

LOWELL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENT PLANNERS RESOURCE GROUP



Mosaic Lowell

March 6, 2024 Meeting, 6:00 pm, LTC

Panelists Alison Hughes, Jay Linnehan, Thaddeus Miles, and Lee Viliesis reviewed budgeting and fundraising tactics to help organizers build their financial foundation for their events and festivals.

Festivals/Events/Nonprofits Represented

- DIY Lowell
- Mosaic Lowell
- Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Lowell Folk Fest
- Lowell Hispanic Festival (Latinx Community Center for Empowerment)
- Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
- LTC
- Lowell Community Health Center
- UMass Lowell World Languages and Culture Department

Sponsorships

The panelists reviewed sponsorship as a key aspect of raising funds for events and festivals.

- **Quick Hints and Tips:**
 - o Look up the organization's 990 form.
 - o Regularly update your online and social media.
- **Building Relationships VS Asking First:**
 - o Get right to the point with a sponsorship. Talk about levels of sponsorship, etc.
 - o Warm up people well in advance for larger giving, capital campaigns, etc.
 - o Ask for volunteers and other things.
 - o Follow up with various methods. While following up after the event, ask about future opportunities.
 - o Attend events around Lowell and network.
 - o Give tickets for events to go and learn.
 - o If you have multiple fundraisers, show them all in your pitch deck.
- **How to do Cold Calls:**
 - o Try to find someone who knows someone, and network from there!
 - o If speaking with someone that is outside of your network, make your appeal stand out. Personalize the message with a handwritten note, and be your sincere self.
 - o Check your mailing lists to make sure that you are not contacting the same organization twice.
 - o Know what you are asking for: consider whether you should ask for general funding or funding for a specific project. Break your "Ask" into components.

- Look into who they already donate to.
- **Making the Ask:**
 - Create a pitch deck with various levels.
 - Explain the “why” to the sponsors: how does the event fit into their mission? Draw a connection using specifics, such mentioning their LGBTQ+ ideals for PRIDE-related events. Also explain why they would want their name or logo on your webpage as part of the sponsorship.
 - For \$2,500+ sponsors, start the conversation one year in advance so that the sponsorship can be added into the budget.
 - For \$2,500 sponsors, give the sponsors 6-8 weeks of notice. Tell them the specifics (time, date, and location), and provide a contact person with an advertising location. Specify the sizes for the ads that will be provided to them as part of the sponsorship package.
 - For low-level sponsors (i.e., \$500 and the logo on the map), consider what you need and how many sponsorships are required. For big names, try to put monetary value on limited resources.

Networking to Raise Funds

- **Where to Network:**
 - Connect with nonprofit associations.
 - Solicit individuals by emailing your friends and family or asking nonprofit friends.
 - Alison Hughes helps people network.
 - Add your fundraisers to the [Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce Calendar](#).
- **While Networking...**
 - Tell stories, and get them to tell their own stories.
 - Make the connections clear to your funder.
 - Put forward large appeals and create a program book.
 - Find ways to give to small businesses in Lowell – what can you give lower levels?
 - The number of people working on fundraising equates to more money raised.
 - Ask for in-kind donations, such as raffle baskets.
 - Raise your rates when you need funding.