

# FUNDRAISING DURING CRISIS

## MISSION ADVANCEMENT'S POSITION ON FUNDRAISING DURING COVID-19

The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is having a major impact on our communities and across the world. While the United States has not experienced a crisis exactly like the coronavirus in recent history, we have experienced other crises that led to similar levels of anxiety.

Mission Advancement Professionals (MAP) has worked and lived through these challenging times and understands the implications on our nonprofit organizations. First and foremost, please know that we are praying for your missions and for your leadership.

To help you navigate through these challenging times, we are offering our position on managing through the coronavirus crisis.

### ADOPTING THE RIGHT MINDSET

Your organization's vision and mission to serve an unmet need in your community is just as vital today, regardless of the circumstances unfolding in the world around us. The well-being of the people you are dedicated to serving depends on your mission.

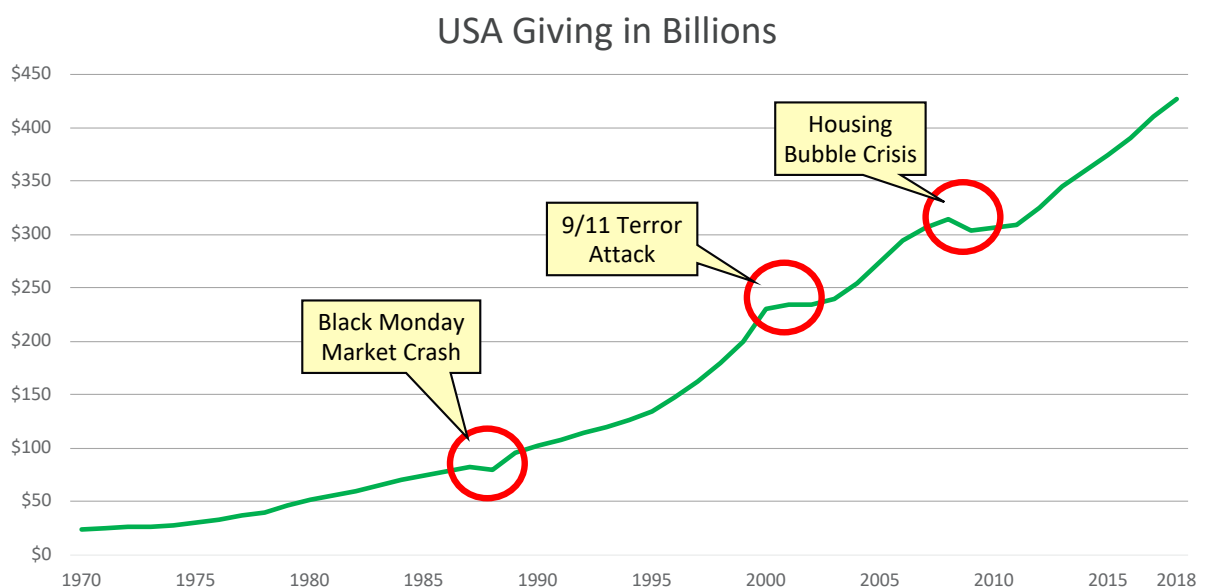
All aspects of your mission that make it compelling still exist today. If your mission were to vanish tomorrow, it would leave a gaping hole in your community. It is important for you to keep your mission front and center in the eyes of your community and be willing and able to adapt it accordingly in response to the crisis at hand.



## CLIMATE FOR FUNDRAISING

During times of crisis, people continue to give in support of missions about which they care and believe are relevant. This has been proven time and again for over 60 years since charitable giving has been accurately tracked by Giving USA – most recently during the financial crisis in 2008. The desire for Americans to continue supporting relevant missions is well documented.

- Over the past six decades since philanthropy has been accurately tracked in the United States, giving has consistently risen year-over-year in excess of the rate of inflation with two exceptions. This growth has occurred through all recessions and all nature of crises.
- The two exceptions are 1987-88 and 2007-09, during which philanthropy in the U.S. dipped only slightly – less than 5% in both instances. Most Americans likely believe that giving dropped dramatically during these periods, but the truth is that the generosity of individuals in our country has always prevailed.
- Following the housing bubble crisis in late 2007, there was a slight dip in charitable giving in 2008 (approximately 2%). However, the amount given by individuals (approximately \$229 billion) which accounted for 75% of all philanthropy in the U.S., did not drop.
- While there was also a dip in philanthropy from 2008 to 2009 (3.6%), giving from individuals was consistent year-over-year.
- The dip in giving during these two consecutive years came primarily from philanthropic foundations. Giving from these entities tends to correlate more with the status of the economy.
- Giving from individuals has always accounted for the vast majority of philanthropy nationwide (over 70%) and has always been the most dependable and sustainable source for funding the nonprofit sector.



## CLIMATE FOR FUNDRAISING (continued)

- Sadly, during previous times of crisis, we have witnessed many nonprofit organizations cancel plans for fundraising, believing a request for support would be inappropriate “for such a time as this.” For those organizations, a loss of philanthropic support became self-fulfilling.
- Conversely, the nonprofit organizations that stayed the course and proceeded with consistent messaging and requests operated from a position of strength and many even experienced increases in annual giving.

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## MISSION ADVANCEMENT’S POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAP’s position is to maintain a calm and confident stance behind your mission and its relevance to your community’s well-being. Now, more than ever, your relationships with donors must be integral to your daily work. Seeking their advice and guidance and communicating with key donors about your specific circumstances and plans to manage through this time is critical.

Don’t apologize for doing everything possible to maintain your mission. Stay the course with your fundraising plans and, if necessary, revise your plans accordingly to fit within the limits imposed by the crisis we are experiencing.

- 1 **Show compassion for the anxiety your donors are feeling.** Everyone is experiencing anxiety from the uncertainty that stems from this crisis. First and foremost, it is important to be sensitive to the personal issues with which they are dealing.
- 2 **Communicate with your donors about the status of your mission.** Your donors who have supported you significantly over many years care deeply about the health of your mission and how it is adapting to address issues resulting from the crisis. This is a perfect opportunity to connect with them one-to-one and assure them that your mission is alive and well.
- 3 **Do not hesitate to seek support for your noble, relevant and urgent mission.** Your donors will continue to support your mission. If your behavior changes and you do not seek their support during this time, donors will end up giving to organizations who are seeking their support. Further, by cancelling activities and not asking for support, you will risk sending the message to your support base that your mission is perhaps not urgent and relevant.



## MISSION ADVANCEMENT'S POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

For obvious reasons, large gatherings and special fundraising events are not possible to implement due to the health and safety concern related to the spread of the coronavirus. However, there are many creative alternative ways to engage your support base that can successfully keep your mission in front of your support base.

### HELP AND SUPPORT

Regardless of how your fundraising plans have been affected, you may be dealing with issues and questions for which you do not have answers. Mission Advancement Professionals (MAP) is prepared to offer you and your organization a free session with one of our development professionals – no strings attached. Please email us at [Info@MissionAdvancement.com](mailto:Info@MissionAdvancement.com) or call 888.540.0505.

*Your vision and mission to serve an unmet need in your community is just as vital today as it was two weeks ago, regardless of the circumstances unfolding in the world around us.*

