

National Recovery Month

Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover

FUNDRAISING

Tips & Tools

Hosting a campaign to raise money, also known as fundraising, is important to a campaign's growth for many reasons. It helps you establish and maintain relationships with fellow organizations, provides you with resources to help others, and enables you to carry out your **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** activities throughout the year. The **Recovery Month Toolkit**, **Recovery Month website**, and the steps listed in this guide offer a variety of resources to plan your organization's fundraising efforts.

You will learn about different types of [funding sources](#), [tips for successful fundraising](#), fundraising [online](#), and how to use [letters and mailings](#) to raise funds – including customizable [template letters](#).

For most organizations, identifying donors is the first step when raising money to hold your **Recovery Month** event. Some of the more popular sources for funding include individuals (family, friends, and colleagues), grants, businesses, and State and local governments. Remember, when reaching out to potential sources of support, you should highlight the importance of prevention and treatment for mental and/or substance use disorders. Throughout the fundraising process, remember to communicate key motivators. Ask yourself what will inspire an organization or individual to be a part of your **Recovery Month** movement? The answer may include:

- A charitable nature and the need to be of service;
- A sense of satisfaction and helping a cause;
- An allegiance to a community's well-being;
- A personal connection to mental and/or substance use disorders; and
- A belief that your organization can truly make a difference.

Also, keep in mind that donations can come in different forms – money, volunteered time, supplies, etc. Your “ask” should convey a sense of urgency and indicate that your organization is efficient in its operation.

Types of Funding Sources and Annual Giving

- **Individuals** tend to be the greatest source of funding for nonprofits. By voicing your commitment to prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders, you can motivate members of your community to donate in support of your mission.
- **Grants** are typically provided by institutions that have endowments for grants, such as governments and businesses, among others. Many grants are awarded nationally, but they can be time-consuming and difficult to acquire; some

grants are available at the local level and might require a less-extensive effort. Securing a grant can require different types of proposals, but most proposals call for the same basic information: project or proposal summary, body of the proposal (introduction, needs, project goals/objectives, methodology, and evaluation), target sources for future funding, budget proposal, strengths of the project and organization, and conclusion.

- **Corporations and businesses** can be a good source for supporting special events, campaigns, and projects. Often, local entities are willing to help either through staff volunteers or by contributing items such as gift certificates and special items (e.g., gift baskets and discounts), as they are also able to gain exposure from participating in **Recovery Month** activities. Philanthropic acts can instill pride within an organization, strengthen ties to the community, and serve as a testimony to the corporation's willingness to give back.
- **State and local governments** are additional resources, as they will sometimes help fund activities that benefit communities in their areas or offer to send an official to participate. Reach out to your representatives, city council, board of supervisors, and other government entities for support.

To develop your **Recovery Month** fundraising outreach plan, you may need to tap all of these types of funding sources. Create a list where you consider all prospective donors and evaluate their financial abilities and their willingness to contribute to their maximum potential. Depending on your timing and needs, you may need to refine it to a list of probable donors. Determine how likely they are to get involved, identify any common connections, and build on shared interests to maximize your success.

All fundraising campaigns take time and effort. The tips and tools provided below will help you transform your potential funding sources into active donors and participants by engaging them in a number of ways: through events, online, and direct-mail efforts.

Things To Remember In Successful Fundraising

- **Identify your purpose.** Fundraising can have multiple outcomes outside of raising money for your **Recovery Month** event. You may wish to gain visibility for your organization, or to use your fundraiser as a platform to form new partnerships. Defining the purpose and goal(s) will be key as you determine the most appropriate fundraising approach.
- **Create your fundraising plan.** A thorough fundraising plan outlines how much you need to raise, how you will reach your goal, what steps are needed at each milestone, and who you can solicit for donations (e.g., local businesses, individuals, corporations and State and local governments). For example, if your organization wants to raise \$10,000, your plan could consist of applying for a \$10,000 grant or raising \$5,000 through online contributions and sending letters to local business to secure the remaining \$5,000.
- **Secure a committee for your fundraiser.** Depending on how much money you want to raise, you may want to consider organizing a committee to oversee details. Committee members should be assigned specific responsibilities (e.g., create donor lists, handle collection of funds, etc.) and provide updates to the larger organization.
- **Say thank you.** Make sure to thank everyone who contributed to donating funds. Send an email message, thank you note, or post special recognition in your organization's newsletter or website.

Fundraising Online

Fundraising online can offer a great way to expand your donor base and increase awareness about your organization and its mission. You can also combine online fundraising with traditional fundraising. In this section, you will find important information that will help you prepare, plan, and promote your online fundraising efforts.

