

Fundraising

Creating a comprehensive development plan is essential to the long-term success of your clinic. Developing this plan is the joint responsibility of the Executive Director and Board of Directors. Raising charitable dollars is competitive and requires a well-informed and well-executed plan. Your development plan will create a road map of clinic needs to ensure financial health and sustainability.

The following elements are essential:

- A fundraising chairperson and committee to work closely with the executive director and/or development director
- A well-designed one year budget
- A proposed 1-3 year budget
- Designated dates for the fiscal year
- Timeline for your fundraising plan
- Current funding base (money already committed)
- Identification of funding sources
- Case statement

Investors in your clinic will want to see your development plan as a major part of your overall business plan. They will want assurance you have considered the long-term needs for clinic sustainability, not simply the startup phase. There should be careful consideration concerning the various funding sources available:

- Local and National Foundations

Information about most foundations is readily available and covers what type of charities they are inclined to support, how to make application for funding, by what date you should do so, and when money is dispersed. Typically grants and gifts from foundations require a significant amount of lead-time and formal nonprofit recognition by the IRS. Though time consuming and difficult to maneuver, foundation gifts can be very lucrative, and some even renew annually. Remember, while you may appear to fit the criteria for a national foundation grant, such support generally comes only after cultivation and relationship building.

- Government Grants

Healthcare is a primary concern of government grants and can be lucrative. State Associations of Free and Charitable Clinics are great sources of information about government grants.

- Local businesses

The corporate and small business community can be valuable source of funding for your clinic.

- Individuals

Individual donors are often the most valuable and accessible source of funding for charitable clinics. Allow adequate time and include the entire Board of Directors in preparing a Priority Prospect List of individuals likely to invest in the ongoing work of the clinic. A good priority prospect list should include names and an estimated amount of the person's capability of giving. This list should incorporate a broad base of possible investors, that is, a good mixture of large and small contributions. Planned giving should be considered for those individuals who care to make a significant contribution to the clinic from their life's assets.

You should attempt to establish a balanced mix of recommended income sources to cultivate stable funding base.

Fundraising events can be a good source of income, however these types of events require a huge amount of preparation to plan and execute, and should supplement – not replace – primary fundraising. Fundraising calls to large investors take less time and yield greater returns than fundraising events. These events may also serve as “friend-raisers,” but if that is your purpose, you should be clear on goals and anticipated outcomes.