



PHOENIX AZ AD AGENCY

The Small Nonprofit Digital Fundraising Playbook

A step-by-step campaign guide for raising \$75,000 online

Ten sections covering goal setting, campaign storytelling, launch day, partner outreach, content, timelines, payment tools, stewardship, donor privacy, and the checklists that hold the whole thing together.

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Free to use, share, and adapt for your organization.

SECTION 01

Setting the \$75,000 goal and reading your donor base

Every number in this guide is built around a single worked example: a small organization raising \$75,000 online in one campaign. Swap in your own figure and the math still holds, because the structure is the same at \$15,000 or at \$250,000.

Start with what the money does, not the number

Donors do not give to a total. They give to an outcome the total buys. Before you publish a goal, write one sentence that names the outcome in plain language: what changes for real people if this campaign succeeds, and what does not happen if it fails. If you cannot write that sentence, the campaign is not ready.

Break the goal into gift tiers

A \$75,000 goal almost never comes from a flood of \$25 gifts. It comes from a small number of large commitments plus a broad base of small ones. Build the table before launch so you know exactly how many asks you owe.

Gift level	Gifts needed	Prospects to ask	Subtotal
\$10,000	2	6	\$20,000
\$5,000	3	9	\$15,000
\$2,500	4	12	\$10,000
\$1,000	8	24	\$8,000
\$500	16	48	\$8,000
\$100	80	240	\$8,000
Under \$100	Open	Full list	\$6,000

The rule of thumb behind the third column is three qualified prospects for every gift you need at that level. If you cannot name the prospects, the goal is aspirational rather than planned, and you should either lower it or spend another month building the list.

Read your existing donor base honestly

- Export every gift from the last three years and sort by amount, then by recency.
- Flag anyone who gave twice or more. Repeat donors convert at several times the rate of first-time prospects.
- Identify lapsed donors, people who gave two or three years ago and stopped. A campaign is the natural reason to call them.

- Note the average gift and the median gift. The median tells you where to set your default donation amount on the form.
- List board members, staff, volunteers, and vendors separately. Board giving should be locked in before the public launch.

Set the quiet-phase target

Aim to have 40 to 50 percent of the goal committed privately before you announce anything. On a \$75,000 campaign that is \$30,000 to \$37,500 secured from board members, major donors, and one or two partners. Launching at zero is the most common reason small campaigns stall in week two.

SECTION 02

Writing the campaign story that converts

The story is the product. Design, ad spend, and email cadence only amplify whatever the story already does. Write it first, and write it about one person.

The five-part structure

- **The person.** Open on one individual your organization served, named or anonymized with permission. Not a statistic, not a category.
- **The obstacle.** What stood in their way, described concretely enough that a stranger can picture it.
- **The turn.** The specific thing your organization did. Name the program, the hours, the cost.
- **The result.** Where that person is now, in their own words if you can get a quote.
- **The gap.** How many more people are waiting, and what \$75,000 changes about that number.

Get the founder's story on the record

Most small nonprofits exist because one person refused to accept a situation. That origin story is your single most persuasive asset and it is usually trapped in someone's head. Sit your founder down, record 45 minutes of audio, and transcribe it. You will pull the campaign headline, the video script, and three email subject lines out of that one recording.

Language rules that measurably help

- Write at a seventh-grade reading level. Short sentences outperform elegant ones.
- Use "you" more than "we". The donor is the actor in the story, your organization is the mechanism.
- Attach a price to an outcome: "\$250 covers a full month of tutoring for one student."
- Never lead with organizational milestones. Nobody outside your board cares that you turned twelve.
- Say the number. Vague urgency underperforms a specific goal with a specific deadline every time.

Consent and dignity

Get written permission before you publish anyone's story, photograph, or quote, and give people a genuine option to decline without consequence. Offer a first-name-only or pseudonym version by default. If a story could expose someone to harm, embarrassment, or immigration risk, do not run it, no matter how well it would perform.

SECTION 03

Launch-day playbook

The first 48 hours set the ceiling for the entire campaign. Momentum is visible and donors respond to it, so treat launch day as a coordinated operation rather than a publish button.

