



Challenge Match 2021 – Annual Fundraising Plan Guide

What is an annual fundraising plan and why is it needed?

A fundraising plan is a document that organizes all of your fundraising activities over a certain period of time - most commonly over one year. These strategic plans generally include, but are not limited to, a combination of the following:

- **Fundraising goal(s):** Goals can include your total fundraising goal, a donor retention benchmark, or even a total number of new donors you hope to acquire.
- **Organization mission/message:** What your organization shares to the general public and/or its base of donors.
- **Timeline:** Key dates associated with communications, events, benchmarks, or other fundraising plans or initiatives.
- **Fundraising methods and strategies:** The initiatives your organization will use to attain your goal.
- **Donor management:** How your organization acknowledges, stewards, and tracks your donors.
- **Special event details:** If your organization holds special a fundraising event, include any associated details, expectations, or goals for the event(s).

Annual fundraising plans are necessary to ensure that your organization has a stated goal, and that the goal is clearly communicated to appropriate parties (such as your staff and board members). They can also help an organization's sustainability by allowing for innovation or adaptation on a year-to-year basis by more critically examining what was effective and what was less effective.

Fundraising plans do not have to be a comprehensive document. As you will find, there is no standard fundraising plan template, but rather a wide array of approaches that best suit a variety of organization types and sizes. A 1-2 page summation works for many organizations!

'A fundraising plan that's 80% complete but 100% implemented will always outperform the plan that never gets put in place.'

-Sandy Rees, Founder, *Get Fully Funded*

What should be considered before creating a new fundraising plan?

Before you create your 2021-2022 fundraising plan, first review any data from your organization's past year or last fundraising plan. What fundraising methods worked, what didn't and why? Many organizations utilize SMART goals when setting fundraising benchmarks. SMART goals are:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound.

Other than just an overall fundraising goal, a SMART goal can also be applied to new donor acquisition, communications benchmarks, or organizational awareness.

A SWOT analysis can also be performed ahead of creating a fundraising plan and goal. A SWOT analysis includes your organization identifying your:

- **Strengths:** What are your most successful initiatives and campaigns?
- **Weaknesses:** In which areas could your organization invest more time to meet its fundraising goals?
- **Opportunities:** What uncharted areas are ripe with possibility? Is there any 'low-hanging fruit' your organization could go after?
- **Threats:** The best way to prepare for worst case scenarios is to imagine them. Brainstorm what lurks in the shadows and consider how you might respond in the face of a threat.

It is also important to evaluate your resources and determine what is available to help you during this year's campaign. Assessing your available resources will help you to set strategic annual fundraising goals and prioritize fundraising methods.

Resources to consider include but aren't limited to:

- **Budget**
 - **Staff**
 - **Volunteers**
 - **Available donor data**
 - **Preexisting relationships with partners and donors**
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