

# Cycle of Fundraising



This exercise reduces resistance by helping people move past the idea that fundraising equals asking for money. You can create a menu of ways everyone—board, staff, volunteers, donors—can participate, even if they're unwilling to be askers. If you want to develop a fundraising culture throughout your organization, this is a great way to start.

## Why Do This Exercise?

It's an easy first step to creating a model for strengthening relationships with your donors

## Use This Exercise When

You want to emphasize that asking for gifts is only a small part of a larger process

## Time Required

60 minutes

## Audience

All participants in your fundraising campaign: some combination of board, staff, and volunteers

## Setting

A space large enough to accommodate several small groups of three to five

## Materials

- Flip chart paper and markers
- Three handouts: Cycle of Fundraising, North Lakeland Discovery Center Donor Engagement Menu, and Cycle of Fundraising: Building a Donor Engagement Menu (See pages 44-46)

## FACILITATING THE EXERCISE

1. Photocopy the handouts in advance.
2. Share copies of the Cycle of Fundraising handout (page 44) with your trainees. Explain that this is a simple map for creating healthy, mutually beneficial relationships with donors. Note that only a fraction of the work is asking for money. Most of the cycle is about what happens before and after asking.
3. As a warm-up for the small group work to follow, ask the full group to brainstorm one or two activities that might fit into each phase. For example, "What are some of the ways we might identify prospective donors?" (Two possible answers: compile lists of friends, and review published donor lists from peer organizations.) Ask similar questions for each phase

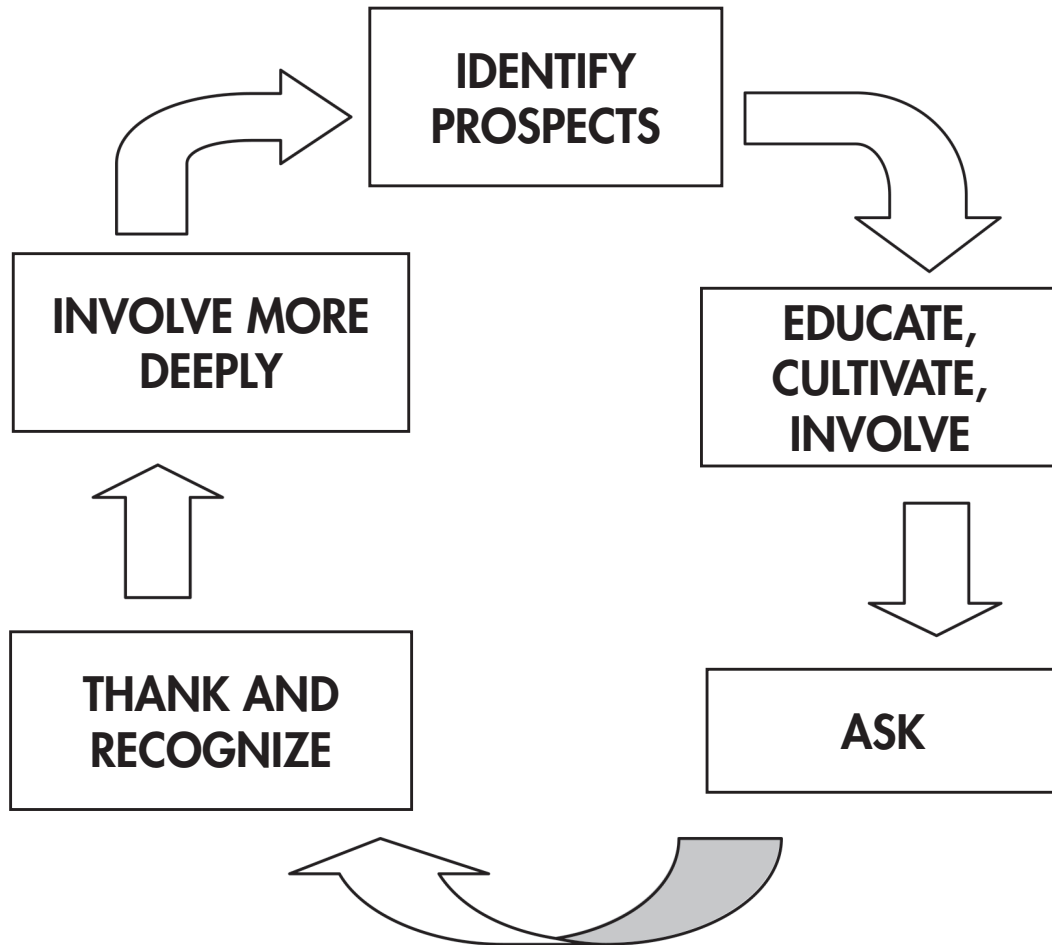
of the donor cycle—“What steps could we take to educate and cultivate donors?”—encouraging an answer or two for each phase.

