commitments are, but I wanted to invite you to be part of this if you can. Will you donate \$20?”

#### ► **Phone calls, meetings, and other methods of making asks**

##### **Phone Call**

Most of your direct asks will (and should) include a phone call of some sort. Whether to setup a future in-person meeting, or to make the ask itself, nailing the phone call is an important skill to have for any successful fundraising operation. Here are some things to keep in mind:

##### **Meetings**

Asks for large donation amounts (e.g. \$1,000+) should not be done through phone (or e-mail). Request large donations respectfully in person. Do not make a full pitch in your initial e-mail, letter, or phone call. Instead, your initial ask is to set up the in-person meeting.

In-person face-to-face asks will always be the **most effective** type of interaction for getting donations. This is true for new donors, high-dollar donations, or any ask. You should also use in-person interactions to thank donors, though they may perceive it as more informal, so it should

still be preceded and/or followed up with a written thank you. The only drawback to in-person meetings as opposed to phone calls is that they are comparatively inefficient, which is why often fundraisers reserve in-person meetings for large or difficult asks or for cultivating particularly strategic relationships.

### **Letters and E-mails**

Direct asks can also be made through letters and e-mails. These have low response rates for new donors, though a number of past donors will contribute again through these avenues. If someone donates through a letter or e-mail, they often will give a lower amount than they would if you made a direct ask in person or on the phone with a specific amount.

In general, letters and e-mails are not the best way to make asks. Instead, you can use letters and e-mails to get to a phone call or meeting or to introduce yourself or the organization in advance of a phone call. Letter should be no longer than a page and email should be even shorter. You might follow up a voicemail with an e-mail asking if there is a good time you can reach back out by phone, for example. Or you may send out an update about your organization the week before you make a fundraising call. Formal letters and e-mails may specify that you would like to ask for a contribution to your organization and that you are hoping the prospect will give you a short amount of time to hear your appeal.

### **Canvassing**

Direct asks can also be made going door to door or by standing on the street asking passersby for donations. A sample pitch while on the street would be something like, “Got a minute to support kids gardening in our community?” In general these methods have low response rates and are inefficient. If you do plan to go door to door, think about the previous section on prospective donor groups and lists. You could walk in your neighborhood, where you have connections to neighbors. You could walk in neighborhoods in the feeder pattern for a school where students will be engaged with the garden, or in the area the garden is located. Generally other fundraising strategies would be better uses of your time. However, if you are already canvassing for other purposes, such as to inform people about the community garden project and/or invite people to an event or ask for volunteers, you could ask those who respond positively for a donation, such as “Would you be willing to donate \$2 for a pair of gardening gloves for a child in the community?” This is called opportunistic fundraising, where you are taking advantage of the situation you are in that does not have a primary purpose of fundraising to try to raise money. Besides the actual ability to buy a pair of gloves from a successful ask in this context, any size donation helps translate to investment in the project, including the potential for future donations and involvement.

### **► Making the Pitch** (Klein 2016)

#### **Prepare for the Pitch**

Before a phone call or meeting ask, know which pitch and points you will use for each donor. Know a specific ask amount for how much you are going to ask for a donation. Fill out the prospective donor list for this person in advance of the call or meeting. You can have the list out during phone calls, and you can jot down notes for yourself for an in-person meeting.

Phone calls can be stressful. A phone call is an interruption, an unexpected request for time that the recipient probably did not build into their day. (I imagine just thinking about this, you might want to apologize to the prospective donor, but don't even think about it. You giving them an opportunity to make a gift is a gift to them!). You also do not get body-language cues, facial expressions, or eye-contact during a phone call to help you know what the donor is thinking, and this can add stress onto any would-be solicitor. Therefore, you must become proficient with phone calls and go into the phone call prepared. The only thing worse than an unexpected phone call is a frustrating unexpected phone call.

With a phone call, many things can go wrong: the call drops, you cannot hear each other, one of you has to leave immediately, the prospect plain dislikes talking on the phone, the prospect has had a bad day before your call, etc. Remember that when the prospect expresses frustration, it is hardly ever directed at you. The problem is the situation. Do not become discouraged or take it personally. Do not defeat yourself in your head. Give your prospects the agency to say yes or no to your asks.

The first way to make a call or meeting easier on your potential donor is to know what you are going to say. There is no good reason to waste a donor's time while you try to figure out who they are or what your ask is or how they can contribute logistically. Make good use of their time and they will have an easier time making good use of their money! Your competence reflects on the organization you are trying to raise money for. If you seem competent, they may assume your organization is as well.



## Phone Calls

Direct asks generally start with a phone call, whether it is a phone call to make an ask for a donation or an ask for a meeting.