Two weeks before

- Finish the quiet phase. Have your matching or lead gifts confirmed in writing.
- Build and test the donation page on a phone, on cellular data, with a real card.
- Write every email in the sequence in advance. You will not have time later.
- Line up eight to twelve people who agree to post within the first two hours of launch.
- Prepare a shared asset folder: images, suggested captions, the campaign link, and the hashtag.

Launch day, hour by hour

Time	Action
7:00 a.m.	Donation page goes live. Team confirms a test gift processes and receipts.
8:00 a.m.	Email one to your warmest segment: repeat donors and board contacts.
9:00 a.m.	Founder posts the story video from the organization's main account.
9:15 a.m.	The launch crew shares, comments, and tags. Comments matter more than shares.
12:00 p.m.	Post the first milestone graphic, even if it is only 8 percent.
3:00 p.m.	Personal texts from board members to their top five prospects each.
6:00 p.m.	Email two to the full list, with the day-one total in the subject line.
9:00 p.m.	Thank every single day-one donor by name, publicly or privately.

The momentum window, days 2 through 10

- Post a real update every day. A number, a face, a thank-you, a behind-the-scenes clip.
- Never post the total without context. "\$18,400 of \$75,000, 27 days left" beats a bare figure.
- Release the match publicly around day four if the campaign has not already found its footing.
- Call, do not email, anyone who gave over your median gift. Two minutes on the phone drives repeat giving.

The countdown, final 72 hours

Roughly a third of all online campaign revenue arrives in the last three days. Plan for it. Send a message at 72 hours, 24 hours, and 4 hours remaining, each one shorter than the last, each one naming the exact gap left to close. If a second match can be unlocked for the final day, hold it in reserve for exactly this moment.

SECTION 04

Influencer, partner, and local media outreach

You are not buying reach, you are borrowing trust. The people worth approaching are the ones whose audience already overlaps with the community you serve, even when that audience is small.

Build the outreach list

- Local micro-creators with 2,000 to 30,000 followers in your city. Engagement beats follower count.
- Businesses that already sponsor youth sports, school programs, or community events. They have a budget line for this.
- Faith communities, neighborhood associations, and service clubs with regular meetings and newsletters.
- Alumni of your program who are willing to speak publicly about it.
- Local reporters who cover community, education, or human interest, not the general assignment desk.

The ask that gets answered

Keep outreach under 120 words. Name the person's specific work, state the goal and the deadline, make one concrete request, and attach everything they would need to say yes without a follow-up email. Offer a choice of three ways to help: post once, host a small event, or make an introduction. Most people who decline the biggest ask will accept the smallest one.

Working with local media

- Pitch the person, never the fundraiser. Reporters cover people and deadlines, not organizational needs.
- Send a one-page release with a quotable line, two photos at print resolution, and a phone number that a human answers.
- Give them a date hook: launch day, the halfway mark, or the final week.
- Follow up once, politely, three business days later. Then stop.

Corporate matching

Many employers match employee gifts, and most employees have no idea. Add one line to every thank-you email asking donors to check whether their company matches, and include a link to a matching-gift lookup. On a \$75,000 campaign this routinely recovers several thousand dollars for no additional outreach.

SECTION 05

Video and social content plan

One well-made anchor video plus a steady drip of rough, honest clips will outperform a polished library that arrives all at once. Plan the anchor, then plan the drip.

The anchor video, 90 to 120 seconds

- Seconds 0 to 5: the person and the obstacle. No logo, no title card, no music swell.
- Seconds 5 to 45: what your organization did, shown rather than narrated.
- Seconds 45 to 80: the result, in the participant's own voice.
- Seconds 80 to 110: the founder makes the ask, names the number, names the deadline.
- Final 10 seconds: the link on screen, held long enough to read and type.
- Burn in captions. The majority of views happen with the sound off.

