

Volunteer Models for Institutional Licensees

A government or university licensee usually does not have a board that sees the station as its top fundraising priority. In such cases, the station must adopt a different volunteer model to engage the leadership it needs for successful major gift fundraising. There are two types of models. The first is the formal organization:

- Independent 501(c)(3) foundations, such as that at Iowa Public Television, that exist solely to provide volunteer support for higher level fundraising.
- Friends groups, such as that at MontanaPBS. These too are independent organizations, but at many stations are organized to provide support for special events and pledge drives, rather than major gift fundraising. In such cases, the station must either work to raise the sights of the volunteers or risk setting up a separate organization. This often leads to conflict.

In either case, care must be taken that the roles and responsibilities of the organization are clearly spelled out, that member recruitment includes a clear understanding of those roles, and that donor intent is respected. There are cases of support groups withholding funds from the station in which name it raises funds to make a political or programmatic point.

The other model is informal, in that the support group is not a separate corporation, but is established simply to help forward the fundraising mission of the station:

- Focused committees set up for specific fundraising purposes. KPBS at San Diego State University has a producer's club committee and specific committees for major donor fundraising events. KLVX in Las Vegas has supplemented its friends group with this kind of structure.
- "Virtual" boards that perform many of the functions of governing boards, but are not responsible for governance. KUED at the University of Utah maintains a board of friends that has no formal fiscal responsibility, but is treated as the station's board and plays an instrumental role in major gift fundraising. WGBY, a part of the WGBH Educational Foundation, has a "Board of Tribunes" that functions much like a governing board and is deeply involved in fundraising, but whose primary purpose is to function as the station's Community Advisory Board.