

# FOUNDATIONS

Wyoming Library

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## How much should board members give?

It's generally a rule that foundation board members should make their own donations first, before asking donors to contribute. But how much should board members give? A May 5 post by Ken Goldstein on the Nonprofit Consultant Blog (<http://nonprofitconsultant.blogspot.com/>) asks just that question. Some nonprofits follow the "give or get" philosophy. Board members are asked to donate or raise a set amount. Goldstein favors a "give *and* get" outlook. You "get" to ensure adequate financial resources; you "give" as part of your own commitment to the organization. He recommends that whatever the "give" amount is, it should be *personally significant*. If your typical donation to a charity is \$100, your gift as a board member might be \$200 or more. If you typically donate \$500, consider a gift of \$750 to \$1,000. Whatever the amount, if you are sitting on the board, your personal gift should be a stretch.

## Answering the "why" of raising money

The Step by Step Fundraising blog ([www.stepbystepfundraising.com](http://www.stepbystepfundraising.com)) offers a free "The 5 Keys to Successful Fundraising" e-book. Key #1 is to answer why the organization is raising money and why you are raising money for it. Looking at how fund raising supports the organization's mission, and how that fits with your personal goals, gives a basis for building your case and making the ask. Too often, people who believe in the value of the library strongly simply don't understand why others may need to be persuaded. Articulating the "why," instead of assuming it, makes for more effective fund raising.

A trick grant writers sometimes use is to keep asking, "So what?" until you find an answer. For example, the library is starting its annual fund drive. So what? Aren't there a lot of good organizations out there raising funds? Why give to the library? But the funding will benefit children's programs. So what? Do these children's programs accomplish anything? These programs teach early literacy skills, setting children up for a lifetime of reading success. A-ha! Now we're getting to a "why" that is a benefit to people, not to the organization, and that is in a niche that only the library can fill. When you have completely answered "So what?" you've found the "why" that will appeal to donors and grantmakers.

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 Jamie Markus at [jmarku@state.wy.us](mailto:jmarku@state.wy.us) or Susan Mark at [smark@state.wy.us](mailto:smark@state.wy.us).