

## Keep calm and carry on fundraising.

In the last issue of our e-newsletter, we provided some recommendations for nonprofit fundraising outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic (see our April newsletter [here](#)). Things continue to evolve when it comes to both immediate (when can we go out again, please?) and long-term (how will the economy look in the coming years?) projections. While this makes it difficult to plan for the future, we believe planning is nonetheless important for your organization's sustainability.

There are many elements to your fund development plan that may need new thinking. In all cases, we believe it's important to consider the following:


*Timeline:* Much will depend on your fiscal year — and on how much you still have to raise by the close of the year. Keeping this in mind, questions to consider include:

- Do we have the time and resources to conduct an additional appeal before year's end, to make up for other lost revenue?
- Should we cancel our March 2021 fundraising event now — or is it realistic to wait a while longer? If the latter, what's the latest we can cancel our event venue, catering, etc., without a financial penalty? What's our plan B if we do need to cancel, and when should we start to work on that?
- Can we fast track our research and outreach to new institutional funding prospects (or speed up some other aspect of our fund development plan)?

*Budget:* Of course, planning takes place in the context of budget: what you need to raise *and* what resources you have available to do the work. You'll want timely updates about your organization's budget and funding gap — but if things are changing too quickly, use the C-suite's best estimate, with perhaps an additional buffer amount for safety.

It's also important to (re-)estimate the cost and the return on investment for each fundraising activity you're considering. Calculate best-, mid- and worst-case scenarios (with a budget for each), to guide your decision-making. For example, how will holding a virtual event impact your revenue? Given your net revenue estimates, does the planned activity still make sense? Is there a better return on investment elsewhere?

True, you may have to revisit your planning more often these days, to address changes as they occur — and you may need to update your timeline more regularly. In the final analysis, though, we're not suggesting anything groundbreaking here. Sound planning based on realistic budgeting is key to success no matter the fundraising environment. It not only prepares you for success; it's a strong antidote to panic.



Do you have questions about how to move your organization forward during the COVID-19 pandemic? We want to hear from you! Send your questions to [hello@thurlowassociates.com](mailto:hello@thurlowassociates.com) by June 10 and they may be featured in our next newsletter.

*Thurlow/Associates can help you evaluate, refresh and implement your fund development strategy as the situation evolves. If you're interested in upgrading your organization's fund development program, please call us at (310) 675-6497 for a no-cost consultation — or send us an email at [hello@thurlowassociates.com](mailto:hello@thurlowassociates.com).*