

How to Fund YOUR NONPROFIT WEBSITE



ELEVATION

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INTRODUCTION

Today, people instinctively turn to the web to gather information and answers about almost anything - whether they are getting the latest world news, seeking advice, or simply looking for an address- the web is where it's at, and that makes websites a crucial element for businesses; not only to communicate information **but to establish credibility**.

Websites can be costly. Despite the variety of prices and a number of design companies out there building a new website can be more expensive than you imagined. You need to take into account the cost of the developers, time involved, and all-around effort that goes into your website creation. Knowing the limited budget your nonprofit has to work with the real question is-- **how is my organization going to fund this project?**

A well-run nonprofit will employ a fundraising strategy that seeks to raise funds through **various channels**. Diversifying your fundraising sources is also a good way to approach creating a budget for your new website

Think of your website as an investment, not an expense.

Many nonprofits are on the fence as to what value a new website will bring to their organization. It is important to think of your website as a **central marketing tool** working to effectively and efficiently drive your nonprofit's mission.

The truth is, your website is the face of your organization. Therefore, your page needs to directly reflect who you are as a nonprofit. It should be a well-oiled machine that directs visitors to accomplish tasks and convert potential donors.

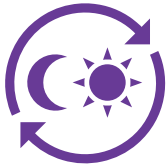
The challenge?

How do you approach your nonprofit supporters and community to donate towards an item that could be viewed more as an administrative cost rather than a cause/mission-related cost? Below we have listed various **benefits, tips, and highlights** of a new website that are great to use when conversing with others who may be less enthusiastic about funding a project like this.

What makes your new website a long-term investment?

- ▶ Generates a better **user experience** which can help you recruit more volunteers.
- ▶ Helps attract new visitors, meaning **more donors**.
- ▶ Builds and develops your **credibility** and **authority** within your community to gain sponsorships with potential local and industry-wide partner-organizations.
- ▶ Makes it easier for your nonprofit to “**go green**.” Automating manual tasks saves your nonprofit money and maximizes your staff's time with more mission-related work.

What your new website does for you:

