

2020

Funding Advocacy:

a Tool Kit to Assist State Self-Advocacy
Networks Increase Financial Independence



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Introduction

“Nothing lasts forever.” People say this a lot today. When it comes to the money needed to operate self-advocacy groups it is true. This project was started to teach self-advocacy networks and groups the importance of planning for their future – particularly how they will fund their projects and activities and how they can have enough money to continue their activities when or if they lose a major funding source.

This tool kit was put together to give state self-advocacy networks and groups information on how to raise funds from different sources available to them. This information is the result of a yearlong project that consisted of interviewing people in different positions in networks/groups as well as some disability-related organizations. A survey was also used to get information about how networks/ groups are funded across the country. Highlights of the results have been added here to give a real-world feel of how networks/groups function. Topics discussed in the tool kit include major gift fundraising and why it is important to a self-advocacy network/group, different ideas of how to raise money, ideas on how to find grants, and information about endowments as a potential source of funds for long-term success. Finally, users of this tool kit will learn about some best practices for safeguarding the funds their network/group has available.

These ideas are not the only ones out there but are a good way to start thinking about how to independently run self-advocacy networks/groups in your state.

Let’s start by defining the organizations this guide was written for. A *self-advocacy network* is a collection of self-advocacy groups that provide a supportive environment where individuals can develop confidence and independence while working on issues that are important to them. These groups often work independently on advocacy projects in their local communities and band together in a network to work on larger projects. For this project, self-advocacy network refers to self-advocacy groups that work together in their state. Many states also have large self-

Tool Box Tip: Spread the Word

Don’t forget to spread the word about your fundraising activities. No one will know what options you have for giving unless you spread the word.

advocacy groups that may or may not be part of a network that can also benefit from the information in this tool kit.

What is Fundraising?

Fundraising is the organized activity of raising money for a cause or organization. The best place to start your fundraising efforts as a self-advocacy network/group are with people who believe in what you do. Fundraising includes a range of activities, from bake sales and car washes to large special events (balls, golf tournaments, etc.) and million-dollar endowment drives. Some of these activities will only raise small amounts of money while others might raise tens of thousands of dollars at a time that will bolster the network's/group's operating budget. This project is focused on raising large sums of money to assist a network/group to keep working in their communities and participating in activities that promote disability awareness and self-advocacy activities for years to come.

Why is Fundraising Important for Self-advocacy Networks?

We learned from our survey that the majority of state networks/groups that responded receive most of their funding from agencies that deliver government funding. Fundraising is important to self-advocacy networks/groups so that if the state and or federal funding is no longer available, they can continue operating with little or no disruption to what they're working on from day to day. Financial security enables organizations to be less dependent on public funding sources that often have requirements that can be obstacles to self-advocacy goals and activities. Greater financial security also allows organizations to spend more time fulfilling their missions.

In order for fundraising to work well, networks/groups should have a strategic plan and a business plan to serve as a road map to guide their future. A strategic plan gives you a place to record your mission statement (the main thing your organization does or why it exists), a vision statement (what your organization hopes to grow to be and accomplish in the future) as well as your long-term goals and the action plans you'll use to reach

them. A business plan summarizes an organization's day-to-day and financial goals and activities. It includes detailed plans about staffing and marketing and a budget that shows how these goals can be achieved. Strategic and business plans provide a road map for future success and will guide a network/group into deciding which fundraising activities are best for them. For nonprofits, a fundraising plan is often included in business planning. If a network/group does not have a strategic or business plan, it should seek out resources to help them develop these plans.

Fundraising is also a good way to raise awareness about the existence of self-advocacy networks/groups and their activities in local communities. It also provides a good opportunity to educate people about the meaning of self-advocacy and inform people about disability issues.

Should Your Group Be a 501(c)(3) Organization?

While most self-advocacy groups are considered "nonprofit," unless your group has received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service, you are not a tax exempt "Nonprofit Corporation" and donations to your organization are not tax deductible. Self-advocacy networks/groups wishing to raise large amounts of money will need to apply for 501(c)(3) status as major gift donors will expect a tax deduction and state and federal governments require accountability for raising large sums. Be sure to check with your state government about requirements for nonprofits that ask for donations.

