



Fundraising - Class 2

Building Cause-Based Fundraising Approaches for Community Foundations

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Estimated time to complete: 45 minutes

Class Objectives

- Explore cause-based fundraising approaches.
- Learn about Giving Days, place-based initiatives, matching gifts, scholarships, and disaster relief campaigns.
- Practice mapping these strategies for your own foundation.
- Reflect on how your foundation can serve the broader community through intentional fundraising efforts.

Module 1: Fundraising Plan Review

In previous work, you have explored how to involve your board and close supporters in raising early-stage funds. This foundation of internal support helps launch broader fundraising strategies.

Today, you'll explore a key fundraising element: **cause strategy**.

Module 2: Understanding Cause Strategy

A *cause strategy* is a focused fundraising effort organized around a specific initiative, issue, or campaign goal.

Quick Self-Check:

Which of the following causes has your foundation raised funds for?

- Place-based initiatives
- Scholarships
- Disaster relief
- Giving days
- Matching campaigns
- Other: _____

Action Activity: List a recent fundraising effort. What was the cause? Who was involved? How was it received?



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Module 3: Case Study – Giving Day Campaigns

GivingTuesday is a global movement powered by people who believe generosity is critical to our communities and our future.

From organizing volunteering events and nonprofit fairs, to online campaigns spurring giving and training nonprofits how to fundraise, much of our best work is done in community foundations



The Outcomes

Leading a GivingTuesday community-wide campaign has helped community foundations to:

- Link their mission to a massive, trusted conversation about philanthropy and bring the wider community to the community foundation.
- Increase local nonprofits' access to unrestricted funds.
- Build local nonprofits' campaign capacities as well as foundation's county affiliates.
- Alleviate year-end solicitation capacity challenges.
- Engage more people in the community in giving back, including those new to giving, families and young people.
- Further build trust and relationships amongst local people, nonprofits, businesses, and their foundations.





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Richland Gives...and still gives 10 years later!

A Study in Impact with Maura Teynor, Chief Advancement Officer, Richland County Foundation

The What:

During GivingTuesday, Richland County Foundation in Mansfield, Ohio invests in the capacity building of 100 local nonprofits and grows their unrestricted operating funds with this community-wide campaign to leverage this collective giving moment.

The How:

With a one-stop online platform, donors can find local nonprofits, matches made available by the community foundation, and donate in ways meaningful to them—including through a DAF!



They grew from raising \$65,000 in the first year to over \$500,000 today, boosted by matches and prizes that incentivize giving. The Foundation provides training in marketing, fundraising, and donor engagement, helping nonprofits connect with new supporters. Community participation is strong—more than 2,000 donors gave last year, with gifts starting at just \$10—while many others contributed through their DAFs and foundation endowments.

The Opportunity:

- Local nonprofits receive mentorship, tools, and year round network of contemporaries.
- The foundation builds trust, relationships, capacity for the sector, and increases the donors of its services.
- Donors have an easy way to give back and be a part of a local collective giving movement.
- And the community benefits from the social capital, ideas collaborations and collective impact created year-round.



RICHLAND COUNTY
FOUNDATION

Maura's advice for getting started:

1. Have the support of leadership on the board.
2. Start small! Work with just a handful of partners to educate and get people on board - it takes a few years to reach a tipping point.
3. Find your passionate cheerleader on the team and dedicate staff capacity to do this work - it's worth it!



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Self-Reflection: What is the potential value of a Giving Day for your foundation? What challenges do you anticipate? How much time and coordination would it take?

Action Activity: Sketch a simple plan for a Giving Day:

- Cause:
- Target audience:
- Timeframe:
- Communication channels:
- Partners or sponsors:

Module 4: Place-Based Initiatives

Place-based initiatives aim to improve quality of life and access to opportunity for people who live in neighborhoods, cities, and rural communities experiencing disinvestment.

Definition: *Place-based strategies* focus on collaboration among organizations to achieve broader goals than any one group could reach alone.

Self Reflection: What are 2-3 key community challenges in your region that could benefit from a place-based approach? What role could your foundation play: convener, funder, planner?