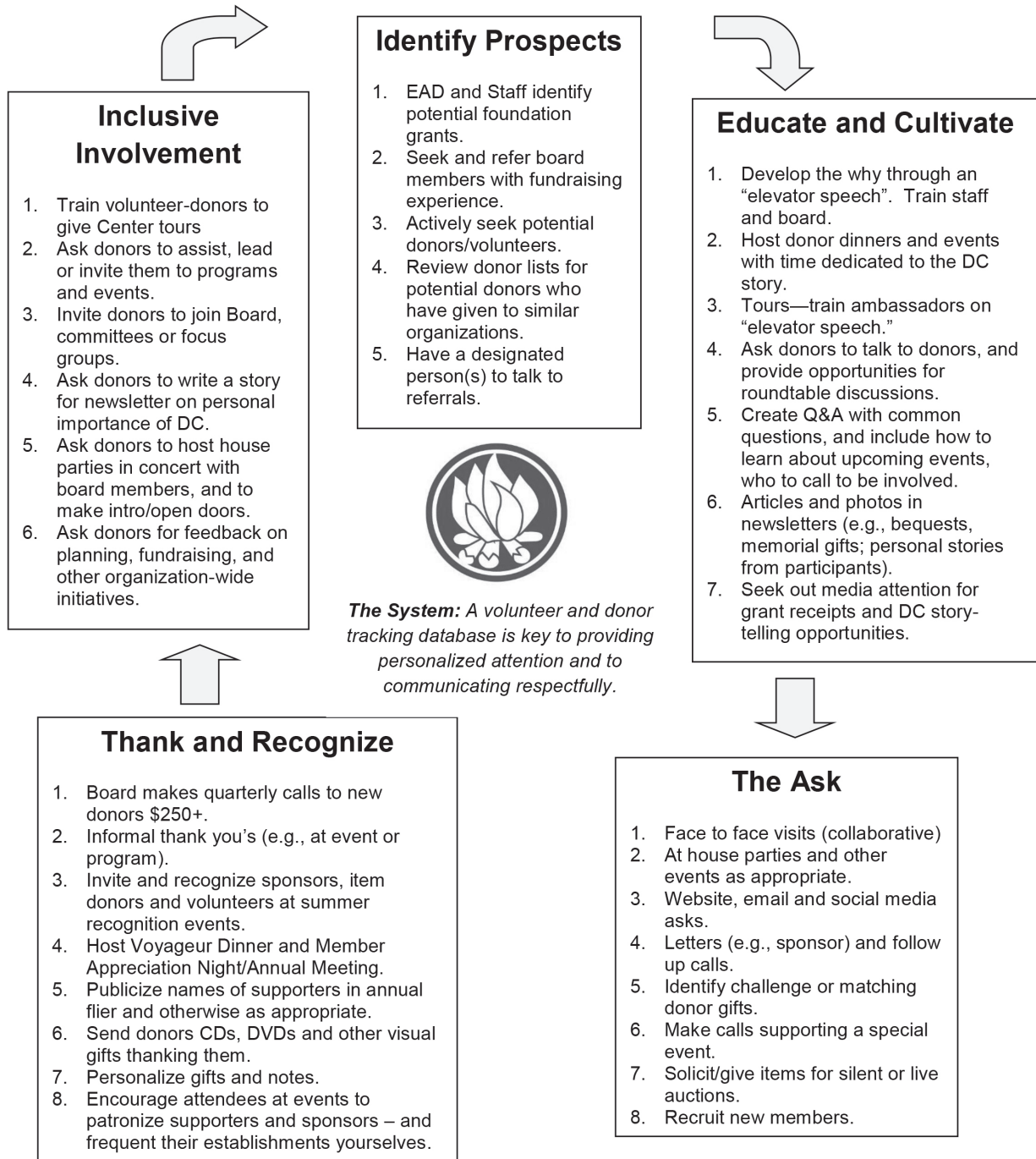
4. Once the large-group brainstorm is complete, distribute copies of the donor relationship menu developed by the North Lakeland Discovery Center (page 45). Explain that it was created by board and staff working together. Give participants a few moments to review the handout and ask questions.
5. Ask your colleagues to form small groups of three to five. Share copies of the worksheet *Cycle of Fundraising: Building a Donor Engagement Menu* (page 46). Ask each small group to fill it in, brainstorming one stage of the cycle at a time: “What are our different options for identifying prospects? Fill in the relevant box. How about educating and cultivating those prospects?” And so on. Let them know they will have about fifteen minutes to complete the worksheet.
6. While the small groups are brainstorming, write the following titles—one per sheet—on flip chart paper:
  - Identify Prospects
  - Educate, Cultivate, Involve
  - Ask
  - Thank and Recognize
  - Involve More Deeply
7. After about fifteen minutes, reconvene everyone into the large group to report their work. Begin by collecting all the items for Identify Prospects, writing them on the relevant flip chart page. Then collect the items for Educate, Cultivate, Involve. Capture all ideas for each stage in the cycle before moving to the next.
8. To debrief this exercise, use some combination of the following questions as you discuss each flip chart page:
  - Which of these tasks are we already doing?
  - What steps do we need to focus on to improve our donor relations?
  - Are there any specific tasks you would like to help with?
9. To conclude, draw a large circle on a piece of flip chart paper. With the help of the participants, divide the circle into a pie chart graph indicating how much time your organization should spend on each of the five functions. For an example, see page 47.

