

American Guild of Organists

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Fundraising Strategies for AGO Regional Conventions

Individual Support

People give to people. Don't be afraid to ask. On average, 70% of charitable gifts to any organization come from individuals. Begin by soliciting the members of your steering committee for their 100% participation as donors to your regional convention fund. This demonstrated support will be very attractive to other potential donors and grant-making organizations. Read the donor lists of past regional conventions and solicit those donors for yours. You should look upon individual solicitations as "friend-raising" opportunities for your convention.

Corporate Support

Contact businesses in your community and solicit their sponsorship of an event. Are there organbuilders in your community? Music publishers and dealers who would want visibility at your convention? Restaurants? Banks? Every event—recital, workshop, reception, and break—should have a sponsor. Put together a menu of possible sponsorships with prices for potential donors. Donations of goods or services "In-Kind" should also be a part of your fundraising strategy.

Foundation and Government Support

Plan ahead. Know your budget and your needs, then identify foundations, government agencies, and arts councils that might award your convention a grant. Local foundations and government are the most likely sources for funding. How do you identify these foundations? Contact The Foundation Center, www.fdncenter.org. They provide online resources and free libraries in Atlanta, Cleveland, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

Acknowledge Your Donors

You must acknowledge your donors at every opportunity. Send them a letter of thanks once their contribution is received, and an acknowledgment that their gift is tax deductible. Include a donor list in your convention book. Announce the names of your sponsors at the events they are sponsoring. Invite them to attend special events, cocktail parties, and receptions—before, during, and after the convention.

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