

FUNDRAISING DURING COVID-19

COMMUNICATING WITH SPONSORS IN THE CASE OF EVENT CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT

As we continue to adjust to the ever-changing climate around COVID-19, many organizations are faced with the decision to cancel or postpone their fundraising events. The outline below is meant to guide you in communicating your event strategy with sponsors and key donors.

- Divide the event sponsor and top donor list among the development team. If the sponsor or donor belongs to a development portfolio, that development officer should be assigned to any outreach.
- Before any formal event communication is made public, your development team should contact sponsors and top donors to let them know the **situation**, the **plan**, and the **ask and/or next steps**.

Situation: The event has been canceled or postponed, and above all, their health and safety is most important to us.

- Ask how they are doing. How is their family? Remember, this is an individual with whom you have a personal relationship.

Plan: Update them on what your organization is doing to minimize the impacts of COVID-19. Let them know what while your fundraising plans have changed, funding of your mission is of the upmost importance at this time.

- Share any plan specifics (e.g. transition to virtual gala, date change, etc.).
- Ask for their guidance and feedback on your plan.

Ask and/or Next Steps: Reiterate how you rely on proceeds from this event to fund your mission, and your mission is just as vital, if not more so, given the current crisis.

- Ask if they would consider converting their sponsorship to a fully tax-deductible donation.
- Explain what their support would mean to your mission, any benefits they may receive, and/or how you anticipate fulfilling these benefits.
- Most importantly, thank them for supporting your organization during this critical time.
- Ask if they have any questions and explain that you will be back in touch as plans are developed further.
- Offer to meet in person, once the public health concerns subside.

For sponsors who are unavailable via phone, you should consider sending an email; however, talking live is most preferred. The key is that these donors and sponsors are recognized as partners in your funding strategy and receive this information before announcements are made publicly.

The benefit of this approach is that it opens doors to reconnect with these donors and sponsors in the future. Find additional tools on our COVID-19 Resource pages at MissionAdvancement.com.