Something to Think About: Where can I learn more about strategic and business planning for my network?

- Google Search
- Center for Nonprofit Management in your community. These centers serve geographic regions with information and training related to nonprofit management. Some community foundations also provide these services. Google "center for nonprofit management" + the name of your city or region to learn if there's a center in your area.
- Seeking assistance from group allies who have knowledge and skills in this area such as business owners or managers at other area nonprofits.

Types of Funding Options for Your Network

During this project various sources of funding were identified as good ways to keep your network/group running independently. Self-advocacy networks/groups that want to raise substantial funds to help achieve financial independence should have a fundraising plan that includes multiple types of activities and funding sources in order to maximize the amount of money they can generate throughout the year. It's also important to try and choose fundraising activities that will bring the most awareness to your communities and the highest financial return with the least amount of resources being used. These resources include the time it takes for people to work on an activity and the upfront money it takes to support the activity. The following section describes funding sources and activities that self-advocacy networks/groups should consider as part of their fundraising plans.

Public Funding

Public funding includes agencies that disburse federal and state funding to groups and organizations for the purpose of disability self-advocacy. These would include your state's Developmental Disabilities Council and protection and advocacy agency, the statewide Arc, and government sources such as the state legislature and governor's office. Local networks/groups should also consider petitioning local government, local Arcs, and local Centers for Independent Living. It's suggested that groups form strong relationships with all agencies that fund and or provide services to the developmentally and intellectually disabled population in their area as they may be potential funding sources and allies for your network/group.

Hands on Activity: Who Do You Know?

Have your group members brainstorm agencies in your state or local community that might consider putting funds aside in their budget for your network. Work on a plan to seek partnerships with them.

Grants

Grants are funds *granted* to an organization by foundations, corporations, or government agencies, often to help the organization address defined goals. Some grants, called project or program grants, are for trying out new ideas or enhancing existing programs. Others are general operating grants that support the overall work of the organization. Although some can be renewed, grants are typically limited to a specific project or timeline and must be formally applied for by the organization. This involves filing out an application and turning in that application by a set deadline. Most organizations that offer grants publish information on their websites that explain what types of organizations and projects they grant money to. It is very important to follow any guidelines set forth to apply for the grant in order to be eligible to receive that funding.

Fees for Goods and Services

Some networks/groups generate money for their operating expenses by providing goods and services to paying customers. According to our survey and other research, some networks/groups provide training for a fee. This training is often in self-determination and self-advocacy or other related topics with the target audience being self-advocates parents, and providers. Others sell promotional items like buttons or t-shirts. One group was even successful in selling an “idea.” This Florida group created a t-shirt with a disability slogan and graphic that turned out to be very popular with people in the disability community. They were able to sell the rights to the graphic for a substantial amount of money.

Tool Box Tip: Researching Grants

- Grants.gov
- Google “grants” + “disability programs” or similar terms
- Search the websites of local and state charitable foundations near you – check their giving priorities to ensure they grant to organizations with a similar mission to yours

Major Gift Fundraising

Major gifts can best be described as large gifts of money, stock, or in-kind products that an organization receives from individuals or companies. According to donorsearch.net, “Major gifts are the largest gifts an organization receives.” For some nonprofit organizations, these donations could be \$1 million or more. For a

self-advocacy network or local group, a \$2,000 donation from one person or company could be considered a major gift. When we refer to a major gift here, we mean that it’s a larger gift than what we typically receive and comes from a single source like an individual or company. The main way major gifts are raised is through relationships. Someone in the network/group knows someone who has money to give and asks them for a donation for the network/group.

How you ask for a major gift

Like we said above, large gifts from individuals or companies start with a relationship between someone in the group and the donor. Think of people and companies in your community or state who are most likely to support your group with a donation. This could be

- ❖ Board members and their contacts. It’s a good idea to have a group of people on your board with different kinds of knowledge for different reasons. One of those reasons is to be a resource for fundraising. Some organizations expect their board members to be donors and/or expect them to assist in identifying major gift donors in their networks. You may want to ask board members once a year to come up with five people

Hands-On Activity: “Who Ya Gonna Ask?”