The content calendar

Cadence	Content	Purpose
Daily	Story or short-form clip	Stay visible during the campaign window
3x per week	Feed post with a milestone graphic	Show momentum and social proof
2x per week	Donor or volunteer spotlight	Gratitude drives repeat and referral gifts
Weekly	Longer update from the founder	Trust and transparency
As earned	Media coverage or partner post	Third-party credibility

Production reality for a small team

A modern phone, a \$30 clip-on microphone, and a window for light will get you 95 percent of the way. Shoot vertical for stories and reels, horizontal for the anchor video and the website. Record far more interview audio than you think you need, because good quotes are the scarce resource, not footage.

Paid amplification, if you have budget

- Retarget people who watched more than half of the anchor video. This is consistently the cheapest donation you will buy.
- Build a lookalike audience from your existing donor list rather than guessing at interests.
- Cap geography tightly. For a local cause, a 20-mile radius outperforms statewide targeting.
- Spend the largest share of a limited budget in the final five days, when intent is highest.

SECTION 06

Campaign timeline, week by week

A 30-day public campaign with a six-week runway. Compress or extend it, but keep the order intact.

Week	Focus	Key deliverables
-6	Foundation	Goal set, gift table built, donor list cleaned and segmented
-5	Story	Founder interview recorded, participant consents signed, copy drafted
-4	Assets	Anchor video edited, donation page built, email sequence written
-3	Quiet phase	Board gifts committed, lead and matching gifts secured in writing
-2	Outreach	Partner, creator, and media lists contacted; launch crew confirmed
-1	Rehearsal	Full test of page, receipts, and links; assets shared with the crew
1	Launch	Launch day sequence, daily updates, personal calls to early donors
2	Momentum	Match announced, first partner posts, midpoint media pitch
3	Depth	Lapsed donor calls, spotlight content, corporate matching push
4	Close	72-hour, 24-hour, and 4-hour countdown messages; final push event
+1	Gratitude	Thank-yous, receipts, results post, donor survey
+2	Report	Public impact report published and mailed to major donors

Assign a single named owner to every row. Shared ownership of a fundraising task reliably means no ownership.

SECTION 07

Enrolling in PayPal Giving Fund and charitable tools

Platform charitable programs remove the transaction fee from most gifts and unlock native donation buttons across social feeds. Enrollment takes weeks, not days, so start this before you need it.

What you need in hand first

- Your IRS determination letter confirming 501(c)(3) status.
- Your EIN, exactly as it appears on the letter.
- A bank account in the organization's legal name, not a personal or DBA account.
- A current listing in the IRS tax-exempt organization database.
- A staff member with admin access to the organization's social accounts.

The sequence

- Register with PayPal Giving Fund and confirm your organization's profile and bank details.
- Apply for the social platform's charitable giving tools using the same legal name and EIN. Mismatches are the number one cause of rejection.
- Complete identity verification for every admin the platform asks about.
- Once approved, run a \$1 live test gift end to end and confirm it reaches the bank and generates a receipt.
- Enable the donate button on the page, in stories, and on the anchor video.

Keep a direct path too

Never route every dollar through a platform you do not control. Maintain your own donation page on your own domain with a processor in your name, and treat platform tools as an additional lane. Platform approvals get delayed, reversed, and occasionally revoked mid-campaign.

Fees and payout timing

Budget 2.2 to 3.0 percent plus a fixed per-transaction fee for standard processing, and expect payouts on a 7 to 45 day cycle depending on the program. On a \$75,000 goal that is roughly \$1,700 to \$2,400 in fees unless charitable programs cover them. Add an optional "cover the fee" checkbox to your form. A meaningful share of donors will tick it.

SECTION 08

Donor stewardship, updates, and transparent reporting

Retention is cheaper than acquisition by a wide margin, and stewardship is where almost every small organization leaves money on the table.

The first 72 hours after a gift

- Automated tax receipt within minutes, with the EIN and the deductible amount stated clearly.
- A personal thank-you within 48 hours. Email for smaller gifts, a phone call for anything above your median.
- A handwritten note for gifts above \$500. This single habit measurably lifts second-gift rates.
- Add the donor to the campaign update list, not the general newsletter blast.

During and after the campaign

- Publish a weekly update while the campaign runs, whether the news is good or slow.
- If you miss the goal, say so plainly and explain what you will do with what you raised. Honesty here protects the next campaign.
- Within 60 days of closing, publish a one-page impact report: dollars raised, dollars spent, and what happened as a result.
- Mail that report to every donor above \$500 along with a signed note.
- Ninety days later, send one more update. Almost nobody does this, and donors remember the organizations that do.

