

The complete guide to a nonprofit board fundraising report





CREATE AN ENGAGING FUNDRAISING REPORT FOR YOUR BOARD WITHOUT STRESS

Your nonprofit's board of directors plays a number of important roles. In addition to operational oversight, it plays—or should play—a critical external role for your organization. According to BoardSource, boards “struggle most with external responsibilities, including fundraising, advocacy, and community-building and outreach.”¹

The information staff leadership presents to the board can go a long way towards helping your board be engaged with these important areas, to the benefit of the organization. Yes, we're talking about the board report. You should report to your board on fundraising at every board meeting. But don't stress! By the time we're done, we trust you'll know how to design yours to be a critical tool for progress, rather than a chore.

¹boardsource.org/fundamental-topics-of-nonprofit-board-service/roles-responsibilities

ROLE OF THE FUNDRAISING REPORT

There's always a lot to cover, so your report should be concise and focused on what's important. Using charts and graphs to create an accessible, dashboard-style presentation which looks at the same metrics each time will help your board digest the material, stay focused on the most important factors, and build their understanding of your fundraising program over time.

A well-designed fundraising report to the board can accomplish several important goals:

- Focus board members on the mission-sustaining work of fundraising at every meeting.
- Ignite enthusiasm in your most important ambassadors and give board members key stories and "material" for marketing the organization to friends and prospects.
- Communicate the important things that have happened since the last board meeting, keeping board members up-to-date and feeling involved.
- Spark questions or raise issues that the board should discuss during the meeting.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING GOALS

As a development staff member, your over-arching goal is to raise funds. But simply knowing that does not help you determine what you should be doing with your time. To chart a path, you first need a clear destination. Setting goals for various aspects of your fundraising operation—both revenue and other types of goals—is a critical step to focusing on and improving your fundraising.

These goals should be clear, actionable, and grounded in your past experience. The acronym **SMART** is a reminder to set goals that are **specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound**. Work with your organization’s board leadership to get buy-in and finalize your goals together. This will have several benefits, including:

- Shared direction.
- A clear way to prioritize when new ideas arise.
- Stay focused on the most important goals and metrics which will help you avoid or reduce “I’m just curious, but...” extraneous information requests from board.

Does it feel too hard to set detailed goals right now? Don’t feel ready? Maybe your organization is brand new and doesn’t have history to draw from.

The first step is identifying a set of key metrics related to the direction you want to go and start tracking them. Then invent goals for them, using your best guesses. They won’t be super accurate. You may never get close to meeting them, or you may overshoot! Either way, you will have gained critical understanding that you could not have gotten without tracking towards goals. And next year’s goals will be much sharper.



WHAT TO MEASURE?

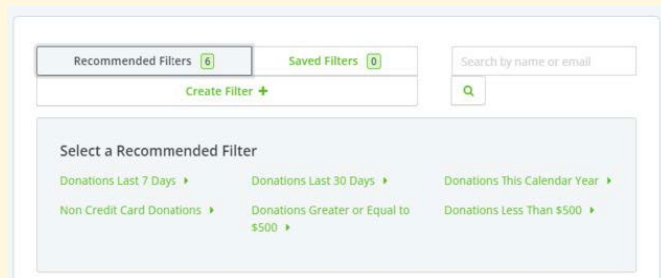
As you'll see in the model board report below, there is value in tracking both dollar figures and non-revenue goals.

There are a wide range of revenue metrics you can track. You don't need to track everything. Select those that are related to the main strategies you'll be using this year. They might include:

- Total giving.
- Average gift.
- Giving in specific gift ranges, such as under \$100, \$100-\$500, \$500-\$1000, \$1000+.
- Number of donors.
- New donors.
- Total pledge amounts.
- Types of donors such as individuals, businesses, and civic organizations.
- Donation opportunities like website gifts, social media campaigns, and events.

Similarly, set goals for and track those non-revenue metrics that are relate to your strategies around, for instance, growing your prospect list. These might include:

- New mailing list sign-ups.
- New social media followers.
- Social media engagement metrics.
- New volunteers.
- New event attendees.



Bonterra Donor Engagement's Guided Fundraising solution (formerly Network for Good) simple, smart fundraising software includes an intuitive reporting tool to help you pull this information easily.

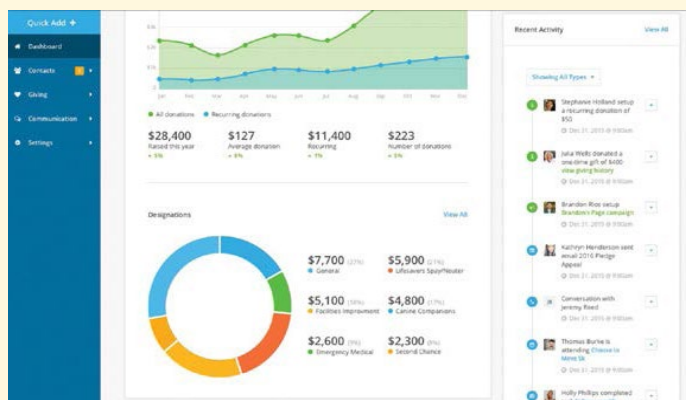
OTHER MATERIALS IN THE BOARD REPORT

This guide focuses on the fundraising report to the board, but the full board report will contain other important material to support the board's work. The board should get a concise update on every key function of your organization.