### Prepare:

**Know what you're going to say.** Be sure you know what you are going to say from the first hello. Having a script or a thorough outline in front of you could be helpful. Be careful, however, to not just read a script word for word. You want to come across as human and relatable, not robotic and awkward.

### Make the call:

Now that you know what you are going to say, pick up the phone and make the call. Remember not to talk too fast and to pause between sentences.

### *What happens next if you do not reach the person:*

You will probably only reach the person you are trying to call about one out of every ten calls. If you do not reach the person, do not fret. When this happens, be brief. Leave a concise message with a number to call you back and a good time to do so. One mistimed call is not the end of the world, so be sure to leave at least three messages on separate calls before you consider giving up on this prospect. Assuming the answer is no just because you cannot reach the prospect leaves out a world of possibility. The prospect could be out of the country, sick, or just unlucky. Leave



as much contact information as you can and try to keep tabs on the prospect in case the situation changes and you are able to reach them in the future. You might put down on your prospective donor list a next step of calling them again in a week or even a month.

Ultimately, however, your time is valuable. After three messages, consider moving on to other prospects and making better use of your time. Another approach is to send an e-mail, or if it is a friend or someone else that this would be appropriate for, a text, to try to find out a good time to call. You can try to set up a phone “meeting” rather than just making an unscheduled call and hoping to reach the person. Alternatively, if you are really ready to drop the prospect, you can try another less effective method of making an ask, such as making the ask via e-mail.

*What happens next if you do reach the person:*

So, you got in touch with the prospect? Now it is game time!

First and foremost, say who you are and ask if this is a good time. This will set you apart from paid solicitors who are notoriously inconsiderate. Now is also a good time to build rapport. Take some time to get to know them or catch up. Ultimately, though, you want to get right to the business of the call. If this is a friend you really do want to catch up with, let them know that. For example, you could say, “Hey listen, I really do want to catch up more with you. However, I need to make a bunch of phone calls right now to raise money for this garden project. Why don’t we talk business now, but do you have some time tomorrow we could reconnect and chat?”

Be clear about your purpose: either you want to schedule a meeting or you want to ask for a gift. Depending on whether you are looking to meet in person with the prospect or planning on soliciting over the phone, you will want to volunteer different amounts of information (if you have sent them an email or prior material, now is the time to check if they received it—to gauge how much they know).

Now you can move into your pitch. Follow the column below that corresponds with the purpose of your call.

<i>Goal: Make an ask over the phone.</i>	<i>Goal: Set up an in-person meeting with the prospect.</i>
<p>If you want to make the ask over the phone, tell them a little bit more about the project. Telling them about the immediate processes that are going on with the project is great for building trust and giving them a reason to want to be part of the movement. For example, “This month we built 30 of the 50 raised soil beds that we need, and we’re looking to complete our irrigation</p>	<p>If you want to meet in person, tell them very briefly about The Tiny Children’s Garden and how you and your team are involved with the project. End by telling them that you’d love to tell them more in person and ask if a specific date works. Initially asking about their availability for a particular date works better than a broader ask such as “When works for you?,” which requires more cognitive work from your prospect.</p> <p>For example, “I’m a sociology graduate student at SIUE and our class is working to help start a children’s community garden in Washington Park. I am reaching out because I know you are interested in environmental</p>

<p>system in the next month” is a good way to lead into the ask or even to lead into other opportunities like talking about upcoming events and immediate financial goals. Either way, make the ask once you’re done. See below for advice regarding how to make the ask.</p>	<p>sustainability and community development. Could we meet in person to talk more about this project? I wouldn’t need more than 20 minutes of your time. Maybe I could come by your office tomorrow at 3pm? Or do you want to grab coffee at the Kaldi’s across from where you work on Sunday at 2pm?”</p> <p>You should never ask for a gift in the phone call if you plan to meet in person. Your ask and goal is the meeting.</p> <div data-bbox="646 520 776 621" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><b>Starting out the meeting</b></p> <p>If you’ve decided that meeting the prospect in person is the route you’d like to take, here are some things you should be aware of. Regardless of how well you know the prospect, remember that this meeting is business. You are there for a cause, on a mission, and neither of you should overlook that fact. Begin the meeting with pleasantries and catch up, but avoid allowing this to turn into a long chat. Opening the conversation with something like “Thanks again for meeting with me. I’m excited to tell you more about The Tiny Children’s Garden and to ask for your support for this amazing project. However, before we get to that, I’d love to hear how your grandson likes Kindergarten.../if you liked the play the other night...” Don’t ask super open-ended questions, like “What’s new in your life?” You want something that can be easily answered, facilitates the conversation, and allows for moving forward to the business of the meeting. Ask about things you are interested in (if you can), and show genuine interest in the responses. People do not like feeling like they are just part of a protocol. However, do not get lost. Remember the reason you are there and make sure you use your time well, moving to sharing information about the project and then to your ask.</p>
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### *Make the Ask.*

Whether over the phone or in-person, the ask is the same.

