

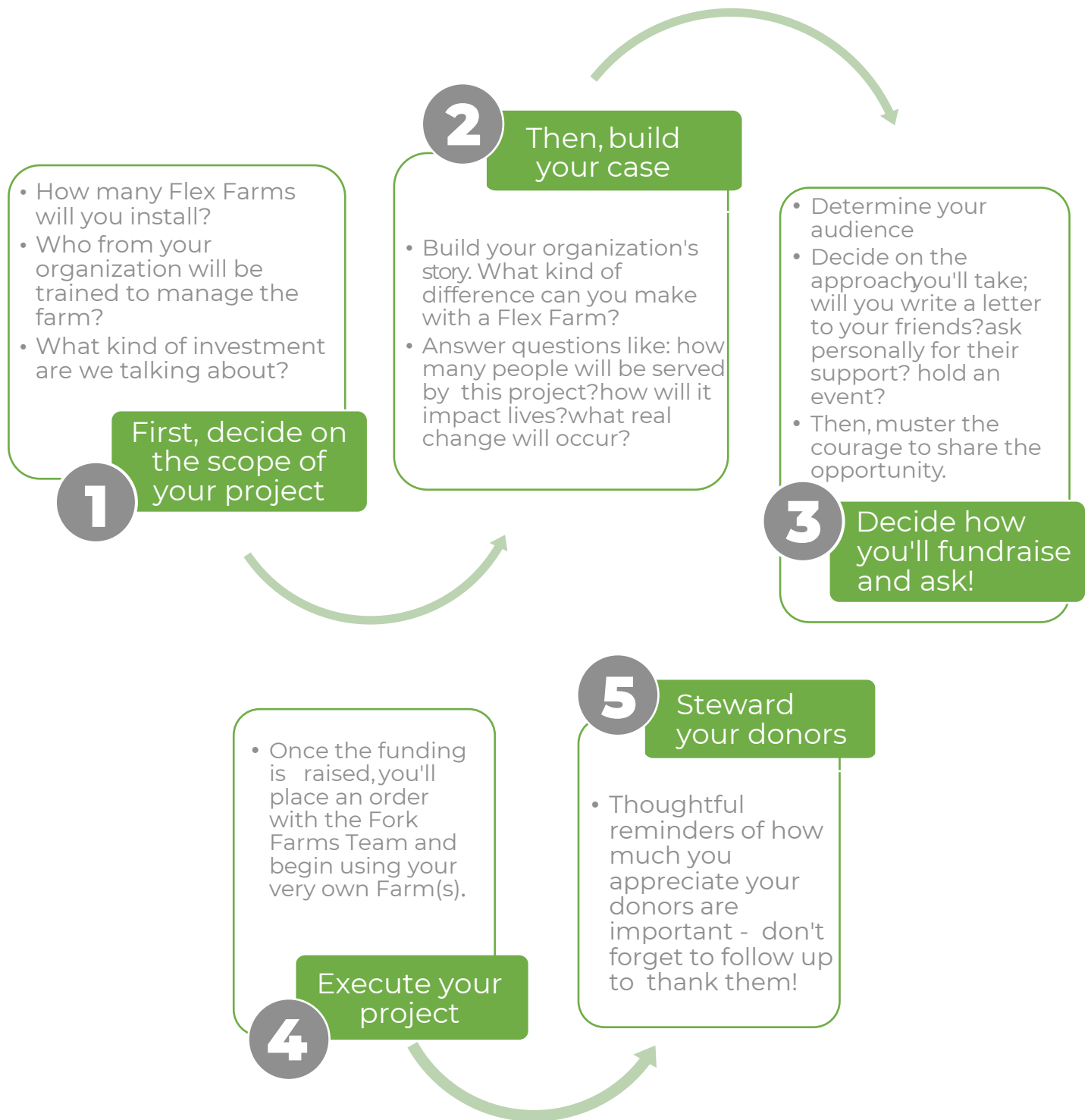


# FUNDRAISING GUIDE



# FUNDING THROUGH PHILANTHROPY

## How can we get a Flex Farm of our own?





# INTRODUCTION TO PHILANTHROPY

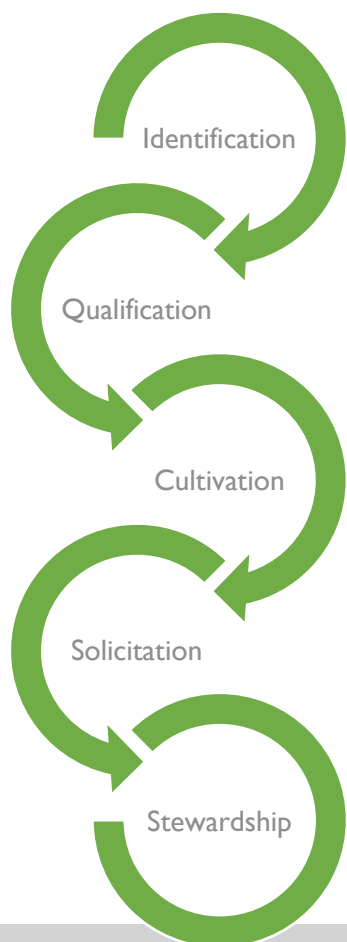
Each year, the Giving USA Foundation, the Giving Institute, and Indiana University Lilly School of Philanthropy researches and reviews the state of giving in the United States. In 2017, they found that giving across the nation continued to rise. In fact, total estimated giving reached its highest levels for the second year in a row. This \$410.02 billion-dollar industry is worth considering as a funding source for projects like the implementation of Fork Farms Technology within your organization.

We encourage you to use this manual as an introduction to fundraising and resource kit for your project.

We've provided some information regarding best practices and recommended some thought leaders in the field who offer great insight in their books, webinars, and blogs for those of you who are new to fundraising or for those who would like to brush up on your fundraising skills.

Please consider taking some time to become familiar with the theories and ideas presented here and by those we mention below. These concepts are not just useful as you establish a partnership with Fork Farms, but they are applicable when seeking funding for any projects your organization hopes to bring to life.

## Fundamentals and Best Practices



We know that relationships are critical to the success of any fundraiser. A donor needs to feel connected to the mission of both the organization and the project. This is achieved through the people that advocate for it (hint: that's you!)