Brainstorm with your group individuals or companies in your city or state that you might consider asking for a major gift. The best place to start is with folks who someone in your group has a personal connection with.

- Decide **who** you are going to ask
- **Decide what** you are going to ask for
- **Decide who in your group will be doing the asking**
- Come up with a **process** that works for your group

they know who might be interested in contributing to your group or network.

- ❖ Vendors or suppliers that the group or group members either regularly use or work for (restaurants, salons, banks, insurance agencies, etc.);
- ❖ Doctors, dentists, and physical therapists, etc. that group members frequent or who are known to serve persons with disabilities;
- ❖ Businesses that sell goods and/or services for persons with disabilities (medical equipment retailers); and
- ❖ Business owners or individuals who have family members with disabilities.

What you say to a prospective donor is important! Compelling stories of the good work your organization is doing and how it's impacting your membership and people with disabilities in general will be persuasive with donors, especially if they have a personal connection with the disability community. While personal contact with donors is important, it's common practice to provide information in writing when you're asking for money. In general, your pitch to donors should also include

- ❖ Background information on the organization and its mission
- ❖ A compelling statement regarding your group's financial needs
- ❖ How donations/sponsorships will help your group (how you will use the funds)
- ❖ Information on how donors will be recognized is important to mention (in person and in your materials).

The process from identifying a donor to asking him/her for a gift and then closing the gift often takes time and multiple steps. It might start with an initial meeting over coffee, followed by providing the donor prospect with information about your organization, followed from there with patient, well-

Something to Think About: Why do people give?

- It makes them feel good - like they are making a difference
- Leaving a legacy
- Belief in your organization's mission

Other reasons (but not significant)

- Tax deductions
- Naming opportunities

BIG REASON – “Someone asked me.”

timed follow-up conversations. Some donors respond right away. Others will need weeks or longer to think about your request. Be patient and remember it's a relational process. And always be prepared for the donor to say "No" or "Not now." Florida Self-Advocates Network'D's (FL SAND) Breaking Barriers Training Academy can provide consulting and training to your network/group in major gift fundraising (asking for gifts) or you can look for help for this in your community from experts at other nonprofits such as development officers at hospitals, United Way, etc.

Organizations that receive major gifts often provide options for their donors to choose from when making a gift. Two primary options are planned giving and endowments.

