

Course Syllabus
DON: Building Beneficial Donor Relationships that Last

Week 1. Introduction to Individual Giving

In Week 1 we will focus on how to attract and cultivate the four current generations of donors to build a sustainable donor base for your organization. We will also talk about the trends affecting individual giving and important issues associated with prospect research. Through reading and discussion we will look at factors that shape the context of fundraising practices and will also discuss how generational and technological changes affect fundraising.

Week 2. Prospects and Prospect Research: Working Behind the Scenes to Find Donors

In Week 2 we will now look at how to identify and qualify prospects (prospective donors with both interest and money) who might support your nonprofit. We will also learn to categorize and profile prospects based on their generational characteristics as well as their "propensity," "capacity," and "connection" characteristics.

Week 3. Cultivation or "Friend Raising" Precedes Fundraising

In Week 3 we will further explore the idea that donors give to causes in which they believe and with which they feel a connection. We will explore ways to cultivate the interest of prospective donors and prepare them for gift solicitation—The Ask.

Week 4. "The Ask" – Soliciting Donations

In Week 4 we will discuss how to ask for the donation. You have learned in the past three weeks that there is a great deal more to raising money than just, "The Ask." That said, asking for money is – not surprisingly – a critical step in securing donations. In Week 4 we will look at how solicitation follows from cultivation. We will also explore how to ask for a contribution, who should ask, and various methods of solicitation. Even as you think about how to ask someone for a gift, though, you will learn about other things to bear in mind. For example, our fourth week will also include a look at how to develop policies and procedures for solicitation, to avoid what experts call, "donor fatigue." "The Ask," is neither the beginning nor the end of a fundraiser's work.

Week 5. Recognition and Stewardship

In Week 5 we will synthesize the work of the first four weeks and look at the last part of the cultivation-solicitation-recognition cycle. We will talk about how this complete cycle is vital to success when seeking contributions from individual donors. Our focus will be on recognition, stewardship, and on evaluating one's fundraising effectiveness. You have found donor prospects, done research, cultivated, and solicited their support. Stewardship helps make sure all that effort builds a long and strong relationships.