Take one or two sentences to repeat the importance of the cause, customized to the prospect and what you have learned from researching them and listening to them during your conversation(s), and then make the ask.

Ask for a specific amount. Do not ask the more general question, “Will you donate?” You will get higher donations by asking for specific amounts. It also demonstrates that the organization has particular tangible needs and that you are working to raise a certain amount of money. A

more generic ask undercuts your messaging. It also makes the donor work harder to respond, to consider if they want to donate and how much they want to donate, rather than be able to respond to a more specific ask. Remember, there are no magic words, so find a phrase that suits your personality and just let it sit. For example, “Will you contribute a gift of \$200?” or “Can you contribute \$10 to the garden so we can buy four pairs of children’s gardening gloves?” or “Will you donate \$50 to The Tiny Children’s Garden?”

After you make the ask, wait and listen for and to the donor’s response. Be silent during this time. Do not interject, even if it feels like the silence is long or awkward. Wait for the prospect to respond, regardless of how long it takes. Breathe easy. Maintain a connected line of sight, without staring. Just wait. Relaxed and patient (repeat this paragraph calmly in your head if it helps). You have already made your ask. You do not need to qualify it, or add more information. The prospect can ask you for more details, or tell you they cannot make such a contribution. Let them process and respond. Think about if you were asked for a donation. You need time to process whether you want to donate to the organization and how much you are willing to and able to contribute. Those take time to process and think through. Your silence and waiting is both respectful to the prospect and an effective fundraising practice.

### **What Next?**

Now this part gives any new solicitor the most worry. What will they say? The next page details potential likely responses and pathways forward based on these responses.

**“Yes! I can do that.” –**

Congratulations! Mission accomplished. Thank the prospect genuinely (though not so much as to imply you thought they would not be generous). Proceed to make the proper arrangements for the donation.

**“That’s a lot of money.”**

Congratulations! This statement is generally an admission that the prospect *can* make the donation, which is a big gift for them. The donor now wants to confirm that the organization agrees that the gift is large. Respond with “It is a lot of money. That’s why I wanted to talk to you about it in person and explain what it would do for our project” or something that similarly acknowledges the donation’s size and impact. After responding, be quiet again and let the prospect decide what to say and do next.

**“I need to talk to my spouse/other party.” –**

Like the response of “I need to think about it,” this prospect generally needs more time. However, it may imply there is another lingering question or concern, and this might be something the prospect is embarrassed about. Ask if there are any questions you can answer for the spouse/other party preemptively. Take these questions and concerns seriously and respond in kind. End by establishing a time to check back in after the prospect has had time to talk to the other party.

**Other responses. –**

Always respect the prospect, but recognize that the “no” is usually a last resort. Do not assume that the prospect does not want to give if they are actually telling you something else, such as “I’m busy this month” or “I need to talk to someone first.” These are still invitations for you to make it work for them. Respond with “I can understand that. Can I contact you at a time when you’re less busy?” or in the second case “Is there a time when I can sit down with both of you?” Another case is that the prospect might want to make a big gift but wants to make sure you are serious about the organization. Help them to believe in you. Be persistent.

**“I’d like to help, but that figure is too high.” –**

Congratulations! Mission accomplished! This is a yes, but likely for a figure that is more manageable for them. Offer the opportunity to make a pledge for the original amount and break it up into installments (e.g. Would you be able to donate \$10 a month for the next five months?) or make another ask for a lower amount, “I understand. I’m glad you’d like to contribute. Would [name another figure] be doable?” If you lower the ask and the prospect still is uncomfortable with the amount, ask, “What would you be able to contribute?” Your goal here is to help the prospect find the arrangement that works for them. Once you find it, thank them and make the proper arrangements for the donation.

**“I need to think about it.”**

Sometimes people genuinely do need time to consider the organization, their budget, etc. Reassure them that they do not have to answer right away: “That’s fine. I know it’s a big request. I appreciate you considering making a contribution.” Then follow up with: “Is there anything I can share with you that will help you as you think through this?” Answer any other questions. End by setting up another time (preferably within the next week) that you can check back in with them.

**“No, I can’t help you.” –**

This will happen on the phone. It is an unlikely response if you are at a meeting in person. But either way, congratulations! Mission Accomplished. You made the ask. Respect the prospect’s decision. Often, the prospect will expand on why they refuse. Take in what is said and try not to argue for or against their reasoning. If their reason is financial, but they like the organization, perhaps you can plug them in as a volunteer. Unless they are turning down your ask but still want to be involved, learn what you can, but move on with your fundraising efforts to your other prospects. Thank the person candidly for their time. Do not give up. Remember the successful asks you have made and will continue to make.

