

# Development for Conservation

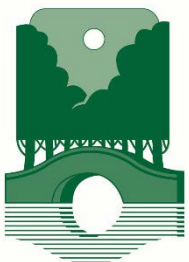
## Fundraising: A 101 Approach

Prepared for

**Land Trust Alliance**

May 2024

**David Allen, Development for Conservation**



**DEVELOPMENT  
FOR  
CONSERVATION**

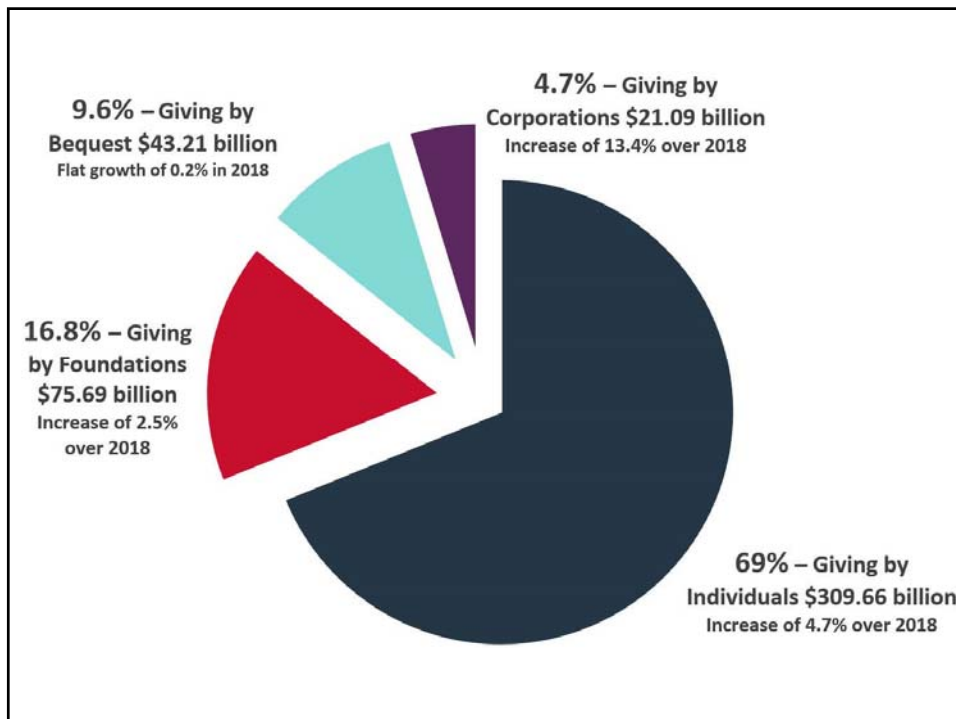


# Opening Premise

There is enough money “out there”  
to support the vision and activities  
of our land trust.



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## 4 Paradigm Shifts

1. We are **helping donors do something important** just as much as they are helping us
2. Focus on the **NET**, as opposed to the COST
3. Major describes the **decision**, not the person
4. “**WHY** will they say **YES?**”  
instead of “Why will they say No?”



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## Revelations

Money comes from PEOPLE.



# Paradigm Shift #1

*We don't need donors to think like WE do.  
We need to learn to think like THEY do.*



# Thought Experiment

Think back on the largest cash gift you have ever made. Think back on the actual giving decision.

Now imagine giving TWICE that amount (at some theoretical point in the future).



What might influence you to say yes?

**2X**

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## Examples

### Philanthropic (Love)

- Membership dues
- Appeal gifts
- Giving Tuesday
- Monthly giving
- Gifts of appreciated assets
- Wills & Annuities



### Transactional (Buy)

- Discounts
- Galas
- Field Trips
- Musical event
- Walks/Runs/Cycles
- Golf
- Sponsorships



Cultivation is about DISCOVERY, not SELLING

## Implications

1. Stop waiting for business to “come around”
2. Talk more about values than deeds
3. Believe the research
4. Prioritize taking people to the land