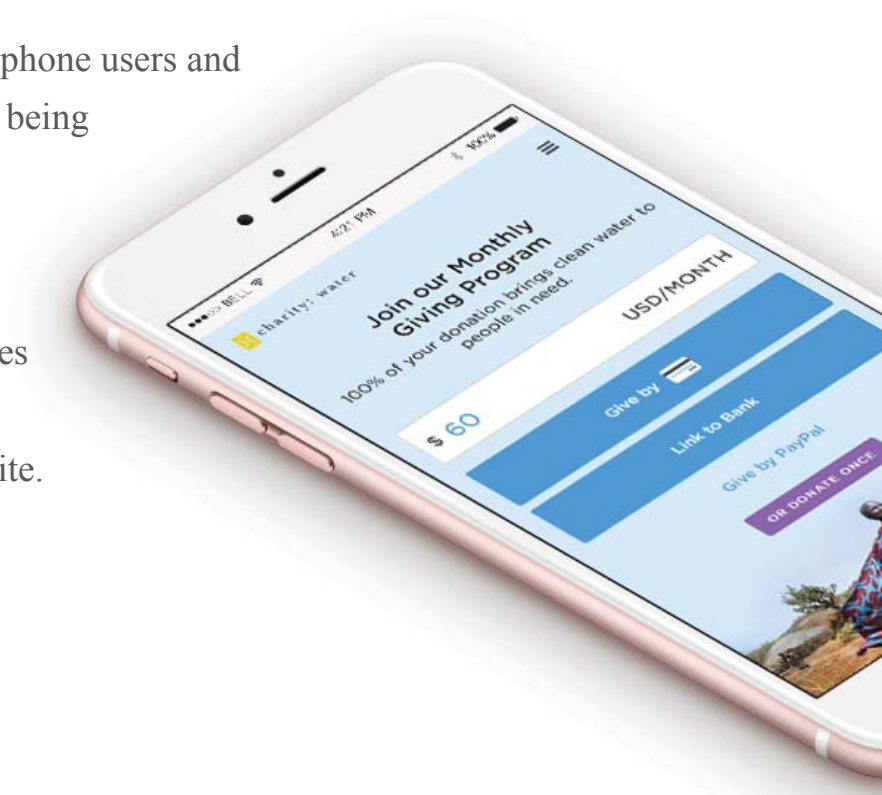


Works around the clock. Works around the clock. Although your nonprofit may have closed for the day your website is still at work. Your organization's site allows you to accept applications, make appointments and intakes, and receive donations 24/7. It provides immediate information for your donors, members, and volunteers. Ultimately, your website is spreading awareness and inspiring your mission nonstop.



Expands your reach. Your website drives unbranded search traffic to your nonprofit. In other words, those who are searching for your cause/mission, but not specifically by name, will find you. People across the street and across the country have access to your organization's site from the comfort of their own home.

Additionally, with the increase of mobile phone users and your organization's on-the-go supporters, being able to access your nonprofit's page from any device is an essential element to broadening your reach. Designing a new mobile-responsive website guarantees your visitors a good user experience, no matter where they are viewing your website.





Increases online donations. As a nonprofit, donations are a top priority. With a new website your organization will have the ability to design the donation process for your visitors- recurring donations, fewer clicks/fields to complete the donation, and integrations with donor database/CRM/accounting tools to track donations. By giving your donors a fast, simple and integrated giving option, you're making it easier for them to **continue to support you**.



Enhances your image. Because your website is a visual representation of your nonprofit, it is a place to successfully illustrate what your nonprofit advocates for. It is a perfect space to clearly explain your mission, outline your services, and celebrate your accomplishments.

- ▶ **Homepage:** Your sites homepage is the first impression your visitors have of your organization, it is your **virtual front door**. Your homepage should be designed to serve many audiences and persuade visitors to explore further into your site. You want to make sure that this page is lively, powerful, and easily guides the viewer to take action (or donate).
- ▶ **“Above the fold”:** The “above the fold” concept is the space the viewer sees on the page without scrolling. **All crucial information should be placed within this area.** This way the viewer is not tempted to scroll when making their donation.

6 Ways to fund your nonprofit's new website

1. Solicit the members of your board

Getting the financial support of your nonprofit's board can be a huge help if executed successfully. These members are already extremely committed to your cause and organization, therefore, the approach may be a bit different.



Clearly express your philosophy. Explicitly show/explain why the board members should be generously donating. Create a **compelling argument** as to why your nonprofit needs a new website to get them excited and involved with the cause.



Articulate your fundraising expectations. Provide a space to discuss ideas, deadlines, and the end goal. Make sure everyone is on the **same page** and has committed to giving.

