

COVID-19 Response Toolkit

Event Management and Fundraising Resources



As the global COVID-19 situation continues to evolve rapidly, organizations are facing difficult decisions when it comes to the management of their in-person events and protecting the health of their supporters. Whether your organization opts to move forward, reschedule or cancel your in-person event, the public's response to this pandemic may impact attendance and participation in your plan events. Declines in registration could have a trickle down effect on the financial health of organizations, especially those dependent on event fundraising to support their mission.

Fortunately, we live in a time where technology can help bring people together in new and creative ways without the requirement of being face-to-face with one another. This response guide will help you quickly set up a basic response as well as provide ideas to pivot your peer-to-peer event website and activities to a virtual event.

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, Blackbaud will be posting resources and updates on [this dedicated page](#).

If you want to connect with other organizations utilizing their Blackbaud solutions to navigate COVID-19 repercussions, please visit the [Blackbaud Customer Community](#).

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Tips and Best Practices for Maintaining Fundraising Momentum

As the global COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, it's an ever-important time to develop new engagement strategies and untap new revenue streams in order to drive your mission forward. Below are some tips and best practices that can help your organization make the greatest impact and offset missed fundraising opportunities should your events be cancelled or rescheduled as a result of a health concern or pandemic.

LAUNCH ONLINE GIVING OPTIONS

Maybe your organization was forced to cancel your gala, and you've missed out on critical registration revenue. Or perhaps your church can no longer meet in person and therefore, your regular tithes are at risk. Perhaps your zoo or theater has shut its doors and regular funds through traditional offline experiences are not present. If you do not currently offer direct online giving as a part of your programs, Blackbaud can help you get up and running in just a few minutes.

If you are responding with a specific fundraising intention, then a designated campaign may tell your story best—and you can [create a campaign](#) in Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising™, powered by JustGiving™ in just a few minutes. Campaigns permit you to visually appeal to your audience through strategic imagery and text elements, set a fundraising goal, encourage personal fundraising, and ultimately collect donations to the general fund or to individual fundraisers. Campaigns can be shared socially and offline gift totals can be added to provide up to date progress. The possibilities are endless but use cases for campaigns include:

- crowdfunding a new exhibit
- collecting funds for a specific program—such as feeding seniors or children—or collecting donations towards masks and medical equipment
- promoting a giving day for student scholarships
- converting an in-person event to a virtual experience with peer-to-peer fundraising options to support local needs.

For additional information and ideas surrounding peer-to-peer and crowdfunding opportunities, [check out this article on sgENGAGE](#).

COMMUNICATE THAT FUNDRAISING EFFORTS MUST GO ON

Be unashamed of the fundraising side of your event. Ensure that your event participants understand the important role your fundraising event plays in your organization's ability to accomplish its mission. Building a fundraising culture around your program reinforces the vital role your organization plays in the community. If your organization is cancelling an in-person event, consider including a paragraph on the important role your event plays in your overall fundraising strategy, and make calls to action or suggest ways your supporters can still contribute to your cause without leaving home.

If you are already fundraising through a JustGiving campaign, editing your message is easy. All you need to do is log into your JustGiving account and navigate to View your Existing Campaign > Edit the Campaign Landing Page. Changing the Story text will allow you to communicate what is changing and why support is more important than ever. For more information about creating and editing a campaign, [click here](#).

OFFER A VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING OPTION TO YOUR PARTICIPANTS

Adding a virtual fundraising option to your event doesn't have to be complicated, time consuming, or expensive.

If you're using Blackbaud TeamRaiser®, this can be as simple as adding an additional registration type to your registration form. This can be accomplished by navigating to "Edit TeamRaiser" then selecting the "Manage Participation Types" (menu option 7) in the lefthand pane.

For Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising, powered by JustGiving users, this is as simple as marking 'Yes' to "Allow fundraisers to connect their fundraising pages to your Campaign?" when you create or edit your campaign. You can also provide default images and text for your

fundraisers to leverage, creating cohesion and brand recognition, under the Fundraising Pages Content.

Personal Fundraising pages can be shared through social media, and fundraisers can add pictures, insert commentary, set goals, and view their donors' involvement—all from their personal page.

Add fitness tracking components to your virtual event experience

If you are hosting a cycling event or long distance running or walking program, consider incorporating fitness tracking apps like Strava or Map My Fitness, enabling your event participants to track and communicate their progress towards a goal. Instead of asking your cyclists to gather together face-to-face at a physical location for a century ride, you can ask them to cycle in their own community at a time that works best for their schedule and use fitness tracking to monitor progress.

Fitness tracking allows your organization to create engaging online experiences that help with community building. One organization used fitness tracking to display a map of the world on their website with real-time updates tracking the cumulative progress of their entire cycling community to virtually ride around the globe!

Fitness tracking can be built into experiences hosted on both Blackbaud TeamRaiser and Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising, powered by JustGiving. Contact your Account Executive or Customer Success Manager for more information.

IF YOUR PEOPLE CAN'T COME TO YOUR EVENT, BRING THE EVENT TO YOUR PEOPLE

If you are moving forward with your in-person event, it's important to remember your supporters who may not be able to attend. Supplementing your in-person event with a virtual experience can be as easy as using a mobile phone and broadcasting your event festivities over Facebook Live. The sky is the limit when it comes to broadcasting experiences on the internet. If feasible,

consider hiring videographers to bring a higher quality production to your social posts and allow virtual participants to feel like they're there.