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## Paradigm Shift #2

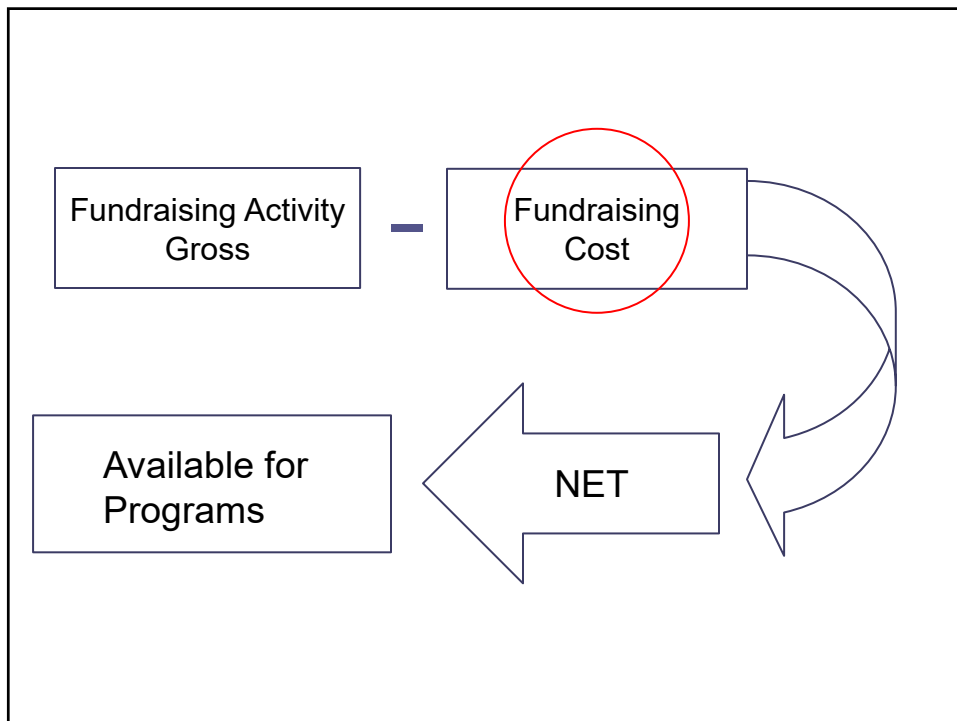
Focus on the NET.

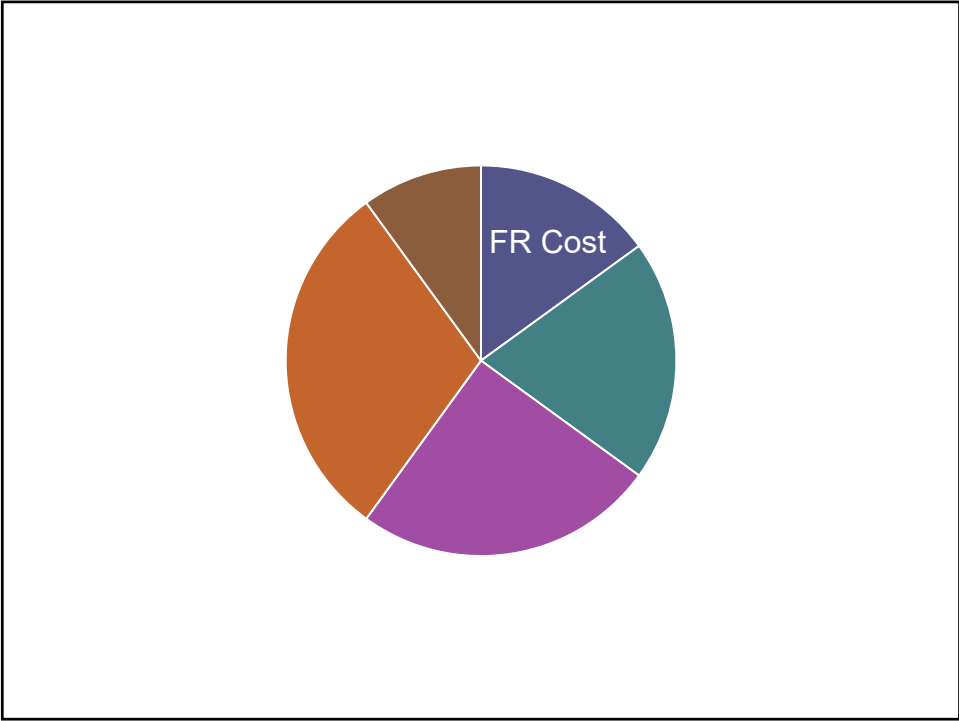
It's not about how much money is raised.

It's about how much money can be put to work on the mission.