*Ending the Call or Meeting:*

Regardless of the person's response, always make sure you thank the person for their time. If the person agrees to donate, your next step will be to turn their pledge into a received donation. You will next want to find out how they will be paying. During this time you might refer them to a website for online payments, collect a check, or determine some other plan for their contribution.

**Mock Script**

Hello, is this [name of prospect]?

*(If no)*

Is [name of prospect] available at the moment?

*(If no)*

Okay. My name is [your name] and I'm calling to talk to [name of prospect] about The Tiny Children's Garden. Could you share my contact information with them so they can call me when they're available? (Leave contact information)

*(If yes)*

***Establish rapport***

Hello, my name is [your name]. I am calling to talk to you about The Tiny Children's Garden that is underway in Washington Park. [Share your role, e.g. I'm a student at SIUE who is helping with the project.] Is this a good time to talk?

*(If no)*

I understand. Can I give you a call back [give specific date and time]?

*(If yes)*

Wonderful! I'm happy I got ahold of you.

(At this point feel free to converse about some shared interest or personal stories. Make sure these are specific like "How did your daughter's soccer game go?" or "Have you been enjoying the new waterpark in the next town over?" or "I understand you were involved in starting a community garden in St. Louis." Let the conversation be natural, but try not to spend more than three to five minutes on pleasantries.)

**Briefly introduce the topic**

[Provide some introductory information about The Tiny Children's Garden.]

The Tiny Children's Garden is a project to establish a community garden in Washington Park where community kids will grow fresh produce. The garden will increase community participation in sustainability, create local access to fresh produce within Washington Park, and educate and empower local children.

**The ask: Scheduling a Meeting**

I'd like to find a time to meet and tell you more in person. Does [specific date and time] work for you?

*If prospect is unavailable:*

I completely understand. How about [offer specific date and time]?

*If prospect is still unavailable:*

Do you have any availability to meet next week?

*If prospect asks for more information before meeting:*

What information would be most helpful?

*Following prospect's response:*

I can send over that information today. I can tell you that... [Answer any questions briefly.] To confirm, your e-mail address is [e-mail address]? Okay. I'll send that over. For the time being, can I pencil you in for a meeting at [specific date and time]?

*If the prospect agrees to a meeting:*

Did you want me to come to your office, meet at a coffee shop nearby, or what would be most convenient for you?

### **The pitch (via phone or in person):**

[Expand on the project with relevant and pertinent information. End with an exciting update about its progress.]

Customize this based on the prospect and their interest and connection to you and/or the project, as well as based on what they already know about the project. Even if the prospect is familiar with the project, make sure to reinforce the main ideas to prime them for your ask. Remember to listen and not just talk. Ask questions here as well that relate to their interest and then relate them back to the project (e.g. Why did you decide to get involved in community gardening?... I agree that that is really important. We really hope to form that kind of connection and access, too, in Washington Park.) Include any relevant accomplishments or information about how the project is progressing. Clarify any confusion or questions the prospect has. Allow pauses for them to digest what you are saying, ask questions, or comment, or prod them for questions or thoughts if they look eager to speak or respond.]

Washington Park is an amazing community, but it's also one that has been neglected and is under-resourced. It is a food desert, meaning that it is difficult for residents to find or access healthy fresh foods in the community. It's easy to access fast food, not fresh food. We want to change that.

We are partnering with a local elementary school teacher, Derissa Davis, to bring a community garden to Washington Park. Ms. Davis purchased a sizeable vacant lot in the community for the garden and we are working with her to turn this lot into a community resource, where children and community members grow food in the community, for the community. Gardening can be hard work, but it is empowering sustaining work that provides a tangible reward through fresh produce and stronger communities.

We're really fortunate that Ms. Davis is playing such an active leadership role to beautify the land and give people healthier choices. She sees this work as planting seeds to grow community. And it will take a community to make this community garden a reality and sustainable. Just last

weekend I was out at the site with a group of two dozen volunteers helping to clean up the land and get it ready for the community and local schoolchildren.

### **The ask (for a financial contribution)**

[Start with a donation ask that you think is realistic but ambitious. You can always follow up with a lower ask. If you find that prospects are saying yes without thinking about the donation, your initial asks are too low.]

I'm really excited to be a part of this project. I reached out because I am hoping you will also be a part of this project and support our work and the positive impact it will have for the Washington Park community. Will you donate \$54 to The Tiny Children's Garden?

[If you are able to quantify donation ask amounts after creating your budget, make this part of your ask (e.g. \$54 is the cost of materials for one garden bed).]