As you wrap up, ask for a volunteer to transcribe your flip chart notes into the Cycle of Fundraising template. It will provide a simple one-page map outlining your donor identification and engagement strategy. It also creates a menu of ways everyone in the organization can assist with fundraising, including many ways that don't involve asking.

**TRAINING TIP** Templates help people understand new concepts in a tangible way. While not necessary, we have found that reviewing a completed template (see next pages) helps people build a model that fits their own organizations. We have tried this exercise both ways—sharing the template first vs. allowing the group to build its own from scratch—and can vouch that using the template early in the exercise is very helpful.

# Cycle of Fundraising

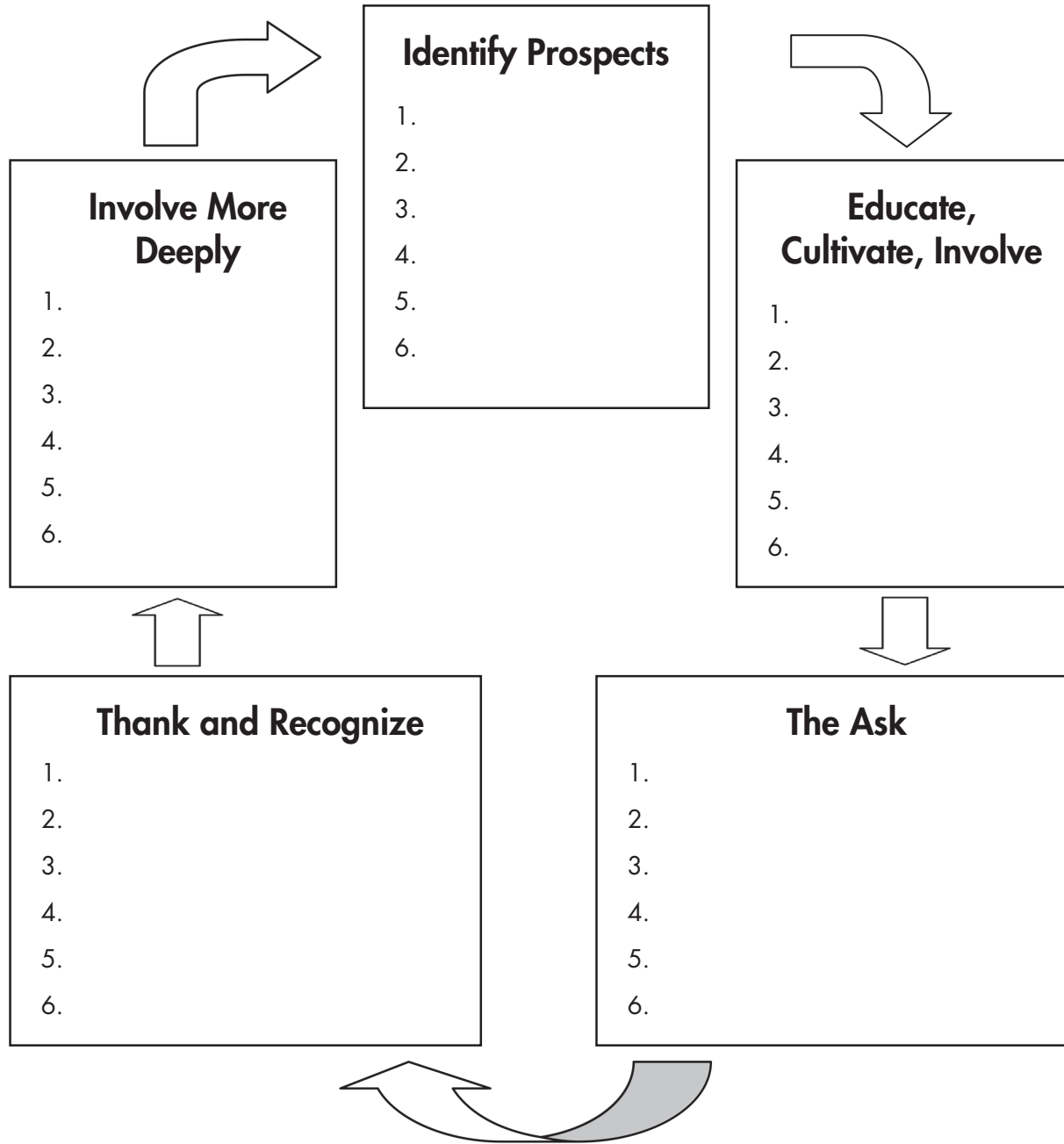




# Cycle of Fundraising

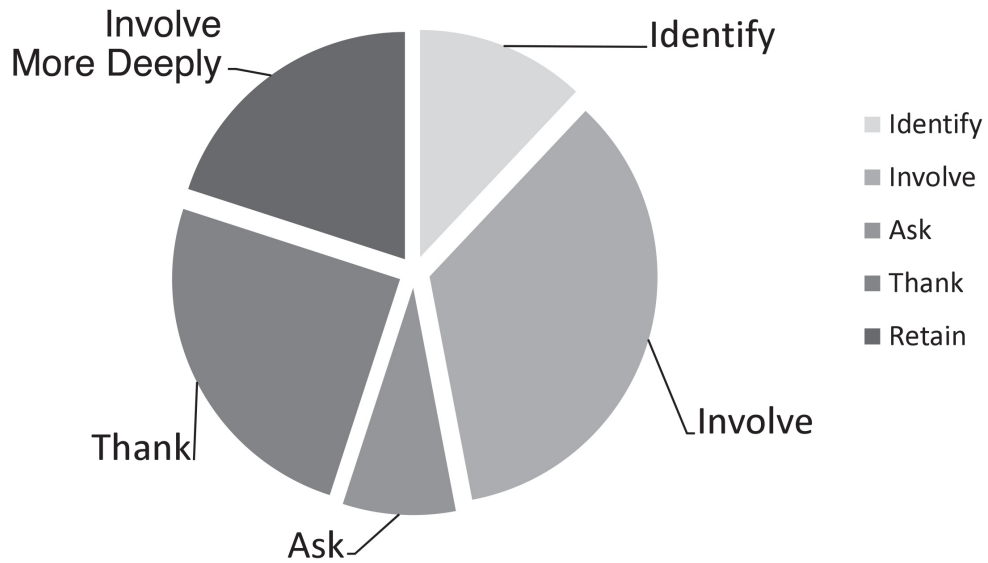
## BUILDING A DONOR ENGAGEMENT MENU

Create a menu of activities for each stage of the relationship:



# Cycle of Fundraising Time Allocation

## Breakdown of Time Spent on Each Phase of Fundraising Cycle



Adapted from Tina Cincotti, Funding Change Consulting.  
Used with permission. Thanks, Tina!