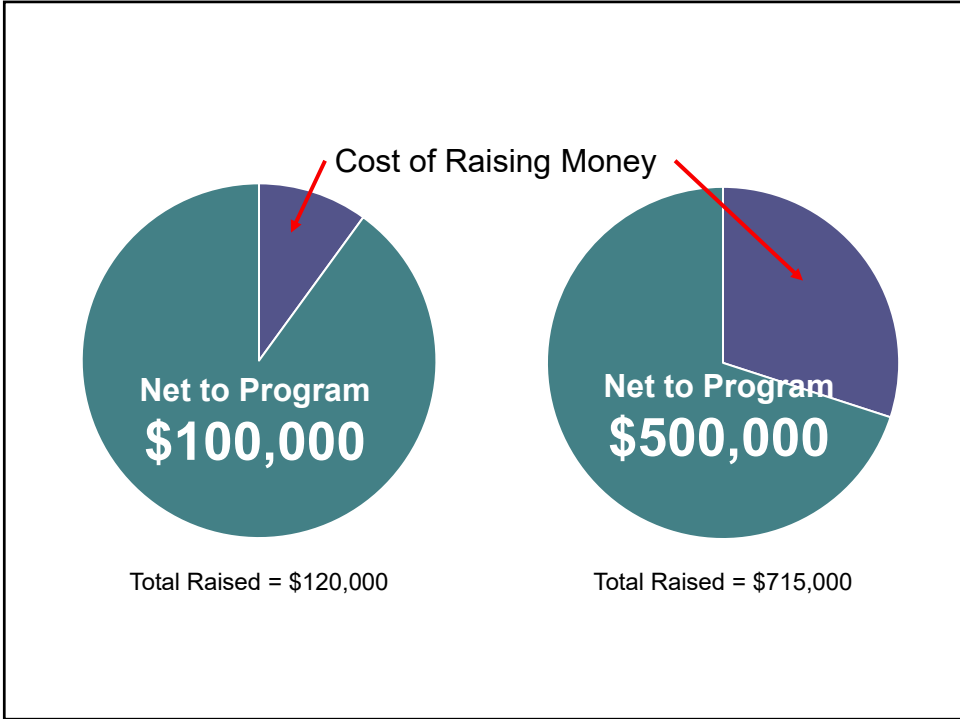


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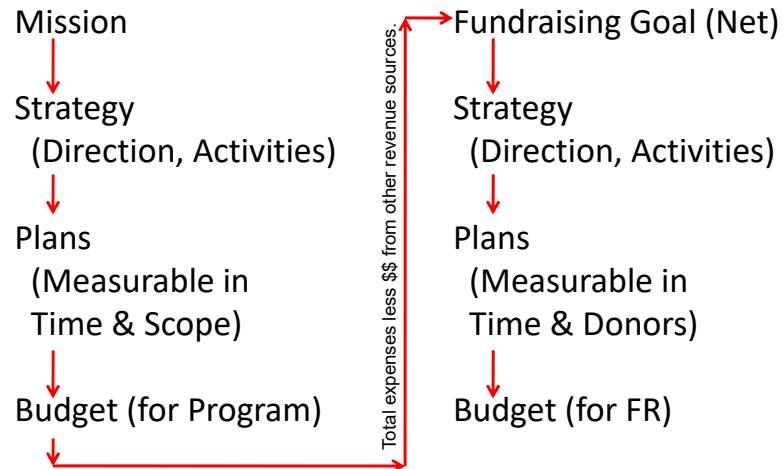


# Start Here



How much do we need to raise?

## Strategic Planning



## A Few Comments About Money

- \$100 is a common withdrawal amount from an ATM
- \$250 is \$20/month - Almost everyone can afford that
- \$1,000 is \$20/week - four trips to Starbucks



# Implications

- Ask Anyone for \$100
- Ask \$100 donors for \$250 (\$20/month)
- Ask \$250 donors for \$1,000 (Donor Circles)