The donor cycle has 5 steps and can follow a simple rinse, wash, repeat pattern if each stage is carefully considered and well executed. As a fundraiser for your project, it is your responsibility to ensure that each step is completed with thoughtfulness and sincerity.

**IDENTIFICATION** *Identify new or existing donors for the project. You should ask yourself: who are we going to talk to? Think out of the box.*

**QUALIFICATION** *Learn about the donor's interest in the project. Would they be interested in helping us reach our goal? What other projects have they engaged with?*

**CULTIVATION** *Strengthen the donor's passion for the project and inspiration to be a part of the change. Have we peaked their interest? Are they motivated to help us accomplish what we've set out to do?*

**SOLICITATION** *Ask them to contribute! Have we asked them to help in the form of a yes or no question?*

**STEWARDSHIP** *Show them what they've made possible through their gift to the organization. Have we thanked them in **an authentic and energetic way** for their help?*

Each step in the process brings the donor closer to your organization, showing them just how they can (or have!) made a difference for the individuals your organization serves.

One early concept we'd encourage you to get familiar with is called "Donor-Centered Fundraising". The idea is that **you'll be far more successful telling the donor what their gifts made possible** rather than just touting what you've done as an organization.

Many donor's needs are simple. They want to feel sincerely appreciated and know how their gift will make an impact. How are they a critical part of your mission?

You can find links below to resources by Penelope Burk and Tom Ahern to learn more about these concepts and find ways to integrate them into your fundraising plans. They're fundraising industry thought leaders that we trust and encourage you to get familiar with their ideas.