What to track

Metric	Why it matters
Donor retention rate	The single best predictor of long-term stability
Average gift	Tells you whether your suggested amounts are set correctly
Second-gift rate within 12 months	Measures whether stewardship is actually working
Cost to raise a dollar	Keeps paid amplification honest
Page conversion rate	Under 15 percent usually means a form problem, not a story problem

SECTION 09

Data handling and donor privacy

Donors hand you their name, address, payment details, and often a personal reason for giving. Treat that file as the sensitive record it is.

Minimum standards

- Never store full card numbers. Use a processor that tokenizes payment data, and confirm it in writing.
- Restrict donor database access to the smallest number of people who need it, and remove access the day someone leaves.
- Use unique logins with two-factor authentication. Shared accounts make breaches untraceable.
- Encrypt exports and delete them when the task is finished. Spreadsheets on laptops are the most common leak.
- Publish a plain-language privacy policy that says what you collect, why, and who you share it with.
- Never sell, rent, or trade your donor list, and say so explicitly on the donation page.

Consent for stories and images

Keep signed releases for every person shown or quoted, store them with the campaign records, and honor withdrawal requests promptly, including taking down published material. For minors, obtain guardian consent in writing and default to first names only.

If something goes wrong

- Contain first: revoke access, rotate credentials, and stop the exposure.
- Document what happened, what data was involved, and when you learned of it.
- Notify affected donors directly and promptly. Do not wait for certainty on every detail.
- Check your state's breach notification requirements, which vary and often carry deadlines.
- Write down what changed as a result. Donors forgive incidents; they do not forgive repetition.

SECTION 10

Checklists and templates

Pre-launch checklist

- Goal, deadline, and outcome sentence written and agreed by the board.
- Gift table complete with named prospects at every level.
- 40 to 50 percent of the goal committed in the quiet phase.
- Donation page tested on mobile with a live card, receipt confirmed.
- Anchor video captioned and uploaded, thumbnail chosen.
- Full email sequence written and scheduled.
- Launch crew of 8 to 12 confirmed with assets in hand.
- Media and partner outreach sent, follow-up dates on the calendar.
- Payment tools verified and payout account confirmed.
- One person named as the owner of every campaign week.

Email sequence outline

Send	Angle	Primary ask
Launch a.m.	The story, told fully	Give today
Launch p.m.	Day-one momentum	Join the first donors
Day 4	The match is live	Double your gift
Day 9	A second person's story	Give or share
Day 15	Halfway, with the gap named	Close the gap
Day 22	Behind the scenes	Share with three people
Day 27	72 hours left	Give now
Day 29	24 hours left	Give now
Day 30	Final hours	Last chance
Day 32	Thank you and the result	No ask, gratitude only

Outreach message template

Hi [name], I follow your work with [specific thing they do] and thought of you. Our organization is raising \$75,000 by [date] so that [outcome in one clause]. We are looking for a handful of people to share the campaign during the first week. If you are open to it, I can send a caption, an image, and the link, and it would take you about two

minutes. If sharing is not a fit, an introduction to someone who might care would help just as much. Either way, thank you for what you do. [Your name], [role], [phone].

Thank-you call script, 90 seconds

- Say who you are and that this is not a fundraising call.
- Thank them for the specific amount and the specific campaign.
- Tell them one concrete thing their gift makes possible.
- Ask one question: what made them decide to give? Then be quiet and listen.
- Tell them when they will hear from you next, and end the call.

Impact report, one page

- Total raised against goal, stated plainly.
- Number of donors and how many were first-time givers.
- Where the money went, in three or four line items.
- One story of a person served since the campaign closed.
- What comes next, and how to stay involved.



Need a hand running it?

We build the websites, donation pages, video, and campaign systems behind fundraising pushes like this one, and we do a share of that work at cost or free for community organizations in the Phoenix metro.

Bring us your goal and your timeline. We will tell you honestly what is realistic and what it takes to get there.

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