

Board Fundraising Policy: Key Elements and Practical Tips

To remain financially viable, meet its mission and contribute to the ecosystem's purpose, an organization must have adequate financial resources.

Although the board can and should expect much of the chief executive and management on this score, the board is chiefly responsible for ensuring resources for the organization.

The resources of most charities are primarily but not exclusively a combination of the following:

1. Earned revenue – fees received for contracts, services, tickets, or tuition.
2. Contributed income – private support received as donations of gifts and grants.

Board fundraising policies may indicate the amount board members are expected to contribute to the organization in the coming year and how they will participate in the fundraising efforts of the organization.

Key Board Fundraising Policies:

- Personal giving policies state whether a board member is expected to give a certain amount or to give according to their means. BoardSource recommends a policy setting the expectation of 100% board giving and individual gifts at a level personally significant to each board member. Funders often ask if 100 percent of board members give.
- Fundraising policies establish expectations for board members to make a personal donation and to participate in solicitation efforts. The policy may list examples of how board members can or should be involved, such as providing names of potential donors, writing or signing fundraising letters, thanking donors personally, accompanying the chief executive on donor and foundation visits, or making the ask themselves.
- Some organizations use a special pledge form that guides board members in thinking about the array of fundraising activities taking place throughout the year and asks them to make an annual fundraising commitment.
- If the organization has a separate fundraising body, such as a foundation or supporting organization, it is still important to outline the role of board members and how they relate to this body — and vice versa.

Practical Tips for Creating Board Fundraisers:

- To become a committed fundraiser, a board member must first make a contribution. This requirement is the cornerstone of individual fundraising because it allows a board member to use themselves as an example of someone who supports the organization.
- Not every board member will be able to give the same size gift. Some organizations stipulate a minimum gift amount; many do not. The policy should encourage each board member to make the organization a priority in their personal giving plan or to make what, for that person, is a substantial financial contribution. The policy should not, however, eliminate capable and valuable individuals from joining the board and contributing other skills and expertise.
- Board members possess different skill levels and aptitudes for solicitation. Provide board members with training in fundraising and practical tools like checklists, sample elevator speeches, and steps for approaching a potential donor, to help each member gradually assume more responsibility. Providing mentors and matching inexperienced board members with staff or more seasoned board members is another way to increase everyone's comfort with personal solicitations.
- Some individuals, because of their profession or position (e.g., journalists, judges, chief executives, or development staff of other charities), may be prohibited from

certain kinds of fundraising solicitations. Seek other opportunities for these individuals to support the organization in a meaningful way.

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Resource: *The Nonprofit Policy Sampler; Board Members' Role in Fundraising; Fundraising Roles*