## Educational Resources

To learn more about fundraising, please consider learning from these individuals and organizations:

- **Penelope Burk** is one of the first to utilize research and data mining in the development of her "Donor-Centered Fundraising" concepts. She is particularly focused on retaining donors once they choose to give to your cause. Find her website here: [www.burksblog.com](http://www.burksblog.com)
- **Tom Ahern** focuses on written communications, including direct mail appeals and newsletters. His theories, though, are tried and true for any communication with a donor. Find his website here: [www.aherncomm.com](http://www.aherncomm.com)
- Other resources that will help you include:
  - [The Association of Fundraising Professionals \(AFP\)](#): A collection of articles, webinars, and forums.
  - [SOFII](#): A collection of best in class fundraising campaigns from across the globe.



# SO, LET'S DIG IN!

## Step 1: Scope your project

Your first step in this journey is to decide on the ideal scenario for your organization. Fork Farms technology can serve a wide variety of purposes. It can grow food to supplement the produce that you currently purchase. It can provide clients/students with an opportunity to see where their food comes from and learn how to grow it. It can establish a revenue generating business to teach small business ownership skills. Or, will your organization find a new way to use the technology?

The donor will want to know the answer to these questions: Will the Flex Farms you install serve as an educational tool? Will they be used primarily to cut other expenses? What impact will the project have and how much money do you need to accomplish this?

**During this phase of the work, you or a representative from your organization will work with the team at Fork Farms to determine your goals and to price out both the hard, upfront costs, as well as the soft and long-term costs to assess the feasibility of your ideal project.**

## Step 2: Make your case

Remember the donor cycle we talked about earlier? In the qualification stage of the donor cycle, you need to take an honest look at whether your prospective donors might actually be interested in joining your cause. For example, if you're raising money to put a Flex Farm in a food pantry, you may not want to spend your time and resources pursuing even the most generous donor if they only care about performance arts. Your time would be better spent working with donors who are passionate about fighting poverty, supporting basic needs or hunger relief. This step of the process ensures that you are aligned in your interests.

**Fundraising is all about relationships. Relationships with donors are built on shared interests and meaningful storytelling.**

When considering who to share your story with, we would recommend you look to your closest friends. This might mean board members, employees of the organization, a PTA group or existing major donors to the non-profit. Perhaps a student-led service group would be interested in getting involved, or a business

owned by a student or alumni. Look first to your inner circle when considering who you might focus on and think about what pieces of the project might appeal most to them.

The next job at hand is to build and tell your story effectively. A compelling case statement—or story that demonstrates your project and why it's important—shared with the right audience will yield great results. But how do you build a compelling case statement?

## Setting the Stage – Who are you?

One of the first steps of creating a compelling case is to really understand your organization, its mission and your goals. Some questions you might want to consider as you begin to develop your story are:

- Who do we serve? How does this advance your mission, be it in the classroom or your nonprofit purpose?
- Does anyone else serve the same group of people? If so, how are we doing it differently? How will the Flex Farm make a positive difference in their lives?
- If this project is successful, what solution will it provide? What will happen if we don't do this?

Imagine the face of someone who has been touched by your daily work. Their story is your organization's story. Don't be afraid to tell it, conveying all the emotion of the importance of your work! Remember to utilize the expertise of Tom Ahern for donor communications. He often provides samples from other organizations doing it right, like the newsletters of [Nashville Rescue Mission](https://issuu.com/nashvillerescuemission/docs/nov_nl_issuu) ([https://issuu.com/nashvillerescuemission/docs/nov\\_nl\\_issuu](https://issuu.com/nashvillerescuemission/docs/nov_nl_issuu)) to help get you started. This organization does a wonderful job of highlighting the donor and tying them directly to the recipients of their services, cutting out the boastful nature and language of many less successful nonprofits. Remember, in your messaging to donors, they are the heroes, and the only way you're able to accomplish your work.