To get started:

- **Prepare your online presence.** Establish on your organization's web page a place where you will be accepting donations. To do this, you will need to have your Webmaster incorporate a platform for you to accept donations through the site. Companies, such as *PayPal*, can provide a secure way to have visitors donate to the campaign online (note: you may have to sign up for a personal or business account). Also be sure that your organization's social media platforms are up-to-date, such as Facebook and Twitter, so you are ready to promote your fundraising efforts online.
- **Check local laws.** Understand the laws for online fundraising in your State. To accept online donations, you must be registered in most States from which you accept donations. For instance, if your organization is based in California, you need to be registered in California to receive donations from California residents. If you plan to receive donations from people who live in other States, you must also register in their States to receive their donations. *The IRS and other sources have links to several important tools to help organizations who are interested in fundraising online, which include:*
 - The IRS *list* of State registration requirements for charities; and
 - Guidestar, an *online resource* for non-profit organizations, has a "dos and don'ts" guide for online fundraising.

Following are some additional tips for online fundraising:

- **Plan your online communication strategy.** Spend time to develop messages and determine how frequently you want to contact your audiences about your online fundraiser. The acceptable number of frequent online messages will vary depending on your relationship with the members in the online platforms, fundraising timeline, and the aggressiveness of your campaign. Make sure each message is clear and takes into consideration any previous messages that were distributed.
- **Be specific.** Tell your audience why they should follow your link and donate. Communicate your organization's specific fundraising goal and the time in which you'd like to reach your goal. Also include how donations will benefit your organization and the community.
- **Use your organization's website to create awareness.** Add information about your fundraiser and links to your fundraising page on your organization's main website.
- **Enlist support from your members.** Ask your members and other supporters to blog about your online fundraiser. If your group has its own blog, you can post updates about the fundraiser. Also ask members to post Facebook and Twitter messages about the fundraiser.
- **Include information about your online fundraiser in promotional materials.** Use space in your organization's newsletters or other communications to promote your online fundraising efforts.

Fundraising Through Letters

Letters and mailings can generate awareness and donations while highlighting your involvement in **Recovery Month**. Letters can be sent to a large number of people, or only a select few, depending on who you think may be most likely to donate. It is important to keep your audience in mind when drafting your materials. By making letters personal, you are able to connect and grab people's attention. When reaching out to local groups, you can link **Recovery Month** to your community by providing local statistics or quoting individuals and families who have been affected by mental and/or substance use disorders and are now in recovery.

Following are three types of fundraising letters you can send to solicit donations:

- **Request for Financial Donations** – Asks the reader to respond by making a financial contribution.
- **Sponsorship Requests** – Sent to specific individuals or businesses that may be interested in sponsorship, such as underwriting charity events. Often, this proposal offers some type of benefit to the donor, such as advertising opportunities at your **Recovery Month** event or online.
- **Request for Services and Goods** – Frequently used to obtain donations that will be used as door prizes, raffles, or auctions at your **Recovery Month** event.

Tips for Making Your Letter Compelling

- Imagine you are writing to one person when crafting your letter to make it more personal. Personalize your letter to a specific donor or group of donors by including information that is related to them, such as referencing an activity they've previously been involved with.
- Keep it simple and focus on the information that is most relevant to your reader. For instance, open with a brief overview of your organization and why you are writing.
- Be specific and detail how the donation will be used. Include the positive results it will bring to individuals, families, and your community.
- Include personal stories to show how behavioral health issues affect all types of individuals and families.
- Use statistics to highlight and demonstrate the impact of mental and/or substance use disorders across the country and in your State. ***The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)***, issued by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, provides information on the prevalence, patterns, and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use and abuse in the United States.

Sample *Recovery Month* Fundraising Letter

[Name of Organization & Address on Letterhead]

[Date]

[Address of Donor]

Dear [Name]:

Each year [name of your organization] strives to advance the cause of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. Once again, we are generating community support and awareness by being a part of this year's **Recovery Month** theme, "[insert current theme]."

Individuals and families right here in [insert city name] are affected by mental and/or substance use disorders each day. For instance, [insert story of someone affected by the issue or helped by your organization].

Every person affected by behavioral health issues has a reason to celebrate their story and accomplishments, and they can help others who may be in need of treatment.

To promote the benefits of prevention and treatment, we are planning a **Recovery Month** event on [insert date]. To make this happen, we're asking for your financial support. Your donation to [insert name of organization] will go towards hosting this important event and bringing the community together. Please submit your donation by [insert website, event information, or mailing address].

Your contributions can positively influence the recovery community, and we hope we can count on your help!

With great appreciation,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]