[Wait for the prospect to respond. Again, you should be completely silent at this point. Do not break the silence. Wait.]

*If the prospect says they need to talk to their partner:*

Of course, I understand that. How about if we make a date when we can all sit down together. In the meantime, are there any questions I can answer for your partner ahead of time?

*Answer any additional questions. If you cannot answer them, share:*

I actually can't answer that question at this time, but I will definitely find out in time for our next meeting. Speaking of which, does \*date and time\* work for you?

*If there are no additional questions:*

Alright. How about we meet again on [date and time]?

*If the prospect says they have donated all the money they plan to give for the year:*

I understand. Would you be willing to include The Tiny Children's Garden in your donations next year?

*or*

I understand. I'll touch base with you again in January. Would you be interested in getting involved with The Tiny Children's Garden in other ways in the meantime?

*If the prospect indicates the amount is too high, or that they want to contribute but cannot do the amount you asked for.*

I understand that completely. We would love whatever help you are able to contribute. Would you be able to donate [specific number that is lower than the first ask]?

*If the prospect indicates that is still too much:*

[Repeat the above, offering a lower amount again, or continue to the next step.]

I understand. Is there an amount that you would feel comfortable gifting today?

[Depending on the situation and their transparency, you can also take a pledge for them to contribute after their next paycheck, a smaller amount repeated over multiple months, or other arrangements that work for them financially.]

*If the prospect says they do not want to contribute to your organization:*



Okay. Thank you for listening and learning more about The Tiny Children's Project. I appreciate your consideration. I hope you'll consider spreading the word about our initiative, and if you ever want to get plugged into our work, financially or through participating otherwise as a volunteer, just let me know and I will connect you.

*If the prospect says yes to your ask:*

Wonderful! Thank you so much for your support. Let's go ahead and make the proper arrangements.

## **Events**

Special fundraising events are a well-known and widely used method of fundraising that serve multiple purposes. Organization can use events to potentially raise money for a cause. Events also help raise awareness and increase the number of donors. To understand how to put on a special event, it is important to understand their purpose and things to consider when choosing an event, as well as logistical and planning considerations.

### ► **Selecting Events** (Ertukel and Volk 2011; Klein 2016)

#### **Purpose and Considerations**

The purpose of special events are to call attention to the organization, raise the visibility of its issues, and to bring in money. However, it is important to know that special events do not always result in an expected financial payoff. Events require a lot of time and energy and often just break even. With some exceptions, choosing to put on a special event should be a strategic decision that is based not just on trying to bring in money, but on other aims as well (donor relations, increasing one's network, etc.). Putting on multiple events, without the proper planning and interest from prospective attendees, can be time consuming and costly and may not be worth the effort. That being said, you can be creative in deciding on events, and events have great potential to expand an organization's reputation and bring people together. Some may even raise money.

There are a number of things to consider when choosing a special event. Organizations benefit from their special events being a good fit with their organization, or at the very least being appropriate and in line with the organization's practices and mission. Because The Tiny Children's Garden is oriented around children, an adults-only event may be less appropriate than a family event. On the other hand, fundraising at a farmers market could draw interest to the project. It would fit the image of the organization and target prospective donors who already have aligned interests. You should also pay attention to the time that the event is taking place so you are not competing with other organizations or hosting it when people may be busy with holidays or other events. Because fundraising events can require a lot of time and expenses, realistically considering these factors in selecting an event can also help on the front end.

## Suggestions for SIUE students

### *SIUE Campus Resources*

For SIUE students, there are some advantages of campus networking and event space opportunities. The Morris University Center Event Services offers spaces that can be rented by students and organizations for free or at a low rate. If you want to have food or drinks, you will have to use SIUE Catering Services, which has a range of options with varying prices. They list rates and costs on their website, but keep in mind that this can be expensive depending on the food or drink options you choose. You can find information on the Morris University Center event services online (<https://www.siu.edu/event-services/>). Off-campus events and on-campus bake sales that are outside or in academic buildings would not require the use of catering services.

### **Examples of Common Student Events**

#### ***Bake Sales***

Renting a table on campus through event services and selling baked goods. Students commonly hold bake sales outside the Morris University Center and inside of Peck Hall. Try one at the Goshen Market!

#### ***Restaurant Partnerships***

Reaching out to restaurants for events where you can receive a portion of the proceeds, usually for patrons attending to support your cause. The most successful partnerships are those who give a percentage of all proceeds, not just those who mention your organization. For example, Culver's hosts Share Night where volunteers work a shift at the restaurant and their organization receives a portion of proceeds.

