

Interview with Sandy

I'm Sandy Rees, creator of the Get Fully Funded system for attracting donors.

I am a nonprofit fund-raising coach and consultant, and I love showing mission-driven nonprofit organizations how to successfully raise all the money they need. My favorite thing to do is to give nonprofits the tools to develop a vibrant donor base, spread the word about their cause, and build a strong Board of Directors. I love seeing them “get it” about fundraising and I love being there to celebrate their successes with them.



My personal **Fundraising Beliefs**:

- Every non-profit organization with a compelling mission can be fully funded.
- The best fundraising is based on relationships with donors.
- Donor relations and gift acknowledgement are critical to successful fundraising.
- Heartfelt passion is the key to attracting support.

What's 'Get Fully Funded' about?

'Get Fully Funded' is a concept I started mulling over many years ago. I was working at the local Food Bank and it was February. If you're not familiar with food banking, winter is not a good time for food donations. Our shelves were empty and it bothered me. I knew that many of the food pantries we supported relied on us for canned goods, and when we didn't have them, they didn't have them. I shared my concerns with my Executive Director and she said “we never have cans this time of year.” I was stunned. Somehow, she accepted the status quo. But it was NOT okay with me! So I set out to do something about it. I started figuring out how to shift some big food drives from the Fall to Winter. I recruited new food drives. I turned over every rock to find other ways to get food into the warehouse during the low times. And guess what? The next year, we had canned goods in the warehouse in February.

Bottom line - I changed the status quo!

What really changed was my thinking. I found that I was willing to do whatever it took to provide food to the hungry and I quickly realized that I would have to start thinking differently about bringing in resources in order to accomplish my goal of having canned goods in the winter months. The success I achieved inspired me to go further. I started asking my colleagues on the front lines what they needed and I set out to find the money to meet their needs. In a short time, they had it - equipment, vehicles, and additional staff. I refused to accept the status quo, and I went out and raised the money. I did it! It was exhilarating! And I never looked back.

Fast forward to today. I'm now a coach and consultant, and spend my days doing what I love: helping nonprofits make a difference in the world. I challenge my clients to be the best they can be and I expect the same level of "no excuses" work from them that I used to be successful when I sat in the Development chair. That's what it takes to Get Fully Funded.

How long have you been doing what you do and how did you get to be a Get Fully Funded coach?

When I was little, I never said "I want to be a Fundraiser when I grow up!" I fell into it like almost everyone else who works in nonprofit fundraising. In 1998, I was working in commercial marketing and sitting on the Board of the local rescue mission. A position came open in their Development office and I applied. The rest is history.

I found that I had great instincts for marketing and fundraising. After all, the principles of marketing and sales were applicable to raising money, with a few simple shifts.

Since 1998, I've worked in nonprofit fundraising, as a staff member, a Board member, a consultant, and a coach. I've "been there, done that" with all aspects of fundraising, from annual fund to planned giving. I've started from scratch and grown donor bases, created monthly giving programs, started major giving programs, and just about anything else you can think of. What I'm really good at is:

- Donor relations
- Direct mail
- Non-profit marketing
- Board development
- Strategic planning

What's the difference between consulting and coaching?

Consulting is a way for me to share my experience and knowledge of what works in fundraising. It's the "how to" information that most people want. Coaching is more about helping you as a person stretch and grow to reach your goals. It involves a lot of listening, tough love, and unwavering support for you. Usually when I'm coaching a nonprofit leader, we talk about improving relationships with staff or Board members, dissolving fear around fundraising, and attitudes toward money.

I'm often told that I'm the one person who truly understands what an Executive Director is dealing with, I'm the one person who constantly supports and listens to them, and I'm the one person who can push them forward with love.

What is a CFRE?

CFRE is an acronym for Certified Fund Raising Executive and it is a credential for professional fundraisers. It demonstrates my commitment to the profession and my achievements over the years.

Only a small percentage of professional fundraisers have CFRE status. It requires 5 years' experience, a minimum of \$25,000 of dollars raised, and meeting the minimum requirements for service and continuing education.