Planned Giving

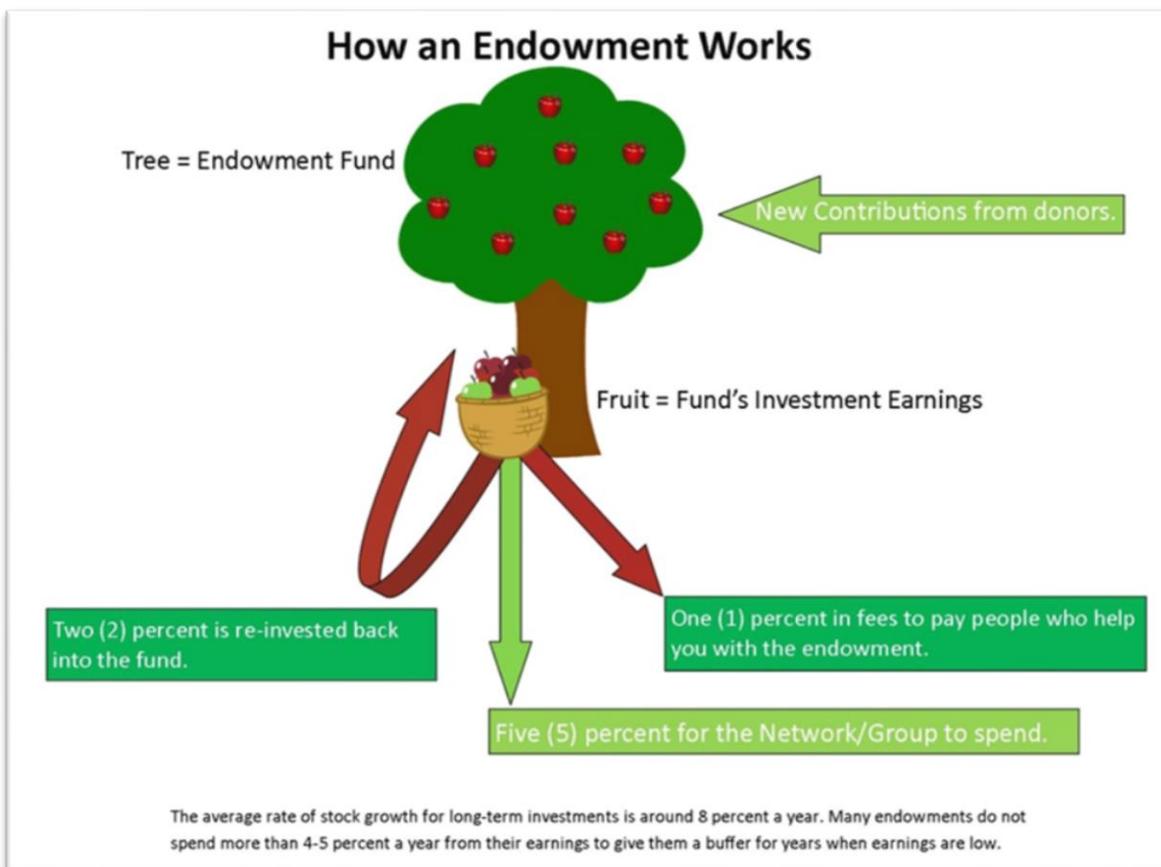
Planned giving programs involve major gifts that are carefully considered by the donor in light of estate or long-term financial plans. This involves a legal process that generally includes a knowledgeable staff person or a qualified volunteer from the organization, and the donor's legal and financial advisors. It's money that will be donated from a person's estate after they pass away, proceeds when they sell their company, etc. This is not an immediate gift the organization can use right away. It is a donation that the network/group will receive at a later date. The advantage of a planned gift is that it offers the donor the opportunity to support a charitable organization in a meaningful way with cash he or she will no longer need one day (upon their death). Planned gifts offer substantial tax savings to donors especially on property and stocks. A planned gift also has many advantages for a network/group. They are often some of the largest gifts a nonprofit will receive. Another advantage of a planned gift for a network/group is that loyal donors can contribute more upon their death or sale of a company than they are able to do at the present time.

Endowments

Groups that want to raise large sums of money to support their long-term independence should consider adding an endowment to their fundraising plan. An endowment is a special fund donors can contribute to that will be invested with the intention that *only earnings* from the fund will be spent. Once an endowment is large enough, it will typically generate regular income from year to year. While it often takes a long time for an

endowment to grow to the point that it generates substantial income, when you consider how long some self-advocacy groups have been around, it makes more sense. If groups that have been around 20 years had started an endowment when they began, some could be generating tens of thousands of dollars a year (or more) by now with very little effort. As stated earlier, this type of financial security enables organizations to be less dependent on public funding sources that oftentimes have requirements that can be obstacles to self-advocacy program goals and activities. Greater financial security also allows an organization to spend more time fulfilling its mission and less on fundraising.

The figure below shows how an endowment works. The tree is all the money that donors give to the endowment fund over the years – none of this money can be spent. The fruit from the tree represents money the fund will earn from its investments. Only the earnings – the fruit—can be spent. In the early years of the fund’s life, it may not earn much money, but as it grows, matures, and is managed by smart people, it will start to earn more and more, and after several years, quite a lot.



“How an Endowment Works” graphic © 2020 Florida Self-Advocates Network’D (FL SAND). Can be used without permission with credit to Florida Self-Advocates Network’D (FL SAND).

To review, an endowment is a planned, consistent, and ongoing effort to support the work of the group and or network. Endowments are typically built slowly. It's a good idea to have solid relationships with various donors and allies who can help cultivate other financial investors who will donate to the network/group on a long-term basis. Many groups do not start spending investment earnings for a few years, allowing the endowment to use its earnings to grow larger.

Managing Endowments. Endowment funds require people with specific skills to help set them up and manage their investments and reports. There are two primary options available to help organizations manage an endowment. Below are descriptions of both so you can make the best choice for your network/group.