#### ***Social Events***

These can be more planning intensive or have higher upfront costs, so be careful. A Bowling Bonanza involves renting out lanes with event services at Cougar Lanes or reaching out to local bowling alleys for a bowling social or competition. A Trivia Night involves putting on a trivia contest with prizes and food.

## **Suggestions for The Tiny Children's Garden**

### ***House Meetings***

House meetings engage volunteer supporters to help expand your network, creating new low-dollar donors and potential future donor prospects. For a house meeting, you ask a volunteer supporter to be the host. They invite their friends to their home or a public space to learn more about the project. A leader with The Tiny Children's Garden attends, providing information about the project and contextual community issues, with opportunity for discussion. The leader then makes an ask for involvement, which includes a small donation (e.g. \$2.50 for a pair of children's garden gloves). Supportive attendees can be followed up with to host their own house meetings.

### ***House Parties***

House parties also engage volunteer supporters to help expand your network, but are bigger events that, depending on the ask, may raise more money. Rather than the event being where the initial pitch is made, the event is open to members of the host's network who are already willing to be supportive (e.g. Rose and Willow Thorne invite you to their home to support The Tiny Children's Garden). The invitation makes a specific donation ask associated with attendance. Formal invitations may be mailed out. Hosts may provide food, wine and cheese, or other refreshments. These are fundraisers where people are attending and coming together already expecting to donate to the project.

### ***Annual Events***

Annual events that are located at or near the Tiny Gardens would help introduce the organization to the community and boost the organization's image. An annual event would continue to grow, as it usually takes such an event two or three years for an event to hit its stride and attain its goal. There are many possibilities for this, from an evening event with lights such as A Night at The Tiny Children's Garden to a produce-oriented potluck to a fun kids event that includes snacks from the garden.

### ***Host Committees***

Host committees are a great way to increase attendance and contributions to bigger events. Host committee members lend their names to an event as the hosts of the event and help recruit attendees from their network. Event invitations without host committees may end up with a response rate of 1% or lower, even if the invitation is beautiful. Follow-up phone calls may help increase the response rate, but the number of people that would need to be called is impractical. Direct asks to a targeted list is useful, but having a host committee where each person will commit to turning out a certain number of attendees can greatly increase attendance and thus donations. The Tiny Children's Garden may want to make an annual or other event in which they ask community leaders and partners to serve on a host committee.

### ► **Planning Events** (Klein 2016)

There are many logistics that go into planning special events. It is easy to underestimate the amount of time needed to properly plan an event. To help assist with time management and the required tasks, it is a good idea to set up an event committee. An event committee plans the event and delegates tasks outside of the committee. Usually these committees are kept to around three people, as larger committees can present challenges, though the actual work of putting on the event is not limited to this group. It is not the event committee's job to do every task (Klein 2016).

Successful event committees should create a master task list, prepare a budget, and develop a timeline. A master task list is a list of everything that needs to be done before your event rolls around. Include the tasks, when they need to be accomplished, who needs to do them, and also note when they are finished. This can also help make sure you do not forget to do something necessary to for your event to be successful. A budget includes your estimated costs and revenue, and is updated with actual costs and revenue. Finally, a timeline will enable you to backwards plan from the event to ensure everything happens and is planned for.

There are many available guides to help with event planning, as well as checklists. It is important to make sure you consider all the components of your event. Have you thought about parking? Accessibility? Trash and recycling? Did you put the event on your website and social media? Events require a lot of work and attention to detail, but can be useful for expanding and solidifying relationships with your donor network.

## **Other Strategies**

### ► **Phone-a-thons** (Klein 2016)

A phone-a-thon involves volunteers meeting up to make phone calls asking for donations. It is an inefficient way to raise money and likely not one you will want to consider. Once The Tiny Children's Garden is established and has a good pool of past donors, a phone-a-thon could be used to call past donors and ask for new donations. Phone-a-thons require preparation – the lists of who to call, call sheets with ways to record call results, volunteers to make calls, a location for the activity, phones (unless it is a bring your own), and a call script. Check the date and time of a phone-a-thon just like you would for an event to avoid major conflicts. The best time to make calls is between 6pm and 9pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

### ► **Mail** (Ertukel and Volk 2011: pg. 54-56)

Mail is popular method nonprofit organizations use for fundraising appeals. Some people enjoy getting mail and respond to it. However, mail to cold prospects, those you do not already have a relationship with, will only average a 1% response rate. Expenses end up being 70% to 100% of revenue, making mailings like this not a great way to raise substantial monies. That being said, return rates increase if you are reaching out to past donors or others with a relationship to your organization. However, making direct asks to these individuals through phone calls is more personal and will result in a higher return rate and higher donation amounts from those who do

respond affirmatively. Sending direct mail asks also requires thinking about how the donor will respond to pay, such as a reply card and return envelope. A lot of mail gets discarded without being opened. People are more likely to open letters with handwritten addresses. Letters should make an appeal similar to an in-person or phone ask, providing appealing information about the organization and its accomplishments and making a direct ask. Letters should also include a sense of urgency about raising a certain fundraising goal by a certain deadline to accomplish a certain task is also useful. Make sure multiple people proofread letters before they are sent out. Keep track of who and when you sent out the mailing as well as any responses.