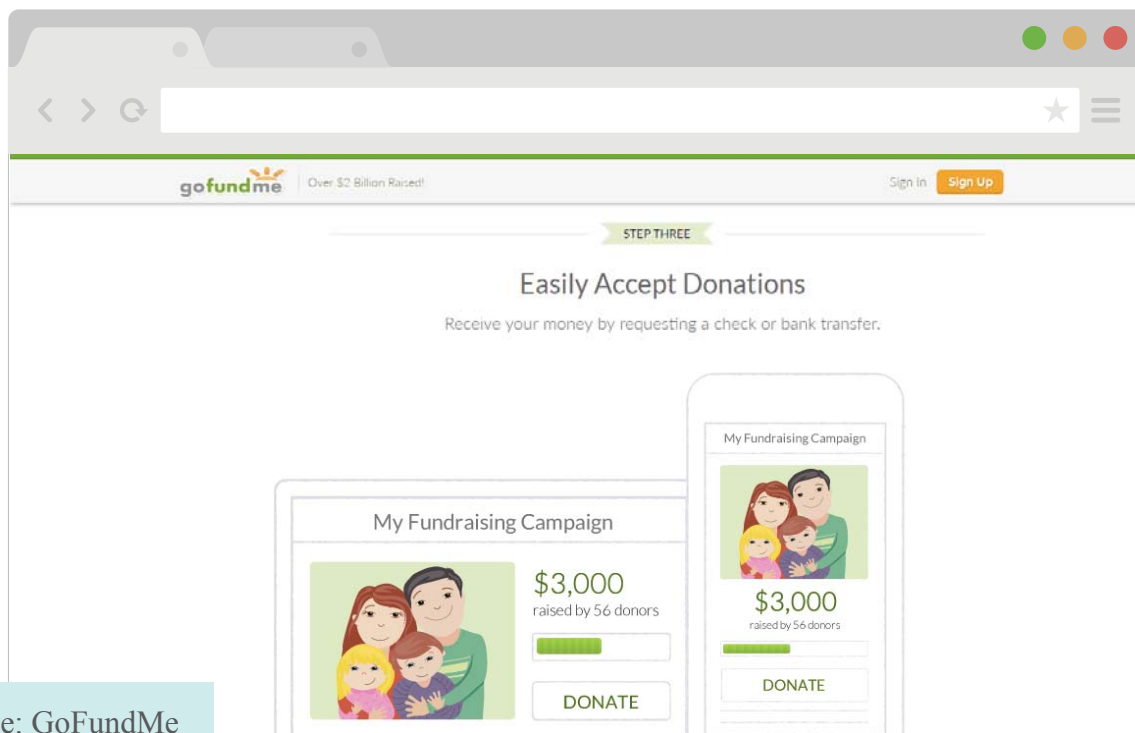


Acknowledge all board members' contributions. Create an environment of **positive reinforcement**, thank you's, and recognition. Once they've made the financial commitment, make an effort to keep the less tech-savvy board members updated in a friendly way on any technical decisions about the website. This will help continue this feeling continue down the road.

2. Crowdfunding

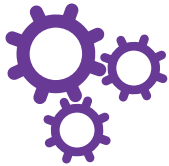
Crowdfunding is a monetary means of accepting funding for a project or idea through a “crowd” or mass audience, as opposed to traditional donations. The goal is to persuade people to donate small amounts (5,10,100, or more). This approach taps into **collectively sourcing** from a large pool of individuals- mainly through online social media platforms and crowdfunding sites- influencing a greater reach and exposure.

Build a single, **comprehensive profile** that will channel all your prospective donors, eliminating the need to approach them individually. Sites like **GoFundMe**, **CauseVox**, and **MobileCause** are great platforms to receive donations. These three sites also allow your nonprofit to keep all funds even if your goal is not reached.



Source: GoFundMe
gofundme.com

Benefits of crowdfunding for your nonprofit:



Productivity: In comparison to other funding options (asking individual donors, business, etc.) crowdfunding gives your nonprofit the ability to **effectively focus your fundraising efforts**. Instead of individually updating, contacting, and informing your supporters, crowdfunding offers everything on one platform, leaving you the time to concentrate on other aspects of your nonprofit's agenda (not just fundraising).

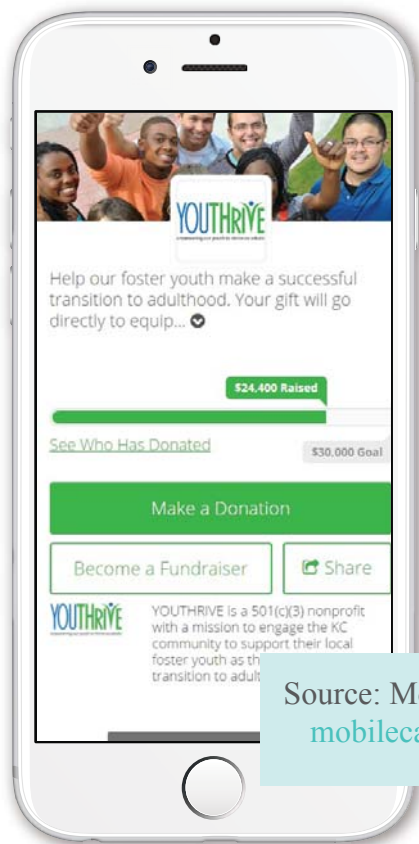


Reach: The power of one individual is enormous, now think about that multiplied by thousands or even millions. When your **supporters fundraise** in the name of your nonprofit, they are going to be reaching out to their community. In other words, contacting those who are closest to them- friends, family, coworkers, etc.

