



## Creating an Environment for Fundraising

Before a campaign is formally undertaken and publicly announced, *precampaign* work is necessary to create an atmosphere where fundraising can take place. First and foremost in any capital campaign is the need for commitment on the part of the governing board, senior staff and the volunteer leaders. Campaigns require teamwork. No campaign should ever be undertaken solely by staff or external professionals.

Successful campaigns are characterized by the following prerequisites:

- ❖ Commitments of time and support from all key participants (the governing board, the chief staff officer, prospective major donors, key volunteer leaders, the professional fundraising staff and the institutional “family.”)
- ❖ A clear record of achievement and a strategic plan for organizational growth and improvement.
- ❖ A written document that makes a compelling case for supporting the campaign, including reasonable projections of the project’s total costs.
- ❖ A pool of cultivated potential donors with the capacity to make gifts, paid over three to five years, in the ranges described in the project’s chart of gifts.
- ❖ An assessment of the institutional development program and a market survey addressing internal and external preparedness.
- ❖ A cadre of committed and educated volunteer leaders, competent staff and, perhaps, external professional counsel.
- ❖ Ability and readiness of major donors to give substantial lead gifts before a public announcement of the campaign.
- ❖ Internal systems capable of preparing prospect lists, supporting volunteer activities, recording and acknowledging gifts.
- ❖ Adequate, even liberal, funds for expenses, including adequate working capital to conduct capital planning and development activities before the first gift is made to the campaign.

Other factors that affect an organization’s readiness to conduct a major campaign include the strength of the national and local economy, competing or conflicting campaigns and a history of positive public perceptions.