- ❖ A **community foundation** is a tax-exempt charitable organization that provides support from funds that it raises, maintains, and administers on behalf of multiple organizations in a local or regional community. Community foundations will manage the investment of a local nonprofit's endowment fund and distribute a portion of the fund's year-end value back to the organization at least annually. A community foundation will charge a fee for maintaining the endowment. The fee, often starting at one (1) percent, is a percentage of the amount of money in the endowment. As the endowment grows, the percentage charged gets smaller. Allowing a community foundation to manage an endowment is often a good option for small nonprofits or those that don't have allies in the area of fund management who will donate their services.
- ❖ Another option available is for **the organization to manage and administer the endowment themselves**. If this is the route your organization decides to take, the program should be totally integrated into your network/group's development and finance functions. This may be a good option for networks/groups that have allies willing to donate legal, accounting, and fund management services.

Appendix A provides more specific information on endowments.

Something to Think About: Is an Endowment Right for Your Organization?

Pros

- Principal (this is the money that is donated) is never spent and serves as a financial asset
- With continued giving from donors over time, endowments can grow to the point of supplying a significant percentage of a small nonprofit's operating budget, allowing the group to expand and be less dependent on public funding sources

Cons

- Endowments take time to build, sometimes several years to begin generating significant income
- Not all income of endowment is available for use
- Some income must be spent on fees
- Some risk: Growth is dependent on the performance of the investments market

Common Major Gift Fundraising Activities

In addition to types of gifts major gift donors make, there are also activities organizations use to identify new prospects and cultivate existing donors that also result in raising larger amounts of money. They are special events, annual giving, and digital giving.

Special Events

Special Events are large-scale events intended to raise large sums of money. They differ from small events like car washes and bake sales in that they typically require months of planning and significant human resources (a lot of people to do many jobs) and money to pay for upfront expenses like renting venues, paying vendors, and printing. Special events include galas or balls, golf tournaments, 5K runs, dance-a-thons, etc. At some point during the event, attendees will be presented with a compelling message about your organization and be asked to support the organization with a donation, by volunteering, or becoming an ally, etc.

Events also raise funds by asking local businesses to be an event sponsor. Sponsors may donate cash to help pay for the event or supplies needed for the event. In exchange for their donation, the organization gives the business publicity and free tickets to the event. Like everything else we've talked about here, the time and expense involved in special events can be lessened if you have allies who donate event planning experience, space, food, and door prizes to your event. In return they will have a sense of giving back to the community and get their name out into the community. This will help them gain more exposure for their organization.

Something to Think About: Pros & Cons of Special Events

Pros

- If promoted well, raise a lot of awareness for the organization
- Are fun and exciting for members
- Can be entry points for major gift donors

Cons

- VERY labor intensive and require upfront money and time on the part of volunteers
- Return on investment – how much money you make compared to how much money and time is spent up front – can be low compared to other fundraising activities

Although special events require a lot of time, effort, and upfront cash, one advantage of them is that they can help you build relationships in your community and cultivate major gift donors. For example, a charity golf tournament will attract golfers who know nothing about the organization because it's held at their favorite golf course or because a friend invited them to play. Participating in the golf tournament helps them to learn about your network/ group and get to know your members who are volunteering at the event. Because they participated in the tournament you now have their contact information to put on your mailing list where they will learn even more about your organization. They might soon respond to an annual giving mailer or be someone you would put on your major gift prospect list.

Annual Giving

Traditional annual giving programs involve sending mail/email to stakeholders every year – usually at the same time each year -- asking them for a donation.

1. The first step in setting up an annual giving program is to create a mailing list of prospective donors.
2. The second step is to include in your mail/email message a compelling case for why you are asking for a donation. It could be for a special project, to help bolster your operating budget, or to help set up an endowment. Either way, organizations must include persuasive stories about how they are serving their membership and the community so donors will be persuaded to help keep the organization going.
3. The third step is to provide an easy way for donors to respond. If you use physical mail, include a card for the donor to check off the amount they want to give and an addressed envelope for them to return the card and their check. You can also include your web address on the card with an encouragement for them to give online.