Later on (in step 4), you'll determine how you plan to raise funds. At that point, you'll have a better idea of what you'll need to be successful. In the meantime, consider the many facets of your organization and the impact your collaboration with Fork Farms has the potential to create!

## Who is Fork Farms?

In order to speak to a partnership with Fork Farms, you'll need to be able to share to our mission, too. Here's our case statement for you to use in whatever storytelling you do:

Fork Farms is a technology company bringing a growing environment for healthy food close to home. **Our mission is to unleash the power of fresh food production for happier, healthier people.**

We believe that when people grow their own food, they create an emotional relationship with that food, leaving a long-lasting impression that generates healthy habits and appreciation of food quality. **Fork Farms is working to empower schools and nonprofits to provide a nurturing, consistent and validating experience for everyone who interacts with the Flex Farm. In the end, we hope to help our partners meet the nutritional, educational and social-emotional needs of the people they serve.** As an added benefit, individuals working directly with Flex Farms acquire first-hand knowledge of growing fresh greens and gain ownership of the food production process.

Fork Farms utilizes its indoor agriculture technology to allow participants to grow their own fresh, healthy food year-round. Through specialized curriculum, **we aim to increase student interactions with and consumption of healthy foods**, leading to the development of healthy habits and a fun, interactive learning experience.

Our partners have filled their pantry shelves, lunch lines and classrooms with fresh, local foods, blending STEM/STEAM lessons with tasty and nutritious local foods and the social benefits of breaking bread (or crunching lettuce) across the table from their colleagues, fellow patrons and classmates.



## What can you make possible with Fork Farms technology?

So, now that you've painted a picture of who you are and what you've set out to do, let's drill down a bit more. Some donors will look to the details to make an educated decision, so you'll need to spell out your goals and how you'll measure your progress against them.

### For example, how many people will benefit from the integration of Flex Farms?

Then, consider some of the bolded statements in the section above. Think about the ways that your site might track these outcomes to report back to your donors (some will want to know when and what they can expect to hear from you before giving their gift). You'll want to know which goals are the most important to meet (or exceed!) and how Fork Farms technology will help you get there.

### At the end of the project, how will you know if you've really made a difference? Do you need to conduct a survey? Track how many pounds of food are grown, or how many servings are eaten?



*Perhaps the students in your classroom will choose the lettuce they've grown when it's offered at lunchtime.*



*Or the participants at your food pantry will have access to fresh produce 25% more often when they come for their groceries.*



*Maybe the kids in your after-school program will be able to articulate how plants grow and identify 10 more vegetables than when they started your program.*



*Or, it's possible that one of your goals is simply to increase attendance or active participation.*

**Determine what's right for your organization and set out to make it a reality!**



## Step 3: Decide how you'll fundraise and ask!

In Steps 1 and 2, you determined the scope and goals of your project. With the help of a Fork Farms representative, you determined an overall budget and got an accurate picture of how much your organization needs to invest. After considering your organization's funds, you identified the gap to fill through your fundraising efforts. You'll likely consider one of the following ways to raise the funds – remember, if you don't ask, you'll never get a yes!

### Personal Solicitation

Many times, the most effective form of fundraising is to sit across the table from your organization's friends to ask them face-to-face for their help.

As this is sometimes the most intimidating form of fundraising, Fork Farms has developed an outline and script to review if you're interested in trying this approach. Feel free to reach out and ask for it if you'd like!



### Direct Mail

You might consider writing a one- or two-page letter asking for donations. This letter should use storytelling and a specific call to action – including a dollar amount – from its readers.

If your organization doesn't have historical information about a donor's level of giving, consider asking for the same amount across the board, or asking a few individuals on the mailing list what they feel is appropriate first.

Don't forget to thank your donors, putting them in the front and center of your letter – without them, it wouldn't be possible to meet your goals!

