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Fundraising for Senior Service Organizations and Senior Living Communities

Why is fundraising important for senior-focused non-profits?

- Charitable giving in the United States now tops \$300 billion annually, with 86% of Americans philanthropically active.
- An estimated \$41 trillion in personal wealth will change hands through 2044 as the older generation transfers this wealth to their successors and beneficiaries.
- Demographic trends point to a surge in demand for senior services and a transformation of non-profit organizations focused on the ageing.
 - The U.S. population aged 65 and older is growing at 3.5 times the rate of the population as a whole.
 - Women form the majority of the population over 65, comprise the majority of residents in senior living communities, and make 70% of all charitable bequests.
 - The average age of an Independent Living resident at entry is 79; the average age at death of all those leaving a charitable bequest is 84.
- Rating agencies like Standard & Poor's consider sustainable fundraising revenue when evaluating the financial health of senior living communities, so a strong fund development program can reduce borrowing costs.
- Fundraising can protect the 501(c)(3) status of a senior living community.
 - The U.S. Treasury has already scrutinized tax-exempt hospitals to assess how they provide a community benefit

in exchange for tax-favored status. Scrutiny of senior living communities can be expected to increase as well.

- Voluntary financial support of senior living programs and services helps substantiate claims of community benefit.
- Forward thinking senior living communities and senior service organizations see fundraising as a part of wellness.
 - Generosity is a part of our humanity.
 - The desire to be engaged in the community and to contribute to it does not end at a particular age.
 - Philanthropy is one, important expression of this ongoing engagement later in life.
 - Residents or clients and their families want to express their gratitude for the care or services provided.
 - Seniors in general and those residing in senior living communities feel financially vulnerable and want a plan for their remaining assets.
- Non-profit senior living communities and senior service organizations have unmet goals, ambitious plans to grow, and the need for more resources.
 - Their residents or clients represent a population that is both willing and able to support their missions.
 - These residents or clients are savvy about fundraising and are being regularly approached by other non-profit organizations for their support.

Return on investment

- Since effective fundraising is based on relationships that take time to develop, senior living communities and senior service organizations should measure the return on investing resources in fundraising over a three-year period.
- Forward thinking senior living communities and senior service organizations adopt a policy to keep the cost per dollar raised under the Better Business Bureau's maximum of 35%. This ratio declines as programs mature, to an average of 24%.