Remember, people give for **emotional reasons**, therefore, the personal connection between your supporters and their outreach has a vast effect on your campaign. Many crowdfunding platforms allow users to create both personal and team campaigns that feature the individual's faces and photos. When reaching a wider pool of your supporters resources and networks, a **greater impact** is made.



Marketing: Your crowdfunding efforts **double** as a marketing tool for your nonprofit's cause. By sharing and promoting your campaign through email newsletters, social media platforms, ads, and other online strategies your organization is increasing their **marketing exposure and SEO**. From launching your campaign to reaching your goal, crowdfunding promotes not only your fundraiser but your nonprofit's mission.



Source: MobileCause
mobilecause.com

Instead of having your website fundraising only coming from your nonprofit by means of donor solicitation, use a crowdfunding platform to influence your already dedicated members to collect funds for your website via their **personal networks, social media, and email.**



The catch? Most crowdfunding platforms have some fees involved. A majority of the platforms offer a free set-up for your campaign, however, there **are processing fees**. Costs vary entirely on the platform you chose. We suggest referring to the crowdfunding websites (Causevox, MobileCause, GoFundMe) for the most accurate processing, transaction, and all-around fees.

3. Individual Donations

When it comes to asking people to donate their money it can be intimidating, uncomfortable, and difficult. The **key** is not to persuade your donors, but instead, help them realize they already care.

That being said, approaching your individual donors is very dependent on the relationship your nonprofit has established with these patrons. For those supporters with whom you have cultivated positive relationships, they can serve as a great resource for your nonprofit in funding your new website. People are much more likely to give when you **build and maintain** a relationship with them.



Simple ways your organization can maintain donor- relationships include: targeted email following-up campaigns, showing the impact of donations, success stories, photos, donor wall on your website, and thank you letters to individual donors.

Yes, there will always be certain donors who are more open to funding a project like this than others. For that reason, think about your donor demographic, which groups are more **tech savvy**? Interested in technology? These members are more inclined to understand the numerous benefits of a new website rather than think of it as an expense.

It is crucial to understand your **donor demographic** to really get the most out of your fundraising efforts. Keep in mind that older generations of donors tend to give larger lump sums and recurring amounts. Whereas younger donors are more sporadic in their giving patterns and are more likely to engage with their peers or social events.

For those members in which an active relationship has not been maintained, approaching them to donate may steer them away from your organization. This is where your **customer relationship management (CRM) tool** comes in. Your CRM will serve as the most efficient and valuable approach to maintaining strong and loyal relationships with your donor groups. It allows your nonprofit to monitor interactions, notes, and donation history making sure your team is always up-to-date and organized with all your donors needs.

Remember, regardless of your target audience for donations, it is important to **emphasize** the long-term benefits of investing in a new website for your nonprofit.

4. Local Business/Corporation Sponsorship

As a nonprofit, you've probably developed a relationship with a local business within your community or a corporation. However, if this is not the case, your nonprofit has a crucial task of choosing a compatible partner, one whose philanthropic ideals overlap with those of your nonprofit.



Pinpoint several individuals either board members or notable supporters/volunteers, who can make personal calls with contacts at local companies. Personal connections and people you know are always a great resource.



Once your nonprofit has made the connection with a local business or corporation, the key is to **identify and approach the right person**. In some cases, you will be searching for the “Corporate Social Responsibility Manager/Coordinator.” However if you are connecting with a small business there may not be this position. In that case, speak with the manager in charge.

Do your research- find out their name, position, etc.- this will provide the **human touch** and demonstrate your interest in what they have to offer. Make sure you directly reach out, if at all possible, meeting in-person is always recommended.