For me, it was a professional milestone that I'm very proud of.

Who are your clients?

I work with a wide range of nonprofit organizations, but my favorite clients are social service organizations. Here are some of the groups I've helped:

- After-school programs
- Animal rescue groups
- Child advocacy centers
- Children and youth issues groups
- Community theatres and arts organizations
- Disabilities organizations
- Domestic violence shelters
- Education foundations
- Food banks and pantries
- Habitat for Humanity affiliates
- Health education organizations
- Historical groups
- Homeless organizations
- Job training organizations
- Women's organizations

Specifically, my client list includes 11 Habitat for Humanity affiliates, Project Linus, Be The Match, Kidney Clinics and Research Centers International, Children of Uganda, Scarecrow Foundation, and many more.

Is there an organization that is too small for your system?

Not really. As long as an organization is official and has the appropriate permits and registrations, then they'll find my system to be beneficial. Since my system walks you step-by-step through fundraising, it's perfect for a start-up organization as well as any nonprofit that isn't getting the fundraising results they want.

Is there an organization that is too big for your system?

Nope. I imagine that most large nonprofits, including universities and hospitals have vast amounts of experience and knowledge on staff, but there may still be nuggets of gold for them in the Get Fully Funded system.

I find that ANYONE can benefit from a coach, particularly people who want to become better at managing teams and reaching goals.

How are you different from other nonprofit consultants?

I've been told from clients, friends, and colleagues that what makes me different from other consultants is the deep level of care and concern that I have for my clients. I think it's the hybrid approach I take. I'm a consultant AND a coach – I can tell you the “how to” of raising money at the same time that I support you to stretch and grow professionally (and sometimes personally). I'll help you think bigger than you ever have before and I'll keep you focused on your goals.

I'm very realistic and I can quickly assess your situation to determine what's the shortest path to cash for your fundraising efforts. I'm all about picking the “low hanging fruit on the tree” and I'll have you thinking that way, too.

Do you offer workshops?

I sure do! I travel around the United States (and sometimes other countries) to lead workshops and seminars on various aspects of fundraising and Board development. Participants in my events love the games, exercises, and jokes that I use to help them learn the material.

If you are interested in having me come to your area, shoot me an email and we can talk about the details.

What type of personality do you work best with and what is expected of me?

Let me be honest here - I'm picky about who I work with 1-on-1. Life is too short not to!

I prefer to work with Executive Directors. I'm happy to work with a Development Director too as long as the Executive Director is on board. I like to bring about change and I find that hard to do when the Executive Director isn't supportive.

If we work together, I'll expect you to show up, be professional, and take action on the things I suggest you to do. You'll need to do your homework, keep your commitments, and be willing to do any personal work you need to do. And keep your mind open to learning and moving forward. I'll challenge you, but in the end it will be worth it when you gain the skill and confidence you need to be totally successful in fundraising.

Are there nonprofits that this system is NOT going to work for?

This system is NOT for

- Nonprofit professionals who are happy with the way things are right now and don't want to do anything different
- Chronic complainers, whiners, and people who are negative
- Organizations that are financially desperate
- People who have a habit of using excuses to justify why they aren't raising enough money or blame the economy
- Organizations that have weak leadership
- Organizations that aren't willing to invest in fundraising

What exactly is the Get Fully Funded system and what does it include?

The Get Fully Funded system is a step-by-step process for creating long-term financial stability through donor-based fundraising. It's a blueprint to building the fundraising program of your dreams.

It's all boiled down to 7 simple steps that you can easily implement.

Step 1: Make fundraising a priority. You must get infrastructure in place in your office, and put the systems together that will support you when you are fundraising. Otherwise, your fundraising program will collapse as soon as it starts. You also must get your mind focused on what's possible and let go any beliefs that suck your energy.

Step 2: Understand why people give. Before you try to raise money, it's helpful to uncover a donor's motivations for giving. I'll help you understand all the reasons why someone might make a gift to your organization.

Step 3: Identify the best donor prospect. You can save a lot of time and resources by focusing your efforts on the right people. I'll help you get clear about your ideal donor and how to find more just like them.

