

## Building a Successful Fundraising Board

- **Begin with a strategic recruitment process.** A year-round nominating committee should be tasked with thoughtfully identifying potential board members – individuals with proven fundraising experience that can open doors. Consider your closest prospects first, including current supporters of the organization.
- **Make your expectations clear up front.** Each prospective member should be presented with a written statement on the role of the board, including:
  - **Governance:** Steward of finances and policy maker
  - **Support:** Participant, fundraiser and donor – if they aren't willing to give, don't ask them to serve
- **Thoroughly orient new board members.** Before their first meeting, review your mission and case statement, programs, board and staff roles, financial picture, development program, and fundraising plans. Offer a tour; introduce them to volunteers and staff leadership.
- **Provide proper training.** Arrange for board training sessions that include role-playing (i.e., making a successful ask). Send a new member with an experienced one to make a gift call – untrained members will be motivated by witnessing successful asks.
- **It's not just about the ask.** A board member sharing his or her story with a potential donor is not only one of the most effective ways to raise money but also builds valuable relationships.
- **Practice proper donor stewardship.** Involve board members in this process by making thank-you calls to donors for their gifts.
- **Other traits of successful nonprofit boards include:**
  - Understand their nonprofit's Case for Support.
  - Give not only time but resources, including financial.
  - Educated on development and trained in how to make the ask.
  - Involved in planning, execution, and evaluation of development efforts.
  - Identify, cultivate, and recruit donor prospects and new board members.
  - Don't assume fundraising is a staff function.

Remember, your board is your link to the community. Fundraising succeeds only if the board leads it.