Email campaigns are much less expensive but still must incorporate the three steps above in a digital format. Annual giving is one way to cultivate relationships with donors who will give a yearly donation and, with hope, will increase their giving each year. This could be in the form of one lump sum or monthly donations via drafting out of their bank accounts. As always, don't forget to thank annual gift donors in some way (e.g. email) – consider this step 4. It's easy to remember to thank major gift donors that you meet with face-to-face over time but when it comes to processing dozens to thousands of annual gifts it's easy to forget this important step. The primary advantage of annual giving to an organization is that – especially if you use email – you are able to ask many people for money with minimal effort and expense. The ongoing year-to-year contact also serves to build relationships with donors that often results in larger gifts each year. While the average annual gift is typically smaller than one-time major gifts from wealthy donors, well-crafted annual giving campaigns can end up raising large totals because of the volume and repeat frequency of gifts.

Digital Tools

Digital Giving is included in this tool kit because, over time, these tools can generate significant amounts of money if managed and promoted well.

- ❖ Utilizing Your Website. If your network/group has a website, they could look into adding a “Donate Now” button so that visitors to the website have the opportunity to donate. PayPal and other credit card processors offer discounted fees to nonprofit organizations.
- ❖ Social Media. You can extend the reach of your website giving by regularly posting your giving pages on your social media platforms. Don’t forget to include a current, compelling story about lives impacted by your organization, accomplishments of your organization, or an urgent need each time you post. This will have a greater return than just posting the link by itself.
- ❖ Amazon Smile. Amazon.com is a widely used e-commerce platform. Amazon Smile is a way that anyone who shops at Amazon.com can elect a nonprofit agency of their choice to receive .5 percent of their purchase. In this case, the network/group must have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status that is granted by the IRS. You can learn more about how to register for Amazon Smile on Amazon.com.

Best Practices for Managing Large Amounts of Money

If your network/group is fortunate enough to have raised substantial amounts of money through the methods discussed above or other means, it’s very important that you put safeguards in place to protect those funds. These safeguards are often called financial controls and/or best practices and are necessary to make sure that the network/group’s funds are properly managed. If you don’t have safeguards in place, your group or network will risk cash shortages, fraudulent activities, or even bankruptcy.

Additionally, financial controls are processes, policies, and procedures that are put into place by a self- advocacy network/group to manage finances honestly and legally. They may also play a role in meeting obligations of corporate governance, fiduciary duty, and/or due diligence required by individual donors or organizations that gifted the money to the network/group.

According to the National Council of Nonprofits, “Effective financial controls have three attributes: they ensure safe care of your assets; divide responsibilities among several people; and are fully disclosed to, and understood by, all concerned parties.” This last attribute is referred to as transparency.

If a network/group is effective at the second and third attributes above, they will more than likely also accomplish the first – to ensure monies are handled honestly and safely. Let’s talk about dividing responsibilities and transparency first.

Dividing Responsibility

Dividing responsibility for finances among several people is the second broad financial control of any organization. In other words, just one person should never have sole control of any financial product or process. A strong organization should have policies in place that provide checks and balances for everything from physical products such as cash, credit cards, and checks, to digital resources such as passwords, bank account numbers, and credit card numbers. Networks and groups should craft policies based upon how they raise and manage money. For instance,

- ❖ If they collect large amounts of cash and checks at events, two people should count the proceeds together before depositing them.
- ❖ If the network/group has a checking account, the person writing the check and recording the expense – usually the board secretary or staff bookkeeper – would not be the same person who signs the check. Another good practice regarding checks is that two signatures be required for amounts over a certain limit. Your bank can help you establish this procedure.
- ❖ Any size group should designate a separate party –not the people who prepare and write checks or handle cash – to receive and review copies of checking or investment account statements. Or, in today’s digital age, this *second person* should be logging on and reviewing digital statements independently each month.

Transparency

Transparency is the third principle of good financial controls. Nonprofits with official 501(c)(3) designations are exempt from most taxes because

they serve the public good. However, it means your tax returns and other filings are open to the public. Transparency is a best practice regardless if it's required or not.