Step 4: Tell your story. When it's time to talk to donors and prospects, it's best to have a clear, focused message to share. I'll help you get clear about your key messages and share with you how to tell a good elevator speech. I'll also help you create a library of stories about clients who have been helped by your organization.

Step 5: Plan how and when will you ask for a gift. This is the nitty-gritty! Here, we'll put together a fundraising plan for your nonprofit, and choose all the strategies and techniques that will be most effective for the target audiences you are working with.

Step 6: Acknowledge and steward the gift. Thanking and stewarding a donor is not only polite, but it builds relationship and trust with the donor. You'll learn how to put together a great Thank-You letter and how to thank your VIP donors in meaningful ways. You'll also learn how to create a Donor Acknowledgement Plan so that you know how you will thank donors at all giving levels.

Step 7: Evaluate success. Measuring your success will help you know which fundraising activities to continue and which ones to dump. I'll give you several tools to use to keep a close eye on how you're doing.

Does the Get Fully Funded system really work?

Yes! The results of this system are a larger, happier donor-base, broader and deeper revenue streams, and more confident fundraising staff and volunteers. Many of my clients have enjoyed remarkable success using my recommendations.

Can I contact some of your former clients for references?

You bet! Contact me and I'll give you a list of references.

How quickly can I expect results?

The Get Fully Funded system is like anything else – the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it!

It's not a quick fix to your fundraising woes. Instead, it's a proven system that, when implemented, will lead to a steady, long-term stream of revenue for your nonprofit.

If you are committed to the success of your nonprofit organization and you're willing to do the work I outline in this system, I think you will begin to see results fairly quickly. Typically, it can take up to a year (or more) to get a complete fundraising program in place, but I'm going to help you shortcut that process by getting you laser-focused on the exact tasks that will give you the most return on your investment. In other words, **I believe this system will help you raise more money and do it faster than you could do on your own.** You should recover your investment in this system within a few weeks, and maybe even with 1 new donor!

The nonprofit clients I work with privately see results within the first few months. Here's what they do to be successful:

- They take ACTION and implement the steps of the system.
- They get really good at telling their story to lots of people.
- They create a written plan for fundraising.
- They get out there and spread the word about their cause.
- They learn how to say “no” to things that don't help them raise money.
- They work smarter, not harder.
- They create systems to make their work easier.
- They develop deep and lasting relationships with key supporters and donors.
- They create diverse revenue streams from a variety of fundraising strategies.
- They thank every donor, every time, and do a fantastic job of it.

- They track where their fundraising dollars are being spent and where the most money is being raised.
- They regularly review their fundraising plan and make adjustments as needed.

How can I guarantee that I will raise more money?

The one single thing you can do to guarantee your success is to **take action**. Do all of your assignments, even if you think “I already know this.” Be committed to the process. Remember, this is not a quick fix, but a long-term strategy you are implementing.

The difference between successful people and unsuccessful ones is taking action.

Will I recover the investment I put into this program?

Yes! Many of my clients report raising much more than their investment in a short period of time. In fact, you might be able to recover your investment with a single major gift! Stop and think about the lifetime value of a donor. What is one donor worth to your organization? One new donor or one large gift could more than pay for your investment in coaching with me!

What are my options for working with you?

I’m so excited that you’re considering working with me! I offer several options for working with me.

If you just have a few questions, try my **Clarity Power Hour**. In just 60 minutes I’ll help you get clear about your fundraising goals and the strategies that will help you raise the money your nonprofit needs. Ask all the questions you want about fundraising, Boards, and anything nonprofit. I’ll give you my best ideas and advice to help you crank up your development efforts fast. It’s just you and me, one-on-one for a full 60 minutes. Come prepared, because you’ll be able to ask all the questions you want about fundraising, planning, Boards, and anything nonprofit during that hour. Nothing will be held back! I’m known for my ability to generate lots of ideas, and I guarantee you’ll walk away with several good ones. Fee: \$147.

