Excerpts from “Advocating fundraising during the Coronavirus pandemic”
Rogare, the Fundraising Think Tank
https://www.rogare.net/advocacy-during-pandemic

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Some nonprofits are experiencing reluctance about fundraising activities (letters to prospective donors, for example), because it might seem like their work is not as important as the work related to the pandemic. This article (which includes a link to a more detailed report) summarizes the arguments that have been made AGAINST fundraising, and counterarguments, which organizations like ours can use or adapt to make the case for fundraising.

**Argument 1:** People don’t have money to donate to charity because they’ve been furloughed or laid off

**Counter argument:** All charities play a crucial role in our society: often, they fill gaps left by the government and the market economy. In the wake of Covid-19, those gaps are more acute than ever, and that means charities are more important than ever.

When charities ask for support, they are asking on behalf of those they serve:

Question for discussion -- who would you say is served by CRC?

Another important point is that most people only give to charity if they’re asked to do so. Therefore, leaders of charities have a duty to their beneficiaries to ask for support.

**Argument 2:** Our charity will be criticised if we fundraise right now because people have been furloughed or laid off.

**Counter argument:** The lockdown has altered spending patterns, meaning that some people may have more money available to donate to charity than previously. Charities have always appealed to people at all levels of the socio-economic scale. Charities’ most loyal supporters are often those with modest incomes giving small regular or cash gifts.

It is important to remember that giving has been proven to have numerous positive effects. In a time of social distancing, people are looking for ways to feel connected to each other, and giving can offer that sense of connection.

**Argument 3:** No one cares about non-Covid-related organisations right now. We don’t want to come across as tone-deaf and uncaring by asking for donations

**Counter argument:** The growth of informal activities – like honoring our frontline workers during the pandemic – is one example of how people will organize themselves in order to feel a sense of connection and purpose. Charities that invite donors to give can also offer a sense of control and focus.

People want to find a sense of worth, a way to contribute, a way to find joy.

This pandemic gives us an opportunity to deepen relationships with our donors.

**Argument 4:** We don’t want to be seen as ‘capitalizing’ on the current situation.

**Counter argument:** a zoo might desperately need to fundraise to feed their animals because they have lost revenue from ticket sales or parking. That’s not “capitalizing,” it’s informing their supporters that their cause is important.
It makes sense for us to remain connected with our donors even if not every communication contains an ask. Our donors will tell us by their reactions if and when they are ready to give.

**Argument 5:** We can’t predict results and could waste resources.

**Counter argument:** Fundraisers learn from the outset that giving is voluntary: the decision to give always rests with the donor. If a charity declares that its needs are not as great as others during the pandemic and chooses not to fundraise, it is taking that right to choose away from the donor. This is not donor-centered fundraising.