► **Online Strategies** (Ertukel and Volk 2011: pg. 58-63)

**Organization's website and other social media platforms**

Make sure that information about ways to donate and preferably a method to directly donate are prominently available on your organization's website. Social media platforms also increasingly have methods for advertising and promoting donations.

**E-mail**

E-mail enables direct asks for fundraising, though is more importantly used for communications surrounding asks, such as following up on pledges with logistical information on how to donate. Organizations regularly send out e-newsletters, which should always include an invitation to donate online. Organizations can also send out e-appeals, which are like e-newsletters but shorter and focused around a fundraising ask. Having a good e-mail list is critical for organizations, so make sure people can sign up to receive e-mails online and that you collect people's e-mail addresses whenever possible – always have sign-up sheets at meetings and events your organization sponsors.

**Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding is designed for start-ups. It is geared towards short-term online fundraising with the goal of raising money from a broad number of people quickly to make your idea a reality. There are a number of crowdfunding platforms that serve to collect donations and tell the story of one's project and provide updates.

SIUE prefers the use of IndieGoGo (see <https://www.indiegogo.com>, and <https://support.indiegogo.com> for answers to questions about this platform). Make sure to use the flexible funding option if you use IndieGoGo so you can keep whatever donations are made, even if you do not reach your stated goal. Also remember to provide a short and simple story with the most important information first. Include pictures as part of the webpage. However, note that even for nonprofit campaigns, IndieGoGo charges a 5% platform fee and a 3% + \$0.30 per transaction Stripe fee. Therefore a \$10 donation that would be cash in hand if given directly becomes an \$8.90 donation on IndieGoGo.

Other platforms are also used. In 2014, the project to put a rooftop vegetable garden on top of SIUE's Morris University Center was put on [superiorideas.org](http://superiorideas.org), where it raised \$1,110 from 26 donors (see

<https://www.siu.edu/news/2014/02/SIURooftopVegetableGardenSeeksCrowdfundingSupport.shtml> and <https://www.superiorideas.org/projects/rooftop-veggies>).

One alternative platform to consider is SeedMoney (see <https://seedmoney.org>). This is a nonprofit with crowdfunding specifically aimed at “food garden projects.” SeedMoney has a garden grants program. Organizations must apply by November 12, 2019. They then raise funds for their project during a one month crowdfunding challenge from November 15, 2019 to December 15, 2019. This is specifically timed to take advantage of year-end giving. Depending on how much you raise, you may get a grant from SeedMoney, which will be giving out \$40,000 in grants to 255 public food garden projects. While 50 of those grants are limited to projects in the State of Maine or in developing countries, the rest are open to The Tiny Children’s Garden project, with \$100 given to the 35 most successful fundraising projects after the first week and 170 grants ranging from \$50 to \$600 given based on fundraising success after the month-long effort. SeedMoney provides tools, training, and support for your crowdfunding campaign.

### ► **Voluntary Fees**

Organizations can also encourage those who use the services they provide, traditionally for free, to pay an optional service fee. The organization can provide the service for free and ask for money to help cover the cost or the organization can ask people to consider paying for the service, with suggested amounts and pay as you can being welcomed and accepted. The Tiny Children’s Garden could put a donations box on site, with information about operating costs to encourage people to donate.

## Final Considerations

Currently The Tiny Children’s Garden is a start-up enterprise seeking out new donors to establish itself. As it becomes established and as time passes, fundraising will also change. The community garden is meant to be a sustainable community good, not a short-term project. Institutionalization can change an organization, and it is important to keep one’s case statement and vision at the forefront. This section will discuss some important development practices related to institutionalization, including creating a sustaining donor program, engaging creating a network of individuals who will support your fundraising efforts, and furthering your efforts through celebrating your achievements.