Considering only half of all company giving is money related, your nonprofit has a good chance of persuading both a local business and/or a corporation to donate an item (in this case your website) in the place of cash. In return, **your nonprofit’s new website** can feature company sponsors and/or a message acknowledging that your site was kindly donated by “business x”. This adds some SEO and exposure on their end. Ultimately a **win-win situation** for both parties involved.

5. Event Fundraising

Targeted fundraising events can be very successful, and in this case, can be used to get your nonprofit a new website. Give your donors an event to **center their fundraising efforts** around and you are more likely to see positive donation results. Again, think about your donor demographic- select events that draw in an older, well-connected, and passionate audience even though your funding is not going towards mission-related work.

According to Money for Good II, 63% of donors want to know where their money is going. Therefore, it is your nonprofit's responsibility to **illustrate and clarify** where these funds are going and how their contributions will make a difference.

Include statistics about why having an **optimized website** is a necessity for your nonprofit and/or create an infographic to use in donor thank-you's, email campaigns, social media platforms, or print media at the event. Providing a visual explanation of what these funds can accomplish continues to emphasize the importance of your attendee's donations.

The 2 fundamentals to keep in mind:



1 Set a measurable goal. Your goal needs to be specific and attainable. In order for your nonprofit to accomplish this, the **RFP (request for proposal)** process is crucial to receive an accurate estimate of your website's costs.

Due to the fact that this event is designed **explicitly** to acquire funds for your website, make sure everything that goes into preparing for the event does just that. This includes speaking with the web design company to properly plan the budget for both the event as well as the website.

2 Select the right type of event. The fundraising event should be a reflection of:



- ▶ Your nonprofit's mission
- ▶ Your nonprofit's goals
- ▶ Your nonprofit's supporters
- ▶ Your nonprofit's budget

This event is to acquire funds for your website, therefore, you want to make sure those who are attending are already **onboard** with your nonprofit's ideals and cause.

6 Grant Funding

Grant funding is a great **source** of support for nonprofits. Although grant funding is a bit more restrictive than other fundraising options out there, it is definitely worth looking into when financing a new website. Here are two types of grants your nonprofit will most likely be applying for

- 1 General Operating Support Grants:** Also known as unrestricted grants, allow your nonprofit to use the funds to strengthen and support your **organization's operations** as you see fit. Operating support grants provide the opportunity for nonprofits to be **innovative and creative**. These grants express a high-level of trust and flexibility for your nonprofit to use the funds wisely in order to accomplish its goals.
- 2 Management and Technical Assistance Grants:** Different from other grant funding, management assistance grants are not directly related to your nonprofit's mission activities, but instead work to enhance it's organizational and administrative capacity. These grants support your nonprofit's fundraising, marketing, technology, and management tasks.

Grants are great **compliments** to any of your nonprofit's fundraising efforts. Keep in mind, applying for grants require a different (more lengthy) process than getting individual funding. Your grant proposal should be **articulate, concrete, concise** outlining the numerous benefits behind your nonprofit's new website. At the end of the day, your goal is to persuade the foundation the importance of a new website for your nonprofit.

CONCLUSION

Your nonprofit's website is the **center of your organization**. Therefore, it is important to have the most up-to-date, user- friendly, and optimized web page. Finding ways to fund a new website can be challenging, but the finished product is exceptionally worth it.

Remember, every nonprofit is different - **there is no such thing as a universal way to fund a new website**. It is to your benefit to understand your donors and their giving patterns to ensure greatest fundraising success.

Make sure you express the concrete benefits this new website will have on your organization, potential donors, board members, business/corporations, etc.

And most importantly, say **“thank you.”** This may seem like second nature, however, there are many times we forget how significant this simple phrase can be. Whichever way your nonprofit finds best fit to fund their website, remember to show your appreciation and gratitude, report back on how the support/ funds/donations and new website have made a difference in your organization. This leaves the donors **eager to continue supporting** and giving in the future as well as leaves a lasting positive reputation of your nonprofit in general.

Good luck!