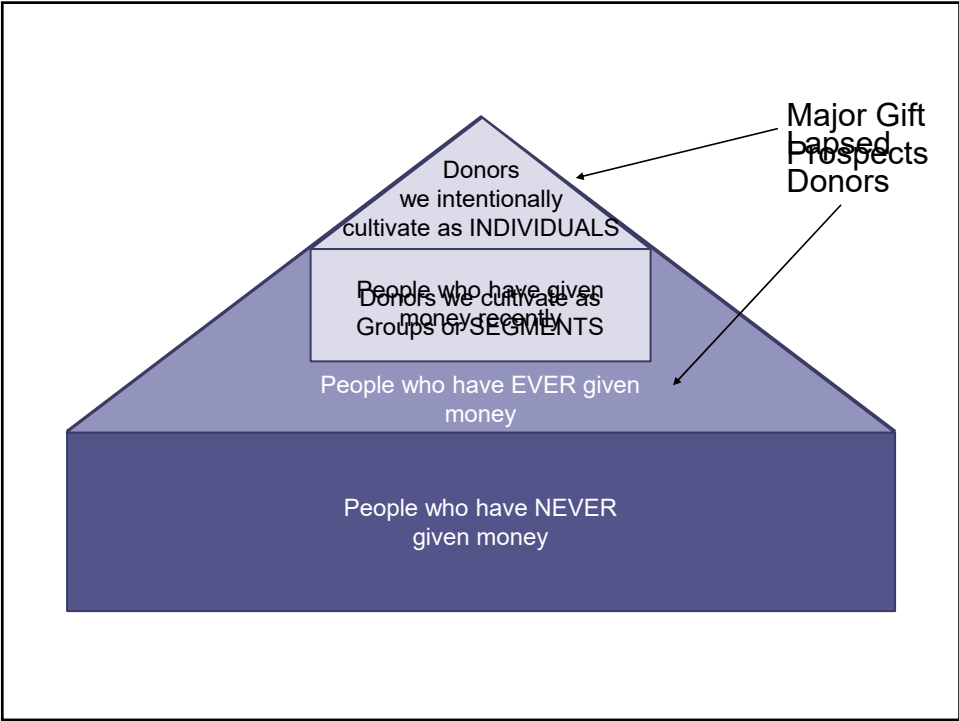
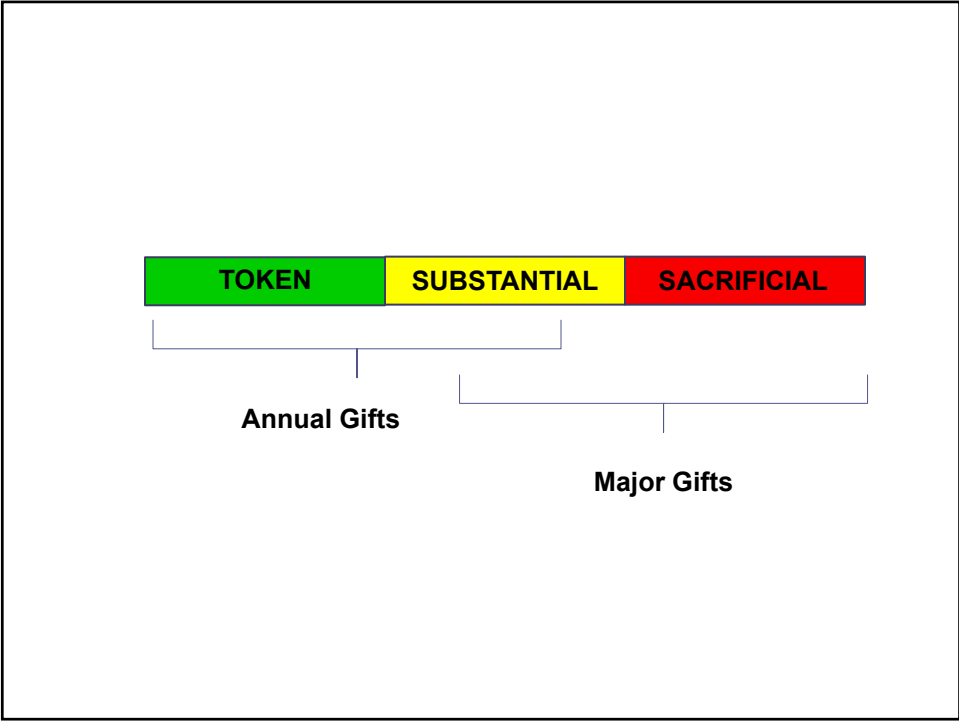
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# Paradigm Shift #3

“Major” describes the decision, not the person making it.

