

# INDIVIDUAL GIVING



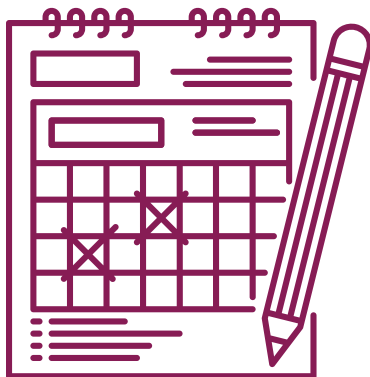
**Creating a strategy for individual giving is key to building a strong base of support for your organization. A strategically planned series of activities designed to establish and nurture a broad base of donor support helps ensure your organization's mission can be fulfilled.**

**Building long-term relationships with donors over time may take some initial investment and energy; but it pays off, generating a steady and sustainable stream of annual income. This revenue source will be secured through a variety of components, staged at different times throughout the year.**

# CREATING A FUNDRAISING PLAN

## Set a Goal for Individual Giving

Using your budget and income reports from previous years (if available), your organization will have a general idea of how much revenue you need and where it's traditionally come from over the years. If you secured \$25,000 in individual donations the previous year, it is not unreasonable to assume you could do that again this year. You may even be able to increase your goal, depending on the resources you have available (e.g. time, skills and expertise). Setting a goal will give you a benchmark you can use to gauge progress and determine if you need to adjust your strategy.



## CREATE AN ANNUAL PLAN

Your organization should provide donors with opportunities to give multiple times a year—typically two larger campaigns, one occurring in the spring and one in either the fall or closer to the end of the calendar year.

Things to consider:

- Add a **quiet phase** to the front end of your campaign; this is when you try to garner as much support from close supporters (e.g. long-time donors, board members, volunteers, etc.) before launching to the general public. Wouldn't

it be great to start the campaign with 25–50% of the goal already met? Doing so removes some pressure and helps build momentum.

- Create donor segments that you can tailor your messaging to; consider using groupings such as date of last gift or gift size. Some examples:
  1. Previous donors that haven't given this year. "Thank you for your previous support—can we count on you this year?"
  2. Monthly donors. "Your ongoing support builds a foundation for our organization to advance our mission."
  3. Donors who give annually. "As a regular supporter of our organization, would you consider becoming a monthly donor?"
- Holidays relevant to your organization—can they be built into your campaign plans or, conversely, they might be something to avoid completely.
- Include stewardship into your plan (Visit the [Stewardship 101](#) section to learn more).

## SAMPLE PLAN

On the following page you'll find a sample plan using some of Women Unite!'s (WU!) annual activities. You'll see how, in addition to fundraising and stewardship touches, we use events and broader communications like impact reports and newsletters to work together to build relationships with people, connect them to our work, and engage them so they're ready to give.

Once people give, these events and broader communications are ways to deepen relationships with the work so they stay connected as donors and are primed to give more/give again.

## JANUARY

**Release annual report** highlighting work from previous year; post on website, social media, and any outgoing newsletter/eblasts. Send a personalized email with a link to your report or a handwritten note with a hard copy of a report to top donors as a way to deepen your relationship with them.

- **Q1 Newsletter:** Include impact report, WU!'s hopes for the upcoming year, and connect readers with upcoming events

## FEBRUARY

**Stewardship touch** for current/recent donors. For example, WU! sends out an annual Valentine's Day postcard as a "love letter" to our supporters.

## EARLY SPRING/LATE WINTER

**Outreach Event:** WU! uses these to engage our board, donors, etc. and build community. We do a drive or some sort of volunteer event with a nonprofit in our network.

## MARCH

**Begin silent phase of campaign**, privately asking those closest to the organization to become monthly donors (e.g. board members, regular volunteers, those who give more than once a year, those who have given consistently over the past 1–3 years).

## APRIL

**Launch public campaign** to secure 20 new monthly donors

- **Q2 Newsletter:** Highlight current campaign and announce upcoming spring event

## MAY

Report on campaign results and **send thank yous** to donors. During this time we also announce our incoming partners, the three organizations we'll be providing free support to for the next 12 months.

## SPRING EVENT

*Plantasia:* This WU! event is a **fundraiser**—but more than that it's a chance to connect, enjoy warmer weather post-winter. It's also a chance for folks to meet our partners for the upcoming year.

## JUNE/JULY:

**Release a Mid-Year report** highlighting the first half of the year, showing impact to donors/potential donors

- July: **Q3 Newsletter:** Link to Mid-Year report with a summary version, announce *#WUCrewSummer* events

## SUMMER EVENT

*#WUCrewSummer*—Another **fundraiser/outreach event**. Fun, celebratory, opportunities to connect, enjoy life, and support a cause while enjoying all that summer in Chicago has to offer.

## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

**Stewardship touch** for current donors—make sure to include any new donors acquired since the last campaign. Remember, these touches don't need to be grand, expensive gestures. It's all about doing something thoughtful. This could be a personal email with a highlight about your programs and/or impact story.

