

# Virtual Fundraisers – Connect Your Colleagues in a Socially Distant Workplace

*Crafted by: UWCFD*

What does a virtual fundraiser look like? Kind of like a regular fundraiser, but different. Instead of getting together in person, you gather online, using technology to move your favorite fundraiser to the digital environment.

Don't let the new format distract you from your ultimate goal — communicating a story to inspire your co-workers. Keep your virtual fundraiser focused on how your gifts will help, and show your colleagues what their gifts are doing and the positive change they're making in the world.

The good news - virtual fundraisers don't have as many logistics! Planning a virtual fundraising event is like planning any other event. Establish your goals, get your team in place and make a plan. Once you've got your plan in place, figure out your logistics, spread the word, and have a good time!

## 6 Best Practices to Consider for Virtual Events & Fundraisers

### **Step 1 - What Kind of Virtual Fundraiser You Want to Have?**

The first step in planning your virtual fundraiser is figuring out what kind of event you want to have. Do you want to transfer as much as possible of your traditional event to an online format, or try something completely new?

If you are transitioning a traditional (or possibly annual) event to a virtual event, ask team members to help decide what elements of the original event you want to keep. Plus, if you've already planned out an in-person event, a lot of the basic logistic work is already done. Just let the UWCFD help you shift your event online!

If you're brainstorming a new event, there are lots of choices out there:

1. A speaker with a scheduled program
2. A video conference with Q & A
3. Virtual Challenge, Food Drive, Bake Sale, etc.
4. Virtual run or walk
5. The possibilities are endless

Don't let the new format throw you off your game. Keep your fundraiser focused on the how giving makes a difference – show your co-workers the positive change their gift is making in the world.

You are the expert in your office culture and your digital office culture. We can help you put on a just right event where everyone has fun and no one leaves the house!

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### **Step 2 - Set a Goal**

Events look different depending on their goals. Once you decide what your priority is, you can design your event accordingly. Do you want to raise money? Awareness? Interest? You can focus on more than one priority.

For instance, say you want to hold a food drive AND educate colleagues about the food that food banks need most. We've got a great virtual food drive template that shows what the most-needed, least-donated items are, with dollar values so people have an idea what their dollar buys. We can help you customize it for your work group if you'd like. Win-Win.

### **Step 3 – What's the Event Vibe? How will You Create it?**

A virtual event is still an event. You don't need centerpieces or decorations, but think about the on-screen experience you are creating. Now is a great time to try out your movie producer talents! Try to provide:

- An uncluttered background
- Your camera at eye-level
- A light source behind your camera (if you have more lights, place them to your right and left)

Once you've decided what kind of virtual event you're having, you can plan what happens when, for each portion of the event, and figure out what you'll need to accomplish it. Create a minute-to-minute timeline, a list of technology needs and a plan. Let your UWCFD Campaign Assistant help you. For example:

- 5:50 pm - open the event portal
- 6:00 pm - Greeting and technology explanations
- 6:05 pm - Event starts; participants introduce themselves, icebreaker
- 6:30 pm - Introduce guest speaker

Think about how to create virtual interactions for your audience. Collect questions in advance or have someone manage them during a chat. Create affinity groups and teams if you can. It might not be in person, but it can still be lots of fun.

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### **Step 4: Publicize Your Event**

If you've been to coordinator training, you've heard me say over and over that it doesn't matter if you have the best event in the world if you don't invite anyone! Once you've got an event on the books, let people know! Think about who you want to attend. Just the folks in your department? Is it open to a broader group? Once you know, get the word out! Send an invite. Send it more than once. Have your links and necessary technology active and ready to go! Remember to:

- Make sure people know it's a virtual fundraiser
- Provide all the links needed for the event
- Let people know what they need to do to participate

### **Step 5 – Test your Tech**

Make sure you know how to use the technology you need for this event. Practice using the tools before your event. What are the common issues to trouble-shoot with your platforms? If you can, designate a member of your team to help your attendees solve them.

### **Step 6 – When in Doubt, Make it Simple**

If you have an idea that is creative, or innovative, or hilarious, go for it — but you don't have to create the most elaborate virtual fundraiser ever to be successful. Focus on sharing the impact of giving and the importance of giving what you can. You don't have to make your online event an exact replica of your in-person event. Your audience is at home with a surprising number of distractions competing for their attention. Front load the fun. Make it short, simple and sweet.

And remember, we're here if you need us.

To contact the Combined Fund Drive about setting up your own agency online event, contact us at: [cfid@sos.wa.gov](mailto:cfid@sos.wa.gov) or by phone at 360-902-4162