A successful place-based philanthropy strategy requires the following three components as shared by the Milken Institute*:

- 1) “Laser focus on systems change. For a problem as complex as poverty, for example, addressing it at the local level may be the best bet for creating transformative change. Understanding the particular context and focusing on the specific needs of the community can help you deploy a targeted, flexible, and comprehensive set of approaches to the problem at hand. The result is often a win-win combination of community-anchored systems change.”



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2) “Deep listening and partnership. A place-based approach allows philanthropists to create more easily the conditions for meaningful listening and engagement with communities. Time and again, social change experts stress the necessity of community participation, buy-in, and trust for a philanthropic effort to be successful. Demonstrating a long-term commitment to an area is one way to build that trust and partner with communities.”

3) “Experimentation, learning, and innovation. Donors, together with the community, can innovate and experiment with bold solutions. Indeed, philanthropy’s role is to be innovative, make mistakes, and to adapt and evolve. Compared to other funders such as governments and private investors, philanthropists are not tied to performance or investment return criteria. Therefore, philanthropists can provide funding that is catalytic, risk-taking, and patient, but not permanent.”

Three strategic recommendations:

1. Embrace complexity.
2. Support both results and infrastructure.
3. Enable key partner participation.

Self-Reflection: What trade-offs might be needed when multiple organizations work toward a shared goal?

Module 5: Matching Gift Campaigns, Scholarships and Giving Circles

Matching gifts encourage donations by offering to double (or partially match) contributions up to a certain amount.

Action Activity: Plan a small-scale matching campaign by considering the following:

- Donor offering the match:
- Timeframe:
- Cause or fund:
- Target audience:
- Communications:

Scholarship Funds provide financial support to students based on criteria set by the fund. Scholarship programs can be integral to community foundations, emphasizing youth development and educational advancement. These initiatives not only support students but also enhance public awareness of the foundation's mission and resources, potentially attracting contributions from a broad spectrum of the community.



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Giving Circles are groups of individuals who pool resources and decide together how to allocate funds.

Case Study: Hawaii Community Foundation

“The Kūki’o Community Fund grew out of a shared belief in the value of partnership and a common desire to connect with and support our local community. We believe in working together to really make a difference rather than just going it alone.” – Grant Heidrich

Kūki’o residents and local community leaders volunteer their wisdom, time and funds to lead the growth and oversee the grants of the fund. The committee is led and facilitated by Hawai’i Community Foundation staff members who provide a local, professionally managed, and cost-effective mechanism for the fund’s grantmaking and operations.

Kūki’o Community Fund was housed for 20 years with their community foundation and is now a standalone 501(c)(3).

Self-Reflection:

- What was effective about the strategy?
- Could this be adapted for your community?
- What administrative resources are needed?



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Module 6: Disaster Relief and Recovery

Disaster response can be a crucial responsibility for community foundations.

Case Study: Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky

Region: Central Appalachia

Sector: Community Development, Economic Development

Shifting control back into the hands of local leaders

The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky is consistently shifting control back into the hands of local leaders. Since its founding in 2008, the foundation has pioneered decision-making models that allow communities to establish a shared vision, define priority activities, and guide philanthropic investment into tangible assets and increased capacity.

In recent years, this model has proved to be effective in helping the community respond to natural disasters, particularly the 2022 East Kentucky Flood. The foundation has mobilized communities to raise local funds, rebuild towns, and address the impact of extreme weather by physically moving homes and businesses to safer locations.

The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky meets communities where they are instead of telling them where they should be and the results of this approach are showing, from revitalized Main Streets to more confident leaders.





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Self-Reflection:

- Has your community faced a crisis recently?
- How could your foundation support relief and recovery in a way that is timely and well-organized?
- What are your limits—financial, staffing, infrastructure?

Conclusion

You've completed the session on cause-based fundraising strategies.

Next Steps:

- Review your notes.
- Share ideas with your team or board.
- Identify one strategy to explore further this quarter.

Final Reflection:

- Which strategy felt most aligned with your community foundation's strengths?
- What is one small action you can take this week to begin exploring that strategy?