## EARLY FALL

**Outreach Event:** Another opportunity to connect via a drive or volunteer event.

## OCTOBER

**Q4 newsletter and fall stewardship touch** (WU! does spooky/scary Halloween themed graphics).

## NOVEMBER

**Begin silent phase of campaign**, privately asking those closest to your organization to help you reach your \$10,000 goal. Examples include folks who are monthly donors, who attend your events, and who give regularly throughout the year, etc.

- **Giving Tuesday:** Soft launch of end-of year campaign; goal to raise \$1,000 in 24 hours
- **Holiday Event:** Wellness activity
- **Holiday Stewardship:** WU! does an annual holiday card

## DECEMBER

Public launch of **end-of-year campaign**

## JANUARY

Report on campaign results, **send thank yous**; **Release annual report** highlighting work from the previous year.

**REPEAT OR ADJUST ACCORDINGLY FOR THE NEXT YEAR!**

# CREATING CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Here are the items WU! recommends in order to successfully implement an online campaign:

## COPY

- Updated for website/donation page that matches with the campaign's goal/themes
- For e-newsletters—these are typically what we refer to as a *soft ask*: we highlight that a campaign is happening, and that if people want to give, they can.
- For eblasts to go out once a week during the campaign's duration and for corresponding weekly social media.
- For a thank you eblast to go out in the week after campaign ends and for corresponding social media copy.

## □ HANDWRITTEN NOTES

We recommend these as a personalized touch. However, if the number of handwritten thank yous is an unsustainable amount because you're getting so many donors, you can do handwritten notes to a specific segment (e.g. donors who give \$100 or more) to make it more manageable. Another option is sending everyone the standard, printed thank you with a quick handwritten note in the margins of the letter on a select few.

## □ TOOLKIT

This is for the organization's board of directors to use to solicit their own networks, including instructions, copy for personalized emails and talking points.

## □ CAMPAIGN GRAPHICS

For website, social media, eblast headers, etc.

## □ IMPACT STORIES, GRAPHICS, ETC.

Focused on tugging at the heartstrings as well as more concrete stats and figures. Videos are also a great option. They don't need to be professional, sleek, or long. They can be simple, quick videos of supporters sharing why they give and why they care. Or they can be short clips of people who have been positively impacted by your organization's work.



# SAMPLE PROJECT TIMELINE

**Let's use the spring monthly donor campaign mentioned in the Sample Plan on page 3 to drill into what the campaign timeline might look like.**

## QUIET PHASE OF CAMPAIGN

### March 15

Send an email to the Board of Directors, informing them of the campaign's goal and to ask them to reach out to their own networks. Provide them with a toolkit—email language they can copy, paste, and personalize when reaching out.

### March 20

Send a personal email from the Executive Director to current (and perhaps recent) one-time donors, telling them about the upcoming campaign goal to secure 20 new monthly donors. Ask if they would consider becoming a monthly donor now to help the organization start the campaign strong.

### March 29

Send another email to current one-time donors, reminding them of the public launch on April 3. Give them an update “Thanks to you all, we're starting the campaign with 5 new monthly donors—can we get two more before the launch next week?”

## LAUNCH OF PUBLIC PHASE

### April 3

Announce the campaign via email to your entire list of supporters—friends, donors, past donors, etc. Post on social media.

## UPDATE ON CAMPAIGN

### April 11

Provide email and social media updates on the status of the campaign to create excitement and urgency. Highlight the impact of monthly donors and use this as an opportunity to share more about the work your organization does.

### April 18

Provide additional updates on the campaign and highlight the impact monthly donors will have on your organization's success. This can be done through a combination of stats and/or stories.

## THERE'S STILL TIME (OR STRETCH GOAL!)

### April 25

Remind constituents of the approaching last day of the campaign, and that they still can help toward reaching the goal. If the goal has been met, don't be afraid to set a stretch goal. “We have 20 new monthly donors—can we get 3 more before April 30?”

## THANK YOU/RESULTS

### May 2

Send out an email and social media post thanking donors, and announcing the results of the campaign.

# BOARD KIT

Having board members reach out personally during campaigns can be a huge help. Make it easier for them by providing some talking points as well as email templates that they can copy, paste, and customize to their liking.

