

## Answers in an uncertain time: Part II.

Recently, we asked for your questions on moving your organization forward during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the [last issue](#) of our e-newsletter, we wrote about keeping donors engaged without the use of face-to-face meetings. Below, you'll find our response to another question:

*Our organization is getting back to our regular schedule for fundraising communications. Should we address COVID-19 in a mass appeal, and if so, how?*

Not mentioning COVID-19 will appear tone deaf to most if not all of your recipients — but be wary of using generic language, which can fall flat. Talk about how your organization is impacted, and how you're responding. While you may be limited by space constraints, be as specific as you can. Have you modified your services to provide clients with remote access, for example? Did you buy new technologies or adopt new protocols that have increased your need for support, right now? Show how you're rising to the challenge *and* how donor support can help. Other things to bear in mind:

- *Don't cry wolf:* If you're saying donations are needed especially urgently now, demonstrate how and why. We recently read a very moving appeal from an organization serving LGBTQ youth. Given safer-at-home mandates, many of these youth are isolated with unsupportive family members at the moment. As a result, they need more of the organization's help. This case for support is specific, credible, and extremely moving.
- *Be clear and honest about how funds will be used:* If you're asking for unrestricted support, don't make it sound like donors' dollars will all go toward COVID-related relief.
- *Don't forget to follow other best practices:* Put the donor first. Thank him or her for past support. Underline how involvement makes a difference. If possible, share personal stories that illustrate how contributions are directly helping your clients.

With mindful planning, proactive adjustments and careful messaging, you can increase donor engagement and further your mission, even in these unusual times.

*Thurlow/Associates can help you stay responsive during the still-changing pandemic situation. Please call us at (310) 675-6497 or email us at [hello@thurlowassociates.com](mailto:hello@thurlowassociates.com) for a no-cost consultation.*