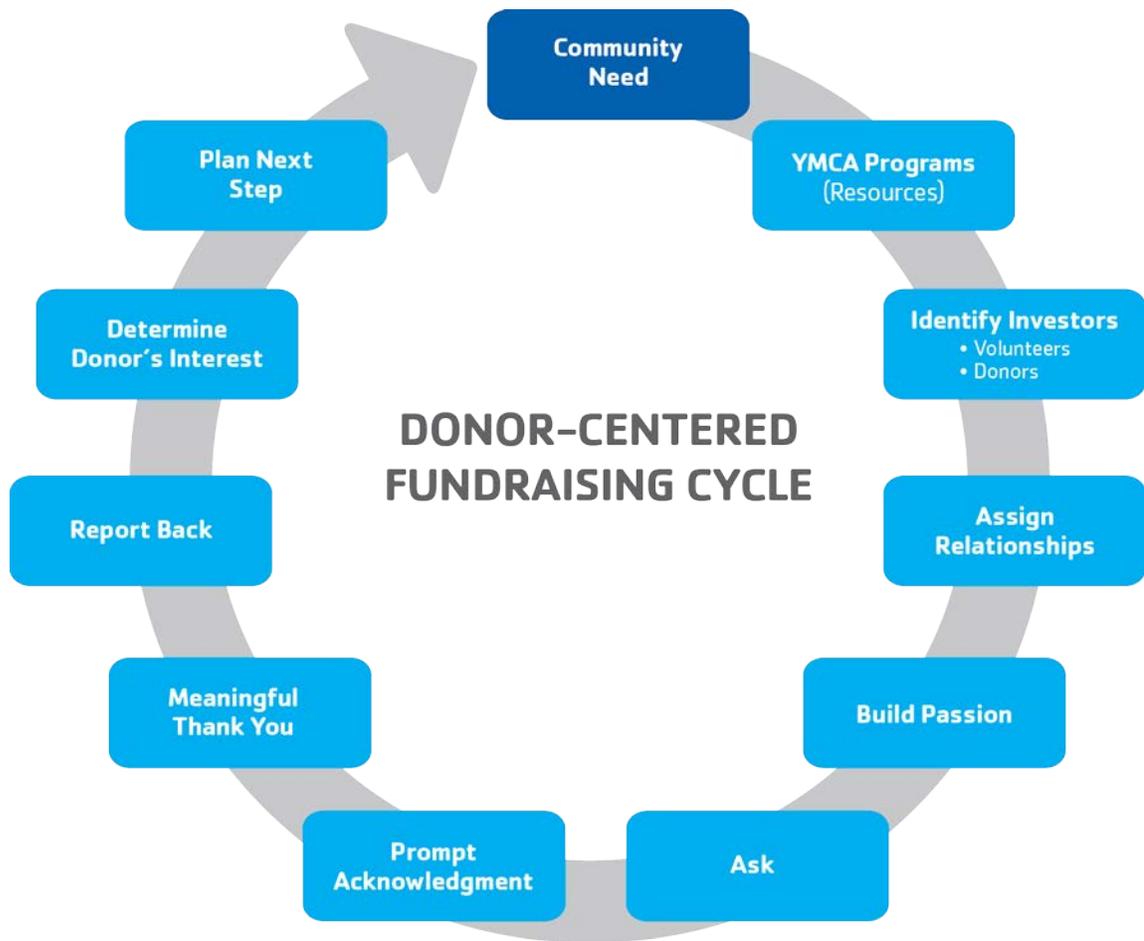




FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## DONOR-CENTERED FUNDRAISING CYCLE

The most effective fundraising programs—in the Y Movement and beyond—understand that giving is a personal decision that expresses a donor’s values and interests, as well as his or her confidence in an organization and its plans. The donor-centered fundraising cycle, shown below, is the process by which your YMCA can engage donors, build their interest in your mission, secure their largest possible gifts, and ensure their satisfaction.



The graphic depicts the steps in the donor-centered fundraising cycle:

- **Community Need:** The cycle begins with identifying the critical social issues and community needs in the Y's areas of focus: youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.
- **YMCA Programs:** In order to address community needs, a YMCA develops programs to meet these needs and determines the financial resources necessary to support these programs.
- **Identify Investors:** Acquiring the financial resources necessary involves raising funds from prospective donors (often through a volunteer campaign structure). Donors and volunteers are identified that would possibly have an interest in the community need that your YMCA is addressing.
- **Assign Relationships:** Individuals are identified and assigned to donor or volunteer prospects with whom they have an existing relationship or a logical connection to in order foster development of a relationship.
- **Build Passion:** As potential donors and volunteers are identified but before actual requests are made, a YMCA develops and carries out various strategies to build the donors' and volunteers' passion for the community need and the YMCA's solution.
- **Ask:** After the need is understood by the prospects, it's time to ask them to volunteer and/or give a contribution in support of the YMCA's project.

As important as asking is to your campaign, it is not the end of the process. It is just as important to continue to deepen these relationships through intentionally communicating to donors and volunteers the community impact of their gifts and volunteer time. Doing so helps build loyal donors and volunteers who will increase giving over time.

- **Prompt Acknowledgment:** Promptly acknowledge and confirm, in writing, the volunteer's or donor's commitment in order to demonstrate that your Y has processes in place to handle gifts and volunteer commitments in a professional manner.
- **Meaningful Thank You:** Thank investors in a way that is personally meaningful to them.
- **Report Back:** Share with donors and volunteers how the dollars raised addressed community issues and helped their neighbors.

- **Determine Donor's Interest:** Engage donors and volunteers in meaningful conversations that help you uncover their values and interests so that you can determine the kind of ongoing involvement—another volunteer or leadership opportunity, making a bigger investment in a program close to their heart, starting a new initiative to address a community issue, etc.—that may interest them. By capturing this information in a formalized way, you begin to create the foundation for future major gift funding and leadership development.
- **Plan Next Step:** By planning the next step with donors and volunteers, you help them feel like they can really make a difference through the YMCA.

When you follow the cycle all the way through, you strengthen your relationship with a donor, secure a meaningful gift, and prepare your donor to consider his or her next gift. The cycle begins again when you identify the next Y opportunity for the program or community need for which your donor or volunteer cares deeply.