

The Backbone of Nonprofits: Working in Development with Lift Louisiana

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After interning with Lift Louisiana for over one year now, I can confidently say that each semester brings new skills and experiences. For the past several months, I have focused on creating profiles for major donors, planning Lift Louisiana's annual gala, writing and mailing donor gifts, and grant research. My time at Lift has taught me that my various skills can be used in very unexpected ways. For example, the skills I learned on the hunt for scholarships in high school to fund Tulane have been

very useful for grant searching. Additionally, my skills with social media have been surprisingly helpful in creating donor profiles. These profiles are useful for helping the team at Lift Louisiana decide how the organization's objectives and goals may align with the interests and values of a donor. The team uses the donor profile to prepare for their meeting with the donor and set expectations for the outcome of the discussion. Information within each donor profile includes past work experiences, past philanthropic involvement, financial capabilities, and any connections a donor may have to Lift Louisiana. Reoccurring donors are vital to supporting Lift's mission, but so are other efforts, including fundraising. Once a year, Lift Louisiana hosts a fundraising gala, and I have spent this past semester reaching out to potential venues to prepare. Although I had no experience in event planning prior to my internship, I loved the opportunity to develop these new skills. I am constantly developing new expertise that has been useful when applying to other internships, fellowship opportunities, and likely in my job search this spring.

Of course, some of Lift Louisiana's revenue comes in on a much smaller scale through individual donations of small amounts. While people may think their small donations go unnoticed, they are so important to the vitality of nonprofits, and Lift ensures that people know that. I sent nearly one hundred hand-written thank you letters this semester to recurring donors and physician activists who have worked with Lift Louisiana in the past to express our gratitude for all of the work that they have done.

The final thing I worked on this semester was continuing my grant research from previous semesters. While this can be a frustrating process, it is so rewarding to know how much finding these grants helps community organizations. There are certain programs that Lift Louisiana has started that can be directly attributed to grants that I have found. Overall, I am thrilled to have completed another semester with Lift and look forward to my final semester with the organization this spring.