

Beyond the Glamorous Parts of Nonprofit Work: My Experience as a Development Intern at Lift Louisiana

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Whenever I am asked about the work that I do at Lift Louisiana – in interviews, at networking events, or even in casual conversations – I am always met with shock. Grants and other development-related activities are universally accepted as boring,

time-consuming, and not rewarding. However, as I approach my one-year anniversary as the Development Intern for Lift Louisiana, I could not disagree more. I find the work that I have done with Lift to be rewarding, satisfying, and extremely important for my future professional endeavors. The skill set that I have acquired through my work translates into so many other experiences and is highly sought after in many fields.

While not everyone understands the joy of this work, this semester I spent a lot of time on the phone saying, “thank you”, and the responses that I received in return were beyond gratifying. Most recently, I have been focusing on making thank-you calls to some of our donors. On one of my calls, the donor let me know that he was a doctor who had convinced his colleagues to attend a medical conference in New Orleans that they were planning to boycott due to the abortion ban. I loved hearing the unique reasons why people donated to Lift or what stories they had surrounding reproductive health. In addition to thank you calls, I also spent a significant amount of time compiling information on past donors. This helps Lift determine how likely donors are to contribute in the future and also gives insight into who is donating to the organization. I compiled information on people’s professions, education, and social media accounts.

Although I have done primarily grant searching for Lift in the past, I feel that this semester I expanded my understanding of what development work could entail. I learned the importance of donor networks and was able to speak directly to people who donated to Lift. My colleagues at Lift then do the work that allows me to see how the donors’ money is being used. It is so satisfying to know that the work that I have done on my end has helped to fund advocacy, education, and litigation for abortion rights throughout the state of Louisiana.