

COVID-19

Event and Fundraising Resources
During Possible Impact



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 ripple 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

Here are eight 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.

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.

OFFER A VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING OPTION TO YOUR PARTICIPANTS

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

For solutions like 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 left-hand pane.

Add Fitness Tracking 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 both on 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 social influencers are participating in your event?

If you are using Blackbaud Luminate Online® or Blackbaud TeamRaiser, there are built in groups that can help you quickly identify your social influencers. You can find these by navigating to “List filters” in Blackbaud Luminate Online Beta.

Blackbaud also 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.

Some examples:

- 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.

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.

