

FUNDRAISING PLANS

Income Sources

Annual Pledge Drive

- ◆ Downtown Businesses (retail, service businesses)
- ◆ Businesses Outside of the Downtown (industrial, retail, service)
- ◆ Residents (giving levels and local philanthropists)
- ◆ Civic Organizations

Action Steps:

1. Be sure 100% of the Board has made a contribution/investment to Main Street.
2. Set the goal for the total annual pledge drive (renewals and new). With renewals, after three years, ask for an increase to help cover cost increases. What percentage of your budget will come from the annual pledge drive?
3. Develop target list of new contributors/investors. Brainstorm those businesses not in Downtown, but making money in Downtown (trash haulers, food suppliers, food wholesalers). Consider peer-to-peer contacts with local retailers. Ask for multi-year pledges.
4. Select a desired contribution for each new contributor. Provide average investments from similar businesses or supporters
5. Review all solicitation materials. Personalize them.
6. Plan for person-to-person follow-ups with business contacts.
7. With residential solicitations, or “Friends of Main Street”, make it worth Main Street’s effort and have a minimum contribution at \$25 or \$35 per year.
8. What is the timetable for this drive to occur? Make sure it fits within the other funding efforts of the organization and does not conflict with other drives in the community.
9. Plan recognition of every contribution.
10. Municipal Contributions
11. Action Steps:
12. What is the timetable needed for securing new or continued funding from the town or city?
13. Review materials that need to be presented. Has the Main Street program been in good communication with municipal officials throughout the year? Do they understand that they are providing support to an economic development organization, not a charitable organization?
14. If the town or city has remained at the same funding level for more than three years, consider asking for an increase. Municipalities should not be weaned from giving to Main Street programs.

15. Should the community develop a Business Improvement District (BID) or Tax Increment Finance District (TIF)?
16. Plan recognition of the municipal contribution.

Grants

Action Steps:

1. Main Street programs have been successful getting grants from some sources, but they cannot be counted on for operational funding. Grants are project driven and should address projects in the work plan. Statewide foundations and the National Trust Main Street Center are good sources for grant opportunities.
2. Develop an annual timeline for grant application deadlines. Fit this into the workplan.

Merchandise Sales

Action Steps:

1. Identify all items that the program will make money on for the organization. This may include annual holiday ornaments or everyday merchandise for sale.
2. If expanding into this area for funds, consider the initial investment by the program to acquire the goods. Return on merchandise sales is not immediate.
3. Merchandise for special events – sponsors may be found. Identify and put your timeline, when this kind of sponsorship will be sought, so that it does not conflict with your annual pledge drive, when you may be asking for this business to contribute.

Special Events or Special Projects Fundraising

Action Steps:

1. Coordinate the entire year's calendar for sponsorship for every event. Who will be contacted and what amount will they be asked to pay for sponsorship? Keep in mind that money given to the program during the annual pledge drive likely comes from a "charitable" pot of money and money to sponsor events comes from a "marketing" pot of money.
2. Strive to have events break even or make money for the organization.
3. Have each committee, with special projects or special events, note the businesses they would like to solicit as sponsors. Make sure there is a plan so that businesses know what kind of recognition they will receive for the sponsorship.
4. Build an administrative fee into all sponsorships. Many businesses have indicated they no longer want to support the administrative operation of Main Street programs, but will sponsor projects that their name will be on. For example, if a business is asked to sponsor Main Street's newsletter, their fee should not just cover the amount of postage and printing. Add a fee that will include staff time to complete this project. Building in an administrative fee to each and every project will help close the gap on the administrative budget.
5. Review each event or projects as soon as it is complete and access new ways to increase sponsorships and fundraising for the following year.
6. Try to have all special events paid for by sponsors before the event even happens. This assures that money will not be lost if the event is rained out.

Books on the subject:

Securing Your Organization's Future: A Complete Guide to Fundraising Strategies by Michael Seltzer.

Successful Fundraising: A Complete Handbook for Volunteers and Professionals by Joan Flanagan.