



## Bar Foundation Best Practices: Innovative Annual Campaigns

Annual campaigns reaching out to lawyers and law firms achieve important results for bar foundations: increased revenue streams and donor pools, improved donation policies and donor recognition practices, enhanced promotion and marketing to the legal and general communities, and inspired and active boards. Every annual campaign is different but most include the following components:

**A goal.** Whether the goal is a particular number of new donors, a set number of repeat donors, 100% participation from key law firms, or a specific dollar amount, most annual campaigns begin with a goal. Some campaign goals are based on past years' performance, some on law firm goals based on law firm size, and some on the dollars raised during a quiet phase of the campaign.

**A targeted message to a targeted audience.** Identifying the audience allows foundations to develop more relevant messages, strategies, and incentives, and ultimately, a more successful campaign. A well-tailored message results in engaging lawyers from various segments of the legal profession to support the legal community's commitment to the foundation's mission.

**Collaborative efforts.** Whether foundations work with grantees, law firms, or their related bars, collaboration is key. Particularly in a recession, pulling together resources can help potential donors decide where to make their gifts. Foundations can also be creative with their collaborations by coordinating campaign goals and messaging with past major donors, the media, or the business sector, creating campaigns that both increases revenue and promotes foundations to the general community.

**Personalized attention.** Campaigns capitalize on volunteers' relationships in the legal and greater communities to positively impact the campaign. Board and committee members meet face-to-face and make personal phone calls to major donors and law firm leadership, send personally-addressed campaign letters and hand-written thank-you notes – personal touches that go a long way in building and sustaining relationships.

### Additional tips:

- Use creative, relevant, and timely themes to develop messages and strategies
- Allow donors a choice of donation vehicles, including checks, online payments, and multi-year pledges, naming opportunities, and planned gifts
- Publicly recognize donors at foundation events, in publications, on websites, and through the media
- Co-market the monetary needs of the foundation with the monetary and pro bono needs of the legal aid community

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Foundation Services

**References:**

ALPS Foundation Services, [www.foundationsservices.com](http://www.foundationsservices.com)

American Bar Association, <http://www.abanet.org/>

Association of Fundraising Professionals, <http://www.afpnet.org/>

Cincinnati Bar Foundation, <http://www.cincybar.org>

Chicago Bar Foundation, <http://www.chicagobarfoundation.org/>

National Conference of Bar Foundations, <http://www.ncbf.org/>

South Carolina Bar Foundation, <http://www.sctbarfoundation.org/>



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