GalaBid

FREE FUNDRAISING PLANNER

# Fundraising for Small Teams

Build a balanced funding mix on a limited budget. Audit where your funds come from now, compare the four streams honestly, and lay out a year that does not all land in the final quarter.

GET STARTED

# How to Use This Planner

Relying on a single source of funding leaves a small organisation exposed. A change in supporter behaviour, a grant that does not renew, or a shift in economic conditions can affect your income quickly, and a small team feels it first.

Diversifying is not about doing more. It is about building a balanced mix of revenue streams that hold each other up. Start with the audit on the next page, because you cannot balance a mix you have not measured. Anything in [square brackets] is for you to complete.

## You'll Find

1. **A funding mix audit, with a risk test**
2. **The four streams compared on flexibility and effort**
3. **What works in grant applications**
4. **How to build predictable income from individual giving**
5. **An earned income shortlist**
6. **A stewardship rhythm, and a year plan across four quarters**

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## Why a Mix Beats a Bigger Single Source

✓ **It spreads the risk.** Organisations with several income streams are generally more stable, and better able to adapt when one of them moves.

✓ **It smooths the year.** Grants, events and regular giving arrive at different times, which evens out the gaps.

✓ **It balances restricted against flexible.** Grant funds usually come with conditions. Something unrestricted has to sit alongside them.

✓ **It compounds.** Regular giving and stewardship build slowly, then carry you through the years when other sources dip.

✓ **It does not require a bigger budget.** Start with what you have, focus on what suits your community, and grow from there.

STEP #1

# Audit Your Funding Mix

Before you choose what to build, measure what you have. Use last financial year, and use real figures rather than impressions.

**Where our funds came from last year**

Grants: [ ] %

Individual giving: [ ] %

Events and campaigns: [ ] %

Earned income: [ ] %

Everything else: [ ] %

Our largest single source: [ ] at [ ] %

## The Risk Test

**If our largest source halved next year, we would lose [$ ] and we would cover it by [ ].**

*If you cannot finish that second sentence, you have found the work for this year.*

STEP #2

# The Four Streams Compared

Each stream behaves differently. The point is not to rank them, it is to see which gaps your current mix leaves open.

| Stream | What it is | Restricted or flexible | Effort | Best for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grants | Funding from foundations, government or corporate giving programmes, for specific projects | Usually restricted to a defined purpose | High, and competitive | Funding a named project you can evidence |
| Individual giving | People giving directly: one-off, major, or regular monthly support | Flexible | Moderate, and compounds | Predictable income and long-term stability |
| Events and campaigns | Time-bound activity: silent auctions, raffles, peer-to-peer, ticketed events | Flexible | Concentrated bursts | Urgency, participation and visibility |
| Earned income | Selling goods or services: workshops, merchandise, memberships, venue hire | Usually unrestricted | Varies, and can scale | Independence from funding cycles |

*Grants are valuable but should not stand alone, because restricted funds cannot fill every gap. Individual giving and events tend to be the most flexible income a small team can build.*

TWO STREAMS

# Grants and Individual Giving

## What Works in a Grant Application

- ☐ Alignment: we are applying to funders whose priorities genuinely match our mission
- ☐ Clarity: our outcomes are simple and measurable, such as the number of people supported
- ☐ Evidence: we have included data or results from what we have already done
- ☐ We know exactly what the funding may and may not be spent on
- ☐ We have flexible income alongside it, because restricted funds cannot cover everything

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## Building Individual Giving

*This is the most consistent and flexible funding most small teams can build, and supporters who feel connected to your impact are the ones who give again.*

✓ **Build a regular giving programme.** Monthly support is the only stream that lets you forecast with any confidence.

✓ **Show where contributions went.** Not what you plan to do. What their funds already did.

✓ **Personalise where you can.** Even lightly. A small team's advantage is that it can still sound like a person.

✓ **Ask the regular givers last.** They are already giving. Protect that relationship rather than leaning on it every appeal.

TWO STREAMS

# Events and Earned Income

## Events and Campaigns

Time-bound activity that raises funds and engages people at the same time. They work because urgency and shared experience do something a standing appeal cannot: people contribute when they feel part of a specific moment.

- ☐ Silent auctions, in person, online or hybrid
- ☐ Online raffles
- ☐ Peer-to-peer campaigns
- ☐ Ticketed fundraising events

*For a small team this is usually the fastest stream to grow, because one campaign can reach further than your volunteer capacity would suggest. It is also the stream where manual admin quietly eats the gain, so the tooling matters more here than anywhere else.*

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## Earned Income

Revenue from selling goods or services rather than asking for support. Usually unrestricted, which makes every dollar of it worth more than a restricted one. Tick anything you could realistically start:

- ☐ Workshops or training sessions
- ☐ Merchandise or branded products
- ☐ Memberships or a subscription model
- ☐ Venue or space hire

*Even a small earned income line contributes to long-term sustainability. It grows with demand rather than with funding cycles, which is exactly the quality your other streams lack.*

THE FOUNDATION

# Supporter Stewardship

Stewardship is what you do after someone gives. It is the cheapest fundraising you will ever do, and it is the difference between a one-off contribution and a relationship that funds you for a decade.

| When | What to send | Why it works |
|---|---|---|
| Within 48 hours of a gift | A prompt, genuine thank-you | The single most reliable thing you can do to earn a second gift |
| Within the quarter | An update on how the funds were used | Shows the contribution became something real, not just a receipt |
| When appropriate | Recognition, public or private | Matched to what that person would actually want, which is not always a public mention |
| At least twice a year | Contact with no ask attached | The whole point is staying in touch consistently, not only when you need something |

## The Test

✓ **Count your no-ask contacts.** If every message you sent last year contained an ask, you do not have stewardship, you have a campaign calendar.

✓ **Check your thank-you speed.** If it takes more than a few days, fix that before you build anything new.

✓ **Look at your second-gift rate.** The share of first-time supporters who gave again is the truest measure of how you are doing.

STEP #3

# Your Year, in Four Quarters

An annual plan spreads the effort, avoids the last-minute campaign, and keeps engagement steady instead of arriving in one exhausting burst. Use the suggested focus as a starting point and write your own beside it.

| Quarter | A suggested focus | Ours | When |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | Submit grant applications. Launch a supporter outreach campaign | [ ] | [ ] |
| Q2 | Run a community event or online raffle. Promote regular giving | [ ] | [ ] |
| Q3 | Share impact updates. Trial a smaller peer-to-peer campaign | [ ] | [ ] |
| Q4 | Host a major event or auction. Run a year-end giving campaign | [ ] | [ ] |

## Check the Shape of It

- ☐ No quarter is empty
- ☐ The largest effort does not all sit in Q4
- ☐ At least one stream is being built rather than just harvested
- ☐ Stewardship contact appears in every quarter, not only after an appeal
- ☐ Each activity has a named owner, even if that owner is the same person every time

PRO TIPS

# Tips for a Resilient Funding Mix

- ✓ **Start from your audit, not from an idea.** The gap in the mix tells you what to build.
- ✓ **Never let one source carry more than you could survive losing.** That is the whole argument.
- ✓ **Pair restricted grants with flexible income.** Grants cannot fill every gap.
- ✓ **Make one stream predictable.** Regular giving is usually the easiest to start.
- ✓ **Spread the effort across the year.** A plan stops everything landing in Q4.
- ✓ **Thank people before you ask again.** Stewardship is the cheapest fundraising there is.
- ✓ **Count small earned income.** It is unrestricted, which makes it worth more per dollar.

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## The Stream a Small Team Grows Fastest

Raise more, stress less. Events and campaigns reach further than your volunteer numbers suggest, as long as the admin does not eat the gain:

- ✓ Mobile-friendly auctions for in-person, online or hybrid events
- ✓ Online and offline payments, so cash on the night still gets recorded
- ✓ No app download needed for your supporters
- ✓ Funds go straight to your own account. GalaBid never touches them

*Real fundraising experts, not chatbots. Trusted by fundraisers since 2011.*

GET STARTED →

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