

FOUNDATIONS

Wyoming Library

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MORE ON THE REVISIONS TO THE 990

In mid-August the Internal Revenue Service issued information on how it is revising the 990 instructions that tax exempt organizations will use for their 2008 reporting. The 990 instructions documentation starts at <http://www.irs.gov/irs/article/0,,id=186015,00.html>. If your library foundation works on a calendar year, then the 990 report for 2008 will be due by May 15, 2009 - and that is not that far away. If your library foundation works on a fiscal year, then the 990 form must be submitted by November 15, 2009. The foundation treasurer or external contractor who prepares the IRS 990 EZ, N or standard form should get acquainted with the changes and added reporting requirements.

THE LIBRARY TRIANGLE

Make a triangle on a sheet of paper. At one point put the library board. At another point put the foundation. And at the third point put the library director. If you identify the roles and responsibilities of each be sure to recognize that the library board and library director have supportive roles to the library foundation but it is the foundation itself that has to be assertive in fundraising for projects and the endowment. Neither the foundation nor the library board should expect the library director to be the moving force to make the foundation successful. Your director is already responsible for organizational development, management and growth. The director and board can help to promote foundation projects and participate in the fundraising events, but do not put her or him in the position of having to organize the events, initiate meetings with potential donors, or manage the affairs of the foundation. The foundation, library board, and library director have to work harmoniously for a successful foundation but the board and director already have work in managing the library. The individuals who willingly take on leadership of the foundation must take on the leadership of fundraising. Make your foundation successful through the dedicated work of volunteers with philanthropic skills.

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL DONORS

When there's a big dollar goal to achieve, many fund raisers start looking for grants and looking to businesses, when their efforts would be better spent cultivating individual donors. According to the Foundation Center's (www.foundationcenter.org) "Guide to Funding Research" tutorial, only 16.5% of nonprofit funding comes from corporations and private foundations. Most nonprofit funding comes from individual donations. Although you may feel more comfortable to write a grant proposal or ask for a business donation, the real money to be raised will come through cultivating individual donors and asking for their support.

THE FUND RAISING PYRAMID

Experienced fund raisers know that raising \$10,000 isn't as simple as finding 100 people to each give \$100. Instead, they use a gift range pyramid, often based roughly on 10% tiers. For example, the top gift for a \$10,000 campaign would be for \$1,000 from an individual donor. The next tier down would be two donors at \$500, then four donors at \$250 each, and on down to the base of the pyramid – the smallest gifts from the largest number of donors. Typically, you will want to have four prospects for each gift needed at each level. Part of your fundraising planning is to evaluate where your major prospects fit in the pyramid. Blackbaud, a maker of fundraising software, has a free gift range calculator at <http://www.blackbaud.com/company/resources/giftrange/giftcalc.aspx>.

FEATURED WEBSITE: WYOMING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

www.wycf.org

The Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF) has been the source of many grants to Wyoming libraries, particularly through the Carol McMurry Library Endowment. Did you know that this website also has other resources for fundraisers? Under the “Resources and Links” menu at www.wycf.org, you will find the online Wyoming Foundations Directory, which you can search for Wyoming-based grant makers and find giving guidelines, deadlines, contact information and more. Also find reports on Wyoming's non-profit sector and links to nonprofit associations and conferences.

ARE YOU MAKING ONE OF THE 20 BIGGEST FUND RAISING MISTAKES?

In [Guidestar.org's](#) article archive, David Lansdowne writes about “The 20 Biggest Fundraising Mistakes,” [Part I](#) and [Part II](#). Among them:

- Thinking people will simply give because it's a good cause (without having to work for your donations.)
- Thinking that others can raise the money.
- Believing that because people are wealthy, they will give to you.
- Thinking that publicity alone can raise money.
- Not having a realistic goal.
- Failing to focus on your top prospects first.
- Not thanking your donors.

And, of course, just not asking. Lansdowne's tips are excerpted from his book, *The Relentlessly Practical Guide to Raising Serious Money*. He is also the author of *Fund Raising Realities Every Board Member Must Face*. Both books are available through Wyoming libraries.

This **Wyoming Library Foundations** newsletter is sent to the Wyoming county library directors for distribution to their library foundation and library board members. Individuals interested in viewing this can bookmark <http://will.state.wy.us/slpub/foundations/index.html>. Comments on the content of this publication or contributions to share with other library foundation board members can be sent to Jerry Krois at jkrois@state.wy.us or Susan Vittitow at svitti@state.wy.us.