A network/group should establish policies that encourage transparency, such as establishing and publishing procedures and processes that direct how all funds are to be handled so that the network's staff and board understand the financial system.

These policies should include that reports from the board to membership or from staff to the board be conducted in a timely manner. Records and books tend to stay tidy and manageable when staff or volunteer board treasurers are not playing catch-up for past months.

The National Council of Nonprofits suggests creating a flow chart or map showing how money moves in and out of your organization and who is responsible for each procedure along the way. As always, these documents should be in easy read or have an easy read version. Another way to encourage transparency is to post these documents on the organization's website.

Audits

If you're ensuring your money is being handled safely and honestly through sound day-to-day controls like those mentioned above, an additional measure to provide accountability to your board and donors is a yearly audit. A financial audit is an objective examination and evaluation of the financial statements of an organization to make sure that its records were kept properly and that all the money that was received and spent was done so honestly and according to the organization's rules and state and federal laws. The audit can be conducted internally by employees of the organization or externally by an outside Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm. Think of an audit as a year-end report card that tells how well you handled your money and if you followed all the rules. A clean bill of health from an auditor shows the world that you're keeping your books in a responsible manner.

Independent audits are mandatory for some nonprofits. The IRS does not require nonprofits to obtain audits, but other government agencies do. For example, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires

any nonprofit that spends \$500,000 or more in federal funds in a year (whether directly or by passing the money on to other nonprofits) to obtain what is termed a “single audit” to test for compliance with federal grants management standards. In addition, approximately one-third of all states require nonprofits with annual revenues of a certain amount to be audited if they solicit funds from their state’s residents. The revenue thresholds vary from state to state.

Closing Thoughts

It may be hard to believe but in this document we have only scratched the surface of all the assistance available to your network or group in raising large amounts of money to help you become financially independent and secure. We encourage you to pay special attention to the tips for accessing more information, especially the encouragement to take advantage of the resources at your group’s disposal via the wonderful knowledge and talents of allies such as nonprofit directors, development directors, attorneys, and financial advisors.

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About SARTAC



The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) seeks to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self-advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership. The resource center is a project of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), the oldest national self-advocacy organization in the country. SARTAC is a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration For Community Living – Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). The information in this product was written to provide guidance for self-advocates and their allies to assist in understanding policy issues affecting their lives. It is not to be used to determine a person's legal rights or an organization's legal responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, as amended or any other federal, state or local laws written to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

About FL SAND

Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (FL SAND) is Florida's self-advocacy group network. It is a statewide association led by self-advocates who are united and active in speaking up for themselves, promoting rights, advocating for systems change, and creating community inclusion and awareness for its members. FL SAND's primary purpose is to support local grassroots advocacy, expand the Florida self-advocacy movement, provide a united voice for statewide issues and topics that are important to Florida self-advocates, create community awareness, and promote inclusion for all.

FL SAND is an independent 501(c)(3) organization comprised of 19 local grassroots groups, governed at the state level by a board of directors that includes representation from each grassroots group. More information about FL SAND and its local groups can be found at www.flsand.org. General information about self-advocacy and the self-advocacy movement in Florida can be found at FL SAND's news and information hub, Florida Self-Advocacy Central / www.FSACentral.org.

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FL SAND Group Handbook and Toolkit (August 2018)

Endowment Readiness, presentation given by Barzella Papa June 24, 2019 at FL SAND Fellows training in Gainesville, FL.

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Appendix A

Specific Types of Endowments

The Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (UMIFA) defines an endowment fund as “an institutional fund or any part thereof, not wholly expendable on a current basis under the terms of the donor’s gift agreement. The Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) has identified three types of endowments. They are:

- True endowment- in this endowment the donor has stated that the gift is to be held permanently as an endowment. A true endowment gift is permanently invested, not spent for current operations or capital projects. It is held by the organization (in this case group and or network) in perpetuity or for an unlimited extent of time, with a portion of the endowments value used annually as the donor requested.
- Quasi endowment- the organization’s board of director’s has designated organizational funds to the endowment.
- Term endowment- the endowment is established for a set period of years, or until a future event.