### **Ongoing Donor Relations** (Klein 2016)

To sustain itself, as well as invest in new projects, capital campaigns, or otherwise grow, the garden will need an ongoing donor relations program. These programs are about forming relationships with donors and continuing to make asks. The first crucial part to an ongoing donor program is thanking donors for their initial and for future contributions. All donors should receive a thank you note. It is an acknowledgment that their donation was received, noticed, and mattered. To that end, thank you notes that are more customized are more appreciated. A written and mailed thank you note is especially important for bigger donors. Nonprofit organizations must legally send thank you notes after donations of at least \$250. Furthermore, thanking donors gives you an opportunity to help your donors continue to get to know your organization. Donors are investing in your vision; keeping them informed about what your organization is doing to move towards that vision keeps them invested in your organization and makes it more likely that they will give again. In addition to thanking past donors, keep them up to date about the organization. Invite them to events.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals, in concert with other organizations and endorsed by a number of organizations, created a “donor bill of rights” with ten rights that donors and prospective donors should have in order to ensure there is confidence, trust, and respect towards philanthropy in general and towards the specific organizations donors are asked to give to. This includes “to receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition” (Klein 2016:37<sup>12</sup>).

### **Engaging Volunteers** (Klein 2016)

The garden may look to institutionalize itself through the development of not only an informal network of supporters, but a board that helps support the organization, including with its fundraising efforts. Most boards have about 10 or more members, which can include both stakeholders as well as former staff members / leaders and former and current clients / customers / organization participants.

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<sup>2</sup> The full Donor Bill of Rights is available as a student resource at:  
[http://higheredbcs.wiley.com/legacy/college/klein/1119209773/pdf/ch37\\_1\\_DonorBillOfRights.pdf](http://higheredbcs.wiley.com/legacy/college/klein/1119209773/pdf/ch37_1_DonorBillOfRights.pdf)



Serving as a board member is a big ask for a volunteer. However, there are a multitude of ways to involve volunteers in smaller ways. Indeed, board members are likely to come from those who have already engaged with the organization in the past through responding to smaller asks, whether they are monetary or service oriented. Engaging volunteers helps increase your organization's capacity as well as bring community together. Organizational leadership will always have a lot to do, and there are many tasks that the leadership will necessarily have to do. For those tasks that leadership does not have to do, volunteers can be engaged to support the organization. If someone is competent and has commitment to the organization, they can help with a multitude of tasks. In terms of fundraising, helping with fundraising events and thank you notes to donors are good engagement pathways and involve concrete tasks that can be delegated. While it requires more support, getting volunteers to also engage directly in fundraising can be useful. Volunteers can raise money for the organization, including collecting in-kind contributions, and through their own direct asks. Make sure to include donating and volunteering with fundraising on information sheets and asks about how to get involved with the organization. A successful volunteer program will require honest communications about expectations and the work involved, giving volunteers real and meaningful tasks, and ensuring they are acknowledged and appreciated.

### **Celebrating Success** (Switzer 2017; University of Kansas 2019)<sup>3</sup>

As The Tiny Children's Garden accomplishes milestones towards becoming a reality as well as has accomplishments in its service to the community, it is important to celebrate its success. Small victories can also be important to acknowledge.

One way to celebrate success is by planning quick acknowledgment celebrations of people who accomplish particular tasks. These can be a surprise to the person and help them feel acknowledged and motivated.

Another way to celebrate is by developing a particular tradition that is used to mark certain milestones or accomplishments. The Tiny Children's Garden could choose to do something like lay a brick as part of a pathway or plant a flower in a flower bed or have a child put their painted hands on a wall as part of a mural each time it meets a certain goal.

Celebrating success is important for fundraising. Whether it is through an annual event that shows off what the garden has accomplished, taking photos and posting them on social media of the garden, or another outlet, these celebrations help communicate to potential and past donors that the organization is active and effective. It is a persuasive way to convince potential donors that their contributions will matter and that their contributions will mean they are part of

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<sup>3</sup> Switzer, Cody. 2017. "Celebrating Success: How Our Readers Mark Fundraising Accomplishments." *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, July 28. Retrieved from (<https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Celebrating-Success-How/240777>).

University of Kansas (KU) Center for Community Health & Development. 2019. "Section 3. Recognizing Goal Attainment." *The Community Tool Box*. Retrieved from (<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/maintain/reward-accomplishments/goal-attainment/main>).

something bigger than them that is making a difference. It can also feel good and help everyone continue to feel motivated.

Fundraising is about the development of your community garden, and its ability to sustain itself. Your efforts and accomplishments deserve celebration, because fundraising is what enables The Tiny Children Garden's vision to become a reality and make a difference in the lives of Washington Park children.

## You are ready!

We hope that the tools in this guidebook help you feel more prepared to fundraising and make your vision of The Tiny Children's Garden a reality. The tools and practices here are best practices and our suggestions are grounded in your particular situation. While this guide may seem long, we necessarily omitted material and could have provided more resources or details in a variety of areas. There is a wealth of useful material available in some of the links provided here, but if you have specific questions about aspects of the report or are looking for particular resources, please do not hesitate to be in touch. We are excited about The Tiny Children's Garden and look forward to its successful development and impact.