

Philanthropy: The desire to improve the lives of others by giving monetary donations.

Development: Management of a systematic and strategic program.

Charitable giving: When an individual or organization makes donation of funds to a 501(c3) organization.

Capital Campaign: An intense effort by a nonprofit organization to raise a significant amount of funds for a capital project.

Feasibility Study: A research study designed to test the availability of philanthropic support needed to reach the fundraising goal. Is the campaign feasible? Depending on alternative funding options, the capital project may or may not happen.

Planning Study: A research study designed to increase the likelihood of a successful fundraising campaign. Unlike a Feasibility Study, a Planning Study is conducted when an organization has already made the decision to move forward with the project.

Stakeholder: An individual (or entity) who has a significant interest in the success of the project. Stakeholders may include the following constituencies: volunteer, donor, funder, prospective supporter, lapsed supporter, or staff members.



Donors vs Funder: Generally, we refer to individuals as “Donors” while institutional entities such as foundations and corporations are referred to as “Funders”.

The Donor Cycle: The cycle of donor-centric processes resulting in effective philanthropic development.

Identification: The process of identifying prospective donors and funders through research. Research for capital campaigns and major giving programs may include wealth screening and personal anecdotes.

Cultivation: The process of building a closer relationship with current and prospective donors whereby the constituent becomes more knowledgeable and engaged with the organization or project.

Solicitation: The act of asking for a financial gift. Asks can be made by letter, email, phone, or in person.

Recognition: The process of acknowledging the donation by receipt and recognizing the donor for their gift. Recognition may be given privately by letter, email, or a handwritten card. Public recognition most often comes in the form of a donor name listing in communications like an annual report or website.

Stewardship: The important step of stewarding a donor’s gift and relationship by using the gift for its intended purpose as well as keeping the donor informed of the progress of the project or program for which the gift was designated.