## Sample Board Kit

# EMAIL TEMPLATE #1

Subject: Be a lifeline for your community

Dear **[Recipient's Name]**,

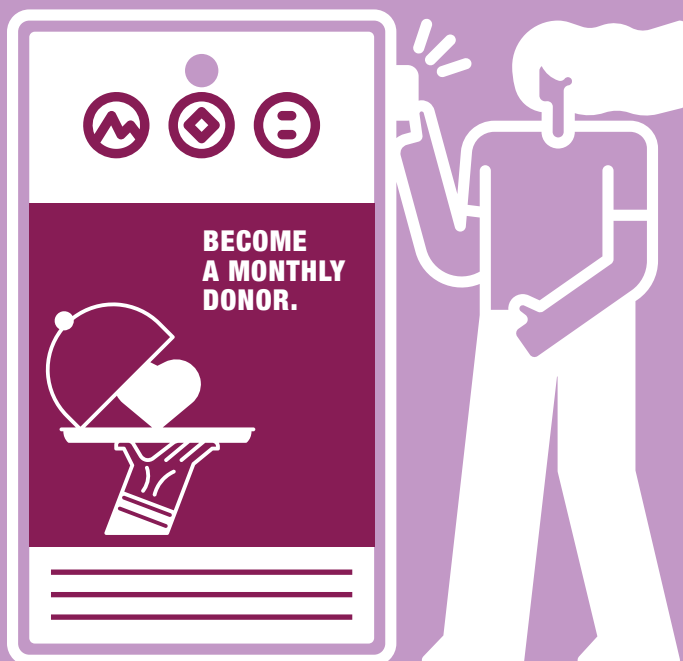
**[Introduction]** We are excited to announce the launch of our new campaign aimed at making a lasting impact on our community. Our mission to provide food security to those in need has always been driven by the support of compassionate individuals like you. Today, we're reaching out with an invitation to become a vital part of our journey as a recurring monthly donor. **[link to donation page]**

**[Impact of support]** At the heart of our mission lies a commitment to ensuring that no one in our community goes to bed hungry. Over the years, we've worked tirelessly to provide nutritious meals to individuals and families, but there is still much more to be done **[add a basic stat about hunger in your area]**. With your generosity, we can amplify our efforts and reach even more people who are struggling to access basic sustenance. **[Add a note about your organization's impact and how you're helping solve the problem.]**

**[Campaign goal]** To achieve our mission's goals, we have set a target of welcoming 20 new monthly donors this month. **[Importance of monthly giving]** Becoming a monthly donor allows you to make a consistent impact throughout the year. Your support will provide a steady foundation upon which we can build sustainable programs, expand our outreach, and plan for the future.

**[Thank you]** No matter the amount, every dollar adds up and transforms into tangible change—thank you.

**BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR** **[link to donation page]**



## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST #1

We are excited to announce the launch of our new campaign aimed at making a lasting impact on our community. Our mission to provide food security to those in need has always been driven by the support of compassionate individuals like you. Become a vital part of our journey as a recurring monthly donor. **[link to donation page]**

# EMAIL TEMPLATE #2

Subject: Make an impact, one meal at a time

Dear **[Recipient's Name]**,

As we near the end of our campaign to secure new monthly donors for our mission of providing food security to our community, we wanted to extend one final invitation to you. Your support has the potential to make an enduring impact on the lives of those in need, and we believe that together, we can achieve remarkable change. **[Campaign goal]** In fact, we only need 4 more donors to reach our goal of 20 monthly donors by April 30.

**[Impact of support]** In these final days of our campaign, we want to emphasize the urgency of our mission. Thirty-two percent of individuals in our community are still grappling with food insecurity—an issue that demands immediate attention. Your decision to join as a recurring monthly donor could mean the difference between another night of uncertainty and a meal on the table for someone who needs it. **[Link to give]**

**[Importance of monthly giving]** By becoming a monthly donor, you become a beacon of hope for families and individuals facing food insecurity. Your consistent contributions help us plan for the future, create sustainable solutions, and ensure that our community members have access to nourishing meals when they need them most. **[Include a personal story or quote from someone your organization has helped.]**

**[Thank you]** Your support does not go unnoticed. Every meal provided, every smile sparked, and every sense of relief experienced by those who benefit from your generosity is a testament to the profound difference you're making. Thank you.

**BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR** **[link to donation page]**

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST #2

We only need 4 more donors to reach our goal of 20 monthly donors by April 30. Can you help? By becoming a monthly donor, you become a beacon of hope for families and individuals facing food insecurity. Your consistent contributions help us plan for the future, create sustainable solutions, and ensure that our community members have access to nourishing meals when they need them most. Sign up today → **[link to donation page]**



# SAMPLE NEWSLETTER COPY

We are excited to announce the launch of our new campaign aimed at making a lasting impact on our community. With a goal of securing 20 new monthly donors, together we're building a steady foundation upon which we can build sustainable programs, expand our outreach, and plan for the future. To learn more or to become a monthly donor, [visit our website](#).

# SAMPLE WEBSITE COPY

One month. Twenty new monthly donors. Lasting impact. Together we're building a steady foundation upon which we can build sustainable programs, expand our outreach, and plan for the future—learn more and consider joining the cause as a monthly donor today. [\[link to campaign page\]](#)

## EMAIL TEMPLATE #3 (THANK YOU)

Subject: Together we've achieved our goal!

Dear [\[Recipient's Name\]](#),

We are thrilled to share some exciting news with you—we've reached a significant milestone in our campaign to secure new monthly donors for our mission of providing food security to our community.

**Thanks to your unwavering support and the dedication of our community, we have successfully welcomed 20 new monthly donors on board!**

This achievement is a testament to the power of collective action and the impact that each individual can make when they join together for a common cause. Your belief in our mission and your commitment to creating positive change have played an instrumental role in reaching this goal.

Whether you've been with us for years or if this is your first time joining our cause, your support has made a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and families facing food insecurity. Thank you for standing by us and making this achievement possible. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

With heartfelt appreciation,

[\[Executive Director\]](#)

[\[Organization Name\]](#)