Even if you are cancelling your event, consider hosting a virtual meet up for your event participants by leveraging social media or livestreaming platforms like Twitch or Mixer. Use a consistent hashtag to make your posts easily accessible, and pose specific activities or questions to your participants to respond to using their favorite social channels. Try to find social influencers or celebrities within your supporter base to help spread the word.

If you are using Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising, powered by JustGiving, there are livestream fundraising tools like donor list and donation tokens built into the solution. Supporters can use these tools to drop fundraising options directly into their livestream on Twitch or Mixer. Learn more about these tools by visiting gaming.justgiving.com.

Unsure if the right social influencers are participating in your event?

Blackbaud offers P2P Insights to help you identify individuals in your database who have a high probability of fundraising on your behalf. We assigned these individuals a persona based on the engagements they've had with your organization; one of the personas is identified "Thrill Seeker" and these individuals thrive on posting their good works on social media. This group could also assist you with getting the word out. To learn more about P2P Insights, you can view [this webinar](#) or reach out to your Customer Success Manager or Account Executive.

HIJACK YOUR HOMEPAGE

Leverage your organization's primary communication tool—your homepage—to highlight your fundraising efforts. Use clear calls to action for your supporters to fundraise, donate, and spread the word through their preferred social media channels.



GET IN THE NEWS!

Let your local news outlets enhance your communications by providing them a concise statement informing those in your area about the urgent need your organization faces in order to continue serving your mission, or share information on how you plan to aid in the relief effort, encouraging others to follow suit.

CONSIDER THE RELEVANCY OF ALL POSTS

Even if you're in the middle of an ongoing social media campaign, consider how each post might distract or devalue your more-urgent calls to action. You can still post anything that provides value to your friends and followers, but be mindful of maintaining an economy of posts to ensure your urgent requests aren't watered down by over-posting.

SAY THANK YOU!

Be sure to thank anyone that makes a gift immediately (for in-kind or cash gifts). Now more than ever, it's important to recognize people and companies making donations or doing their part to protect your mission.

You should also send a follow up communication after the initial acknowledgement, and educate new donors on your broader mission and offer them opportunities to grow their support by becoming a regular member or monthly donor (within the next few weeks).

Email Tips and Best Practices

It's important to portray the urgency of your need and the impact your supporters can have, despite the circumstances. Here are some tips for crafting effective messaging.

SUBJECT LINE

Think of this message as a short, urgent message—something that you want your constituents to really notice. If a constituent only reads the subject line, what would you want him or her to know? Use the subject line to convey the urgency, importance, or time-sensitive nature of this message.

Examples of subject lines might include:

- Take Action: COVID-19's Impact on {Event/ Organization Name}
- COVID-19 Special Update – Our Response
- Take Action | Ways to Help COVID-19 Victims

CONTENT - HEADLINE

Use brief, compelling headlines that speak as directly to your constituents' interests as possible. Think of this as your call to action, your *New York Times* front-page story. Choose attention-grabbing headlines that highlight the outcome you're seeking, like "Saving Lives Cannot Wait—Help Fight the Spread of COVID-19" or "Coronavirus is spreading, but millions do not have access to soap and water. Help us make a difference".

If there is a deadline, make sure the headline includes the date the action needs to happen by, even if it's a relative date or fluid window like "next week" or "in the near future". Urgency and immediacy are very important in getting substantial, quality responses.

CONTENT – EMAIL BODY

This is your opportunity to provide your participants a focused message about regretfully having to cancel the event while encouraging them to continue making a difference by turning up fundraising efforts.

It's okay to be emotional here—make it count. It breaks your heart the event can't go on, but the fundraising must. Your content should be concise, poignant, and immediately relevant.

Unlike your eNewsletter that might contain many different types of stories, this topic should be the sole focus of the message.

Credit Card Refund and Chargeback Considerations

Blackbaud continues to work closely with our industry partners and the card brands to minimize the impacts of COVID-19 on the social good community. If your



organization must cancel an event, consider asking registrants to turn event fees into donations for your mission—a cause they already support! This will help minimize the financial impact to your nonprofit. Should they instead prefer a refund, issue it promptly to avoid a chargeback (cardholder dispute). Before you do, however, be sure to confirm that your bank account has enough money to cover the total refunded and any associated fees that will be assessed by your payment processor. For Blackbaud Merchant Services™ customers, refunds are subtracted from the total disbursement amount. If they exceed the total, your bank account is debited for the difference.

Additional Resources

Here is a list of resources from across the sector that may be useful.

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [Lessening The Risk Of Coronavirus At Nonprofits](#), Nonprofit Times article
- [Livestream Fundraising 101: What is Livestream Fundraising?](#), sgENGAGE blog
- [How Philanthropy Can Respond](#), Center for Disaster Philanthropy webinar
- [6 Steps for Grant Makers to Take Now to Ensure Nonprofits Recover From Coronavirus Spread](#), Chronicle of Philanthropy article
- [A few things for nonprofits and foundations to consider in light of the Coronavirus](#), Nonprofit AF blog
- [Marketing Your Event During the Coronavirus \(PCMA\)](#)
- [Covid-19 Is your Event Covered? \(PCMA\)](#)
- [Event Cancellation and What You Should Do - March 19 webinar \(Running USA\)](#)
- [Managing COVID-19's Impact On Your Peer-to-Peer Programs - March 20 webinar, Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum](#)

About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, companies, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and the individual change agents who support them.

