



## RECOVERY MONTH TOOLKIT

### Private Funding of Recovery Month Activities

## HOSTING FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY MONTH EVENTS

The following are key components that organizations should consider when working to fund their Recovery Month activities.

### I. DETERMINE YOUR KEY ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC PURPOSE

- a. What is the strategic purpose of your event(s)? General awareness? Build positive recovery images and messages? Recovery community rally? Major/Signature community event?
- b. How much can one organization do without losing focus of the organization's mission? Consider focusing on a key signature event that the entire community can embrace.
- c. Establish a timeline for when the activity (ies) should be executed. It may be helpful to start your timeline at the beginning of October or the start of your fiscal year.

Here's a basic timeline to consider:

- OCTOBER: Determine the activity (ies) you plan to host next September, and based on the success or difficulties encountered during the previous event, set your budget for these activities.
- NOVEMBER-DECEMBER: Form (or reform) your event planning committee.
- JANUARY: Establish an event plan or an execution plan with set tasks, timelines, deadlines, and costs.
- FEBRUARY: Begin executing the event plan, which will likely include sponsorship outreach, registration form creation, finalizing online fundraising site(s), etc.
- MARCH-JUNE: Continue executing the event plan; specifically, finalizing event site (except for virtual events), permits, other logistics, and establish media opportunities for publicity and promotion.
- JUNE-JULY: Open registrations, if applicable; and finalize event plan tasks and begin promoting event on social media, in print, radio, and TV.

- AUGUST: Meet all deadlines on event plan and make final preparations for carrying out your Recovery Month activity (ies).
- SEPTEMBER: Promote and execute your Recovery Month activity (ies)!

## **II. ESTABLISH AN EVENT COMMITTEE**

- a. Consider writing into your by-laws a standing committee charter with the budgeting, planning, and executing of your event(s). Establish a board and elect committee members to specified terms. This will guarantee commitment from the members and continuity of the event(s) from year to year. It also results in a strategically oriented process.
- b. Your event committee should be a cross-section of the entire community. With sufficient outreach on your part, you will be surprised at how many people in your community have the heart and passion for the issue and will love to be part of creating the community awareness event for prevention, treatment and recovery awareness.
- c. See also section IV. The broader cross sectional representation of the community on your committee, the better reach you will have for event sponsorship and funding.

## **III. BUDGET YOUR EVENT**

- a. Write into your organization's annual budget the full cash expense for your next event(s) or activity (ies). Essentially, your Recovery Month activity (ies) will be a line item in your operational budget for the fiscal year. If the events are written into the organization's operational budget, their expense can be captured through regular operational revenues and can be carried out accordingly.
- b. Your community-based event committee will then have an expense parameter from which to operate and plan.  
For example, if the event(s) will cost \$5,000 to host, either the dollars will be fully allocated in the organization's budget or it will be reflected as a shortfall, thus requiring the event committee to raise the funds in full or in part with in-kind donations. Any and all registration fees, donations, and sponsorships that exceed the amount to put on the activity (ies) become revenue generated by the event. This, along with the other strategic priorities of the event(s) (i.e., awareness) should be the goal.
- c. Remember that virtual events are both much more affordable, will be useful in reaching a younger demographic with your Recovery Month message. But to succeed, they will also require extensive marketing and promotion.

## **IV. MAXIMIZE RELATIONSHIPS**

- a. Whether you are the executive director, office manager, counselor, recovery coach or board member, you know someone who owns a business (big or small) or is a leader/manager of a business.
- b. This is where your board of directors should work for your organization. Your board should be a cross section of the community. If it is, then it can easily leverage their networks and relationships to meet the strategic and financial (sponsorship) objectives or your event(s).
- c. Note many event associated expenditures can be covered by in-kind donations (e.g., print/radio/TV advertising; food; audio/visual/staging equipment; venue rental; etc.)

**V. SPONSORSHIP**

- a. Set sponsorship levels goals. Give potential sponsors varying levels to support your event/organization.
- b. Set a defined period of time for seeking sponsorship (clear beginning and end).
- c. Just because you meet your sponsorship goal, continue seeking sponsors through the end of your deadline. This may require transparency and modification of the sponsorship benefits (instead of logo on t-shirt, sponsors get logo on website, published materials, placard placement at event, verbal listing at event).
- d. Consider providing free registrations and other perks for sponsors.

**VI. REGISTRATIONS**

- a. Set registration fees at a reasonable level, but high enough to cover some direct costs, such as t-shirts and printing.
- b. Consider using websites such as Crowdrise\* to manage your registrations and to inject a fun crowd-funding element to your event. This can turn your event into an actual fundraiser for your organization. Thus, your budget will have a revenue line from your event that could be two, three, or even four times the amount budgeted on the expense side of your budget.

**VII. VOLUNTEERS**

- a. Minimize staffing costs by recruiting volunteers to help execute the event(s).

**VIII. EVENT DE-BRIEF**

- a. Following your Recovery Month event(s), schedule a full de-brief of the event(s). Include in this discussion, your board of directors, committee, staff, volunteers, and key stakeholders or community members.
- b. Assess what worked and what did not work.
- c. Review how the event was budgeted and ultimately funded.

- d. Create a learning document that the committee for the next year's event can use as a starting point.
- e. Thank every financial and in-kind sponsor promptly. Thank you notes/letters should come from the Executive Director and/or the board of directors.  
Analyze demographic and registration information collected before the event and plan and execute online or telephone follow-up surveys with as many participants as possible.