



## *FSD Best Practices: Advice for Partner Agencies on Staffing & Fundraising*

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### **STAFFING**

*Find great volunteers and interns by: building relationships with schools, churches, and other agencies/resource centers in your area to make the necessary connections; engaging with your community in unique ways to build brand presence; and attracting people to be invested in your agency's mission. Keep great volunteers and interns by: training them well in the beginning; making them feel like an integral part of the organization; and giving them autonomy over their work and direct access to clients so they can see their impact on the community.*

#### **Additional Advice**

- Provide the proper tools and a comfortable workplace for your volunteers. Easy access to coffee and snacks will make them feel at home. Most importantly, make sure they understand the job they are being asked to do.
- Develop programs that mobilize young people in your community (high school students) to volunteer, raise funds, or do research for your organization
- Connect with local churches to find rotating volunteer groups that can schedule consistent shifts, and designate one person as a lead to be a liaison between your agency and their group
- Engage in your community in creative ways to create name and brand recognition, you will attract quality donors and volunteers if you invest your time this way (e.g. community fairs, library presence, etc.)
- Dedicate a staff member as a Volunteer Manager or Leader, and disseminate publications/recognition specifically for volunteers to make them feel included in the organization as a whole (consider hiring from client base for these positions as they will be most passionate about your work)
- Connect with local schools to find solid volunteer bases and connect the school to the larger community
- Give volunteers direct access to clients often and allow them autonomy to create new ideas and programs to implement, this gives them additional stake in the mission

### **FUNDRAISING**

*Find creative ways to fundraise by mobilizing certain demographics to an element of your mission or by hosting events that will draw a different constituency. Thank donors ASAP, and update them on where their money is going regularly. Lend out your facility to companies for meetings for a small fee, or find a service your agency can provide to the community and use the profit to fund your programs.*

#### **Additional Advice**

- Contact large food companies (like Kelloggs, etc.) and ask for samples or donations to your pantry/programs
- Lend your facility to companies for meetings and events and charge a small fee or ask for donations
- Host creative fundraising events in the community that will attract new donors and the public
- Recognize donors and volunteers in external publications/visual displays in your facility; host appreciation events to keep loyal volunteers and donors
- If possible, identify a service your agencies clients, staff, or volunteers may be able to provide to the public and use profits to fund your programs
- Identify a special population or cause that you are passionate about and own it, use this work to find unique and unengaged donors in the community
- Include a donate button on your website to make it as easy as possible
- Thank the donors ASAP (here at FSD we strive to send a letter in the mail within 72 hours of receipt)
- Steward donors! It's easier to keep donors than it is to acquire them. Send them updates as to how the money is being used and what you are able to do because of them
- Create an email list for stakeholders and create specific campaigns, use the list to ask for donations
- Make sure you have a social media presence to build brand recognition and attract new donors
- If you ask for food, be specific: ask for the things people really need, like baby formula, canned meat, etc.
- Ask spiritual leaders, local politicians, and other leaders to mention your drive in their sermons, speeches, and other public forms of communication.
- Organize a phone-a-thon staffed by volunteers and/or employees. Call all of your contacts.

### **How to ask large donors for money:**

Brainstorming with your stakeholders can help you identify potential sources for funding, especially if one of your board members or volunteers has a contact. Do your homework before you spend any time writing a grant. In particular, make sure your program fits the funder's guidelines. Grant writing is only part of the process of raising money from foundations or corporations. Cultivation of an ongoing professional relationship with a funder is the other part of the equation that equals success. Funders need to know you and what you do in order to be your partners and allies. They need to be kept informed and acknowledged for their support on a regular basis. When cultivating relationships with foundations and corporations, try to speak to someone (such as a program officer or a community relations manager) at a foundation or corporation before and after you submit a proposal. Prepare your questions and information very carefully. Offer a site visit if appropriate. Get your board members or their contacts to open doors.