### Grant Writing

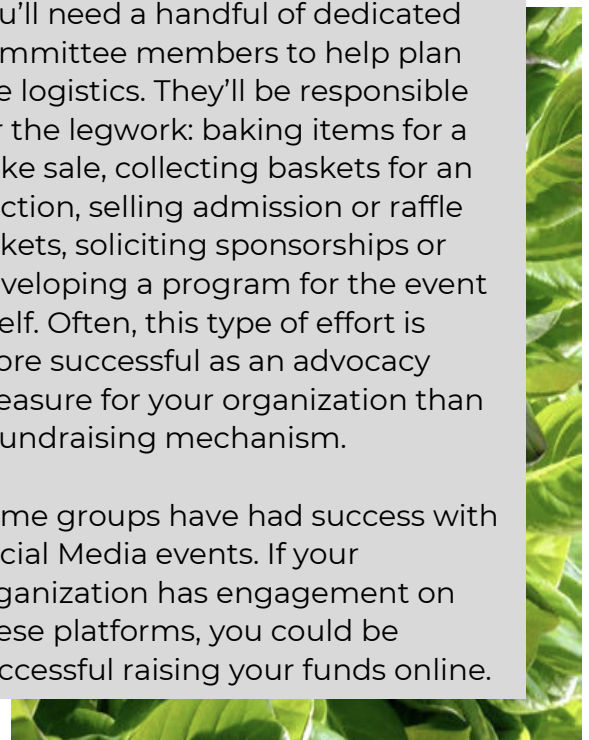
In some cases, grant writing may be necessary.

Some organizations (for example, many corporations or your local community foundation), require that grants be submitted before donating. They'll likely ask for budgetary information in addition to the summary of your project and background information about your own organization.

### Events

Events are often the most time-intensive route to raising money, so you'll need a handful of dedicated committee members to help plan the logistics. They'll be responsible for the legwork: baking items for a bake sale, collecting baskets for an auction, selling admission or raffle tickets, soliciting sponsorships or developing a program for the event itself. Often, this type of effort is more successful as an advocacy measure for your organization than a fundraising mechanism.

Some groups have had success with Social Media events. If your organization has engagement on these platforms, you could be successful raising your funds online.





## Step 4: Execute your project

### 1. Place your order

If you've been working with us directly, inform your Fork Farms representative that you are ready to implement your project. Otherwise, you can visit our website at: [www.forkfarms.com](http://www.forkfarms.com) and order your Flex Farm(s). You can also purchase additional supplies.

### 2. Get confirmation

Receive status updates from our team including confirmation of your order, estimated shipping & arrival dates, tracking information and more.

### 3. Your Flex Farm arrives!

You'll receive a phone call or email from our support staff to help answer any questions you have as you get started. In the meantime, if you'd like to view our instructional videos, visit:  
[www.forkfarms.com/flex-farm-assembly/](http://www.forkfarms.com/flex-farm-assembly/)  
or  
[www.forkfarms.com/growing-resources/](http://www.forkfarms.com/growing-resources/)  
If you have additional questions, our support team can be reached at:

- Phone: [877.886.7736](tel:877.886.7736)
- Email: [support@forkfarms.com](mailto:support@forkfarms.com)



## Step 5: Steward your donors

Congratulations! You've successfully called your community to action. Your farm is ready to go and you're no doubt excited to begin implementing your new (or expanded) program!

But you're not done – not quite yet. You can't forget to bring along the folks who helped you make it happen: your donors.

There are lots of ways to help them feel engaged and appreciated for their support. Consider including them in some of the following as you kick off the farming season:



### **Ribbon cutting ceremony**



**First harvest** (would they like to participate? or could you deliver some of your produce to them?)



**Notes of appreciation** from the people you serve, your board members or your teachers



### **Videos of the growing cycle**



**Metrics to show your success** (remember the ones you promised them earlier in the process? show them that your organization delivered on those promises!)



**Pictures of the Flex Farm in action:** what food did you grow? how did it look in the system? who ate it? were there empty plates?



**Stories and testimonials** to share how impactful this work is.