For example, most board reports will include a program update. For the animal rescue nonprofit in our model below, that might include the number of pets served by each of their programs compared to their goal for the year. (These can be an easy update of the statistics you shared in your Annual Report.)

Other materials commonly include:

- A financial update.
- An update on board development when relevant, including training for board members and recruiting new members.
- An administrative report: a high-level summary of open staff positions and hiring, facilities and systems, insurance, and other similar issues.
- Updates on any projects in active development, which might mean planning how to mark an organizational anniversary, discussing adding a new program or service, or strategizing about how to adjust to legislation that affects your mission.



By presenting your board members with clear, organized, easy-to-read information on your organization's fundraising, you are engaging them in the organization's ongoing fundraising efforts, and helping them do their jobs well.

FINAL TIPS:

- Present a report at every board meeting, whether that is monthly, quarterly, or on some other schedule. It addresses a core part of the board's responsibility.
- Use your fiscal year to track goals.
- Consider tracking how funds are designated to be used by donors if that has significant impact for your organization.

SAMPLE BOARD FUNDRAISING REPORT



Paws for the Cause

Fundraising report to the board | July 10, 2022

Mission moment

With schools letting out for the summer, we've had an influx of high schoolers wanting to volunteer. As you know, the volunteer roles we have that are suitable for teenagers are limited, and applicants often write the sweetest notes about why they want to work with us. We wanted to share this snippet from one, which resonates so strongly with why all of us do this work.

"My family adopted Waffles, our dog, from Paws for the Cause six years ago. He truly became my best friend. Making new friends in middle school is not always easy. Waffles cuddled and loved me whether I was sad or happy. I want to volunteer so other kids can find that kind of friend."

Highlights

- An earlier start this year on seeking sponsors for the gala has put us in a strong position. Five of the seven businesses that sponsored last year are returning. Thanks to Kimberly for her hard work on this.
- The PSA we ran on WTOP resulted in a bump in website traffic and an additional \$2000 in website donations over June last year.



A brief recent anecdote reconnects your board with the organization's mission, demonstrates your staff's commitment to the mission, and provides the board with a great story to share. This is doesn't have to be part of the fundraising report. Instead, it's a great way to start off the full meeting agenda.

Write the highlights and challenges last, as they will be informed by the data you gather.

Challenges

- We did not get the response we hoped for from our call for puppy season donations in May. We think this may be a result of the increasing challenges we and other nonprofits are facing having our Facebook posts seen broadly by our followers.

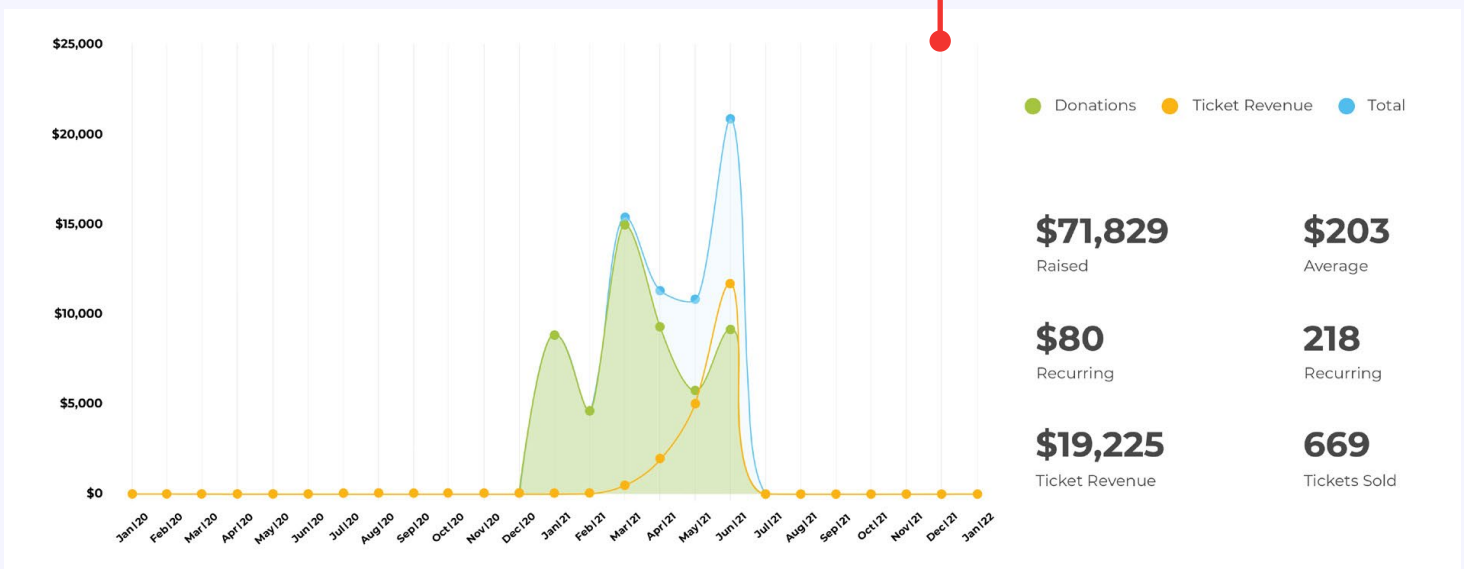
Upcoming opportunities to engage with donors and supporters:

- Animal Trivia Night, MC'd by Dr. Pettrew, in person at Donilda's Pub and online, July 12
- Adoption event at Shaw Farmer's Market, July 23
- BBQ fundraiser by the Jones' at Anacostia Park, July 24

A virtual or hybrid event, like this trivia night, is a great way to involve board members and supporters from their living rooms.

This screenshot from the Guided Fundraising solution illustrates the kind of data visualization you should be able to get from good fundraising software. Presenting your board with the key metrics in an easy-to-read visual format each time you meet will help them understand the organization's fundraising work better and track key trends.

Year-to-date revenue results



	Planned 2022	June Actual	Actual to Date	% of Planned
Individual Donations	\$205,000.00	\$9,645.00	\$55,350.00	27.0%
Major gifts (>\$1000)	\$75,000.00	\$2,000	\$15,000	20.0%
Business Support	\$80,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$48,000.00	60.0%
Donated Goods and Services	\$63,000.00	\$3,865.00	\$18,900.00	30.0%
Gala*	\$33,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	36.4%
Grants & Municipal Support**	\$15,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.0%
Total Income	\$471,500.00	\$36,510.00	\$149,250.00	31.7%

*sponsorships **awarded in Oct.

A simple table like this puts the month's results into important context by presenting:

- The goals for the year.
- The progress towards those goals to date.
- The percentage helps board members quickly see progress. But it may be important to periodically remind readers that more donations typically come in at the end of the year, so progress will not be even across the months.

Notes on the side offer simple explanations to questions that might arise, like how do we have gala income when it is not until October?

2022 Revenues as of June 30



You might consider presenting these key revenue metrics in an easy-to-read chart, which can be created in excel and updated each month.

Non-revenue results for June and year to date

Cost to Raise a Dollar (CRD) is a common fundraising metric. It is a simple calculation of $\text{Cost} \div \text{Funds Raised}$. It can be calculated for specific campaigns, but here we are looking at the overall fundraising program. The industry benchmark varies. \$1.00 to \$1.60 is very acceptable for direct mail acquisition, while \$0.20 is considered an average acceptable CRD for an entire fundraising program. Learn more about this important metric, and how to calculate it for your organization, [here](#).

	2022 Goal	June Actual	Actual to Date	% age of goal
New volunteers	40	5	22	55.0%
New newsletter subscribers	120	12	80	66.7%
Newsletter open rate	30%	27%	28.40%	97.7%
New FB followers	40	3	12	30.0%
New donors	60	2	18	30.0%
New major donors	4	0	1	25.0%
New recurring donors	35	1	14	40.0%
Donor Retention rate*	45%		22%	
Donors with larger total giving than last year**	28%			
Cost to raise \$1**	\$0.25			
Average %age				29.5%

*tends to be low early in year, as so many give at year end

**will be calculated at the end of year

Similar to the above, this table reports on nonrevenue fundraising and marketing goals.

- New newsletter subscribers and social media followers are important; you can now share the information about your mission and impact with them, and inspire some of them to become donors.
- New donors are critical; they are needed to replace existing donors who stop giving for whatever reason, and to grow your revenue and programs.
- Donor retention rate zeroes in on how many donors are giving again in the following year. The AFP Fundraising Effectiveness Report (2019) indicates an average retention rate of 43.4% for all nonprofits in the survey.



The Bonterra Guided Fundraising solution is so simple to use and lays out my stats so nicely. It has taken a load off of me when preparing for board and development committee meetings, and it also has been an incredible help with sending email blasts and thanking donors.”

— Jacqueline Jasek | Director of Operations and Donor Relations
Dreameam Opportunity Center

If you are reading this and imagining hours of boring work pulling all these numbers together, never fear! With the right fundraising software, it doesn't have to be hard.

Guided Fundraising's simple, smart fundraising solution includes built-in graphs and easy-to-use, savable filters that make pulling the numbers you need every month a breeze. From key gift data like amount raised and average gift size, to number of new donors this month, to open rates on your email newsletter, it's all there.

YOUR BOARD WILL THANK YOU!

By presenting your board members with clear, organized, easy-to-read information on your organization's fundraising, you are engaging them in the organization's ongoing fundraising efforts, and helping them do their jobs well.

And you'll look like a rock star!

Ready to streamline your next board report through Guided Fundraising?

[Learn more →](#)

