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Fundraising: Recruiting Volunteers to Conduct Funder Prospect Research

Advantages

- Helps identify potential funders to support your work
- Deepens the volunteer's understanding of funding challenges and the nature of non-profit work
- Can be accomplished remotely, from any location with internet access

Challenges

- You must be able to share program information with your volunteer
- Volunteers need both a clear understanding of your work and how to search for relevant funders
- Identifying potential funders is no guarantee of actual funding, you will still need to follow-up and apply

Steps to Success

1. Discuss potential volunteer activities with existing development staff (if you have one)

- What are your target funding sources?
- Are there specific funding gaps you need to fill (general operating, new projects, administrative, etc.)?

2. Set goals for volunteer research

- How many prospects do you want each volunteer to identify?

3. Create compelling job description

- Include details of the position, skills needed, skills that will be developed, benefits of the position
- Include the time commitment expected

4. Post and advertise opportunity

- List on online volunteer sites such as hungervolunteer.org
- List in publications directed at fundraising professionals, universities, etc.

5. Meet with potential volunteers

- Ensure they have a clear understanding of the process, deliverables, and format expectations
- Share recent annual report to show the work you do and funding you look for

6. Establish research strategies and processes

- What tips or resources do you have to guide their work?
- How do you want their work documented or organized?
- How will you check in with them and maintain clear communication?

7. Compile deadlines, guidelines, and application procedures for prospect list

- Keep track of this in a spreadsheet to stay organized
- Make sure quickly approaching deadlines are communicated to development staff so they are not missed

8. Establish timeline to complete applications by assigned deadlines

- Do you want the volunteers to help apply for these funding opportunities?
- Delegate prospects to development staff and/or volunteers

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Funder Prospect Research Activity Worksheet for Volunteers

What departments in your organization are seeking funding?	What are your target funding types? (project development, material production, overhead expenses)	How much funding are you looking for in this specific department and/or funding type?

Volunteer Name:	How many prospects do you want them to identify?	What department and/or type of funding do you want them to focus on?

Funding source:	Who found this funding opportunity?	How much money is available?	What is the deadline to apply for funding?	Who will be overseeing the application process?	Date application was submitted: