

Role of Fundraiser

20. Fundraisers should not attempt to influence a programming decision on behalf of a donor or prospective donor.
21. Fundraisers should be educators rather than advisors when it comes to tax and investment matters. Common sense dictates that we urge prospective donors to seek outside professional advice.
22. Fundraisers and station executives should be committed to understanding a donor's intent. After accepting a gift, stations have an ethical obligation to carry out that donor's wishes. Fundraisers must obtain explicit consent from a donor before changing the conditions of a gift.
23. Stations should respect a donor or prospect's wishes regarding frequency and form of contact.
24. Fundraisers should never use excessive influence or pressure to secure a gift.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

for public media fundraisers

Introduction

Public media is one of the most trusted institutions in the country. Stewarding this trust is an important role for all those working in public media and should not be taken lightly. To that end, the Leadership for Philanthropy Program has prepared these guidelines for ethical fundraising in public media.

This document is not exhaustive, and it is recommended that stations examine guidelines and codes from other fundraising organizations (like AFP, CASE, AHP, etc.) along with this document. These guidelines should not conflict with any of the widely-adopted professional codes in the fundraising industry.

How to use

Core to this document is a belief in the importance of written policies and procedures. Stations with written policies are better prepared to make consistent, fair, and ethical judgments concerning fundraising. This document contains a list of policies every station should have. Templates and sample policies are available through DEI, content providers like NPR and PBS, and national fundraising associations.

We believe that having stations adopt their own policies, informed by the standards of their community and license-holder, will result in more effective, relevant, and enforceable guidelines than those handed-down from a national organization. So, it is recommended that station managers, development staff, and boards use this document as a tool to start conversations about creating (or strengthening) an ethical fundraising culture in their organizations. It is also recommended that those involved in fundraising review these principles on an annual basis and recommit to upholding them.

Adherence to Laws, Policies and Rules

1. Public media fundraisers should be aware of and adhere to the rules and regulations regarding gifts, contributions and fundraising practices set by the Federal Communications Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, state/local governments, and, if applicable, their institutional license-holder.
2. Stations should have updated editions of the policies listed below. These policies should be approved and reviewed annually by those who will be using them. Each policy should contain a procedure for dealing with “grey” areas and address the consequences for failing to adhere to the policy.
 - Gift Acceptance Policy
 - Donor Privacy Policy
 - Editorial Integrity Policy
 - Donor Acknowledgement Policy
 - Underwriting Guidelines
 - Donor Bill of Rights
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy
 - Social Media Policy
3. Stations must provide suitable training and supervision for those soliciting funds on their behalf to make certain that they understand their responsibilities and any applicable polices and/or laws.
4. Fundraisers must disclose any conflicts of interest (as defined by the policies of their station) regarding donor interactions and/or contributions.
5. Fundraisers have a duty to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Donor/Prospect Interactions

6. Fundraisers must be clear, truthful, and accurate in all communications with donors and prospective donors.
7. When interacting with donors, fundraisers should avoid engaging in conversations (whether in-person or online) related to their personal opinions, particularly about controversial topics.
8. Fundraisers are representatives of their organizations in the community and should conduct themselves accordingly when interacting with the public. They should not engage in any activities that could harm the station’s reputation or ability to raise money.

9. Fundraisers must never exploit their relationships with donors, prospects, or volunteers for personal gain or to benefit anyone else.
10. Any staff member who deals with donors has a duty to respond to inquiries as quickly, completely, and truthfully as possible.
11. When it is not obvious, those soliciting gifts should identify their role with the station when interacting with donors.

Personal Conduct

12. Stations should be sensitive to their employee’s right to express their opinions through words and actions outside the workplace. However, those working in fundraising must be conscious of the public perception of those words and actions and consider their impact and appropriateness in regards to the station’s best interests.

Maintaining Ethical Standards

13. Creating an ethical culture at a station begins at the top. Station leadership should promote and advocate for ethical fundraising practices and lead by example in their own interactions.
14. Suspected violations of station policies or other unethical conduct should be reported to station executives.
15. Fundraisers and executives must be mindful of the costs of fundraising and be frugal when possible.

Donor Privacy

16. Every station employee and volunteer must be committed to the protection of confidential donor information, including reports on communications with donors. Under no circumstances should this information be disclosed to unauthorized parties, even within the station.
17. Stations must do their due diligence when selecting third-party vendors or non-profit partners, being careful to work with only those who have adequate systems in place to protect sensitive donor information.
18. Stations must provide donors with access to their complete donor file, if requested. Fundraisers should take great care to only include relevant, factual information in the donor file.
19. Stations that trade or share lists must clearly and conspicuously disclose this fact to donors and give them the option to have their contact information removed from any shared lists. CPB-funded stations must allow donors to opt-out before any sharing takes place.