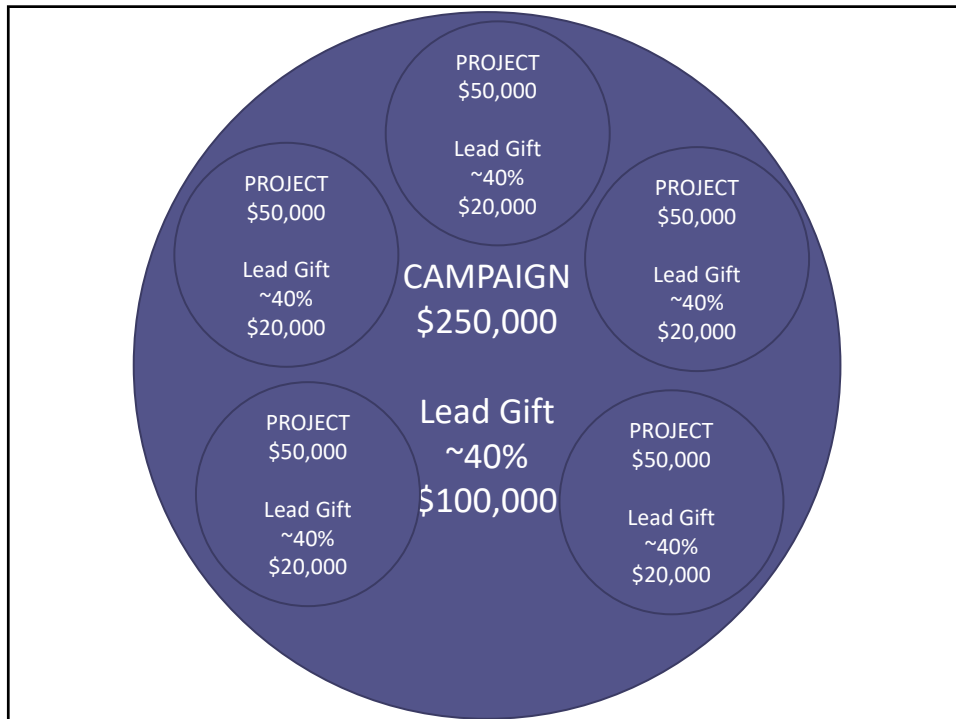


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## Major Gift Fundraising

Cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding INDIVIDUAL donors - treating them as individuals - is the primary differentiation between major gift fundraising and all other fundraising.



“Start small, start now. This is much better than, ‘start big, start later.’ One advantage is that you don’t have to start perfect. You can merely start.”

Seth Godin via The Agitator



## Paradigm Shift #4

We waste too much time imagining why donors will say NO.

A better question is why they might say YES.



## Why will They Say YES?

- They believe what you believe
- They believe that what they can give will help
- They trust the asker
- They were asked!



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## Can't vs. Won't

- “I can’t” means I don’t have the resources to give.
- “I won’t” means I choose to prioritize other things ahead of what you are asking.
- It is arrogant to decide that someone can’t. It is self-defeating to decide they won’t.



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We all represent organizations that value decision-making based on science.

A lot of fundraising is science.

Believe it.



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## Science

- Asking for a specific amount of money will always result in raising more money
- Follow-up is the most important indicator of strong renewal results
- Longer, story-based appeal letters raise more money
- The best time to request monthly giving is immediately after they have renewed



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## A Few Words About Membership

- Membership is a **language**
- Membership “levels” are best considered **GIFTS** (with a threshold amount) rather than fees
- Very few levels should be named, and those that are (Donor Circles) should be **strongly branded**
- Members can be promised **paper** information, **engagement** invitations, and little else



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# DAVID ALLEN

I am a non-profit fundraising consultant. I work with nonprofit boards and staff to help them learn how to be better leaders and advocates. I work almost exclusively with conservation organizations because that is where my heart is.

My background includes 30 years working in membership fundraising, major gift development, communications, and marketing. I worked for about half that time for Nature Conservancy (TNC) chapters in Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. In addition to my duties for the individual chapters, I served TNC as an internal fundraising consultant and major gift development trainer.

In 2000, I served as the vice-president of operations for the Wisconsin-based, international conservation organization Sand County Foundation, a position I held through mid-2009.



Gathering Waters Conservancy, a land trust service agency based in Wisconsin, called me in 2004 to ask whether I would be interested in teaching a seminar for Wisconsin land trusts on major donor development. From 2004, then, through 2009, I consulted on a nights and weekends basis with just a few clients each year.

In March of 2009, I launched my consulting business full-time using the name **Development for Conservation.**

Also in 2009, I partnered with Nancy Moore to form **Conservation Consulting Group.** Together we help land trusts by providing needs assessment, strategic planning, and leadership coaching services.

I consider myself a strategic thinker, problem solver, facilitator, educator, and program developer who brings a particular passion for conservation and the environment.

## **Practice Competencies**

### *Fundraising*

- Development Audit
- Strategic Fund Development Planning
- Staff/Board Training and Development
- Major Gift Coaching
- Capital Campaigns: Feasibility, Planning, Management

### *Organizational Development*

- Strategy Development
- Practice & Process Assessment
- Problem Solving Facilitation
- Marketing

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