If you think you’re pretty close to being able to raise more money, but need a little guidance and direction, consider my **Private Virtual Fundraising Retreat**. It’s just you, me, and a half day together. I’ll help you set goals, choose strategies, and create a fundraising plan that will get you results. This works well for nonprofits that have tried fundraising and not gotten the results they want. Topics include understanding your donor, reasons people give, building relationships, identifying donor prospects, and choosing appropriate fundraising strategies for **your** organization. The biggest benefit to this retreat – it’s virtual, so no travel expenses. Gather your whole fundraising committee around the computer to participate in the discussion. Fee: \$1,000

Coaching/Consulting programs

My entry level program is called the **Fast-Track program**. It's designed to get an organization up and running in fundraising very quickly. We start with a planning retreat where I focus on helping you identify the fundraising strategies that will give you the most "bang for the buck." We'll set goals for both 90 days and 6 months so that every day you'll know exactly what you need to do and why you're doing it.

This program is best for the Executive Director or Development Director who has some experience in nonprofit fundraising, but

- is new to their particular nonprofit and is having trouble applying what they know or has a fundraising program that has leveled off and they want to take it to the next level
- has lots of specific questions
- needs to quickly make some big improvements in the bottom line through fundraising

In this program, you get a 1-day virtual planning retreat (4 hours) then 3 hours of coaching that you can use anytime over the next 6 months. You'll also get a copy of my book "Get Fully Funded." The cost for this program is \$2,500.

Next is my **Basic program** designed to help you focus on the nuts and bolts of donor-based fundraising so that you can take some big steps toward Getting Fully Funded. It starts with a 2-day in-person intensive planning session with me, where we'll go deep into planning, messaging, target audiences, strategies, and mindset (how you think about fundraising). We'll look at individual donor strategies, direct mail, major gifts, grants, and online giving to decide which ones will bring you the most results in the shortest time with the least effort and the greatest long-term benefit.

This program is best for the Executive Director or Development Director who

- doesn't have much fundraising experience, but wants to do it right
- doesn't know where to start
- doesn't have many donors and wants to grow their base of support
- needs some help focusing on the specific things that will give them the greatest return for the time and money spent
- understands the importance of donor-based fundraising
- can understand concepts and implement quickly

In this program, you'll get a 2-day in-person intensive planning session, 6 hours of coaching calls and unlimited email support over a 6-month period. You'll get weekly accountability check-in emails to help keep you focused and moving forward. When we meet in person, I'll bring you a copy of my "Simple Success Fundraising Plan" and my "Get Fully Funded" deluxe workbook. Between them, there are dozens of worksheets, templates and checklists! The cost for this program is \$6,000.

Finally, there's my **Complete program** designed specifically for the Executive Director is ready to uplevel themselves and their organization. It's for the nonprofit professional who wants more for their nonprofit – more resources to serve more people. It's a 1-year program that provides you with more time with me and more support so that you can get more accomplished. It starts with a 2-day intensive in-person planning session to go deep into planning, messaging, target audience, strategies, and mindset. I'll help you set goals for 90 days, 6 months, and 1 year. We'll totally map out your fundraising and communications for 12 months! We'll look at individual donor techniques like email blasts and direct mail, major gifts, grants, and online giving. I'll teach you about the infrastructure and systems you need in place to support your donor-based fundraising. We'll look at how you thank donors, engage them in your work, and build relationships for long-term sustainability.

We'll also look at the obstacles you might be facing, including staffing issues, a lackluster Board, lack of name recognition and whatever might be going on for you and your nonprofit. I'll give you bold support to handle these issues so that you can go forward.

This program is best for the Executive Director who

- is passionate about their nonprofit's mission and wants the best for the people being served
- is struggling with juggling so many responsibilities, including fundraising
- might be feeling a little overwhelmed, frustrated, or burned-out
- needs someone to be a listening ear
- understands that by doing their personal work, they become a better leader and better able to move their nonprofit forward.

You'll get monthly coaching calls, unlimited email support, and weekly accountability check-in emails to keep you focused. You'll get a complete set of my books and audios including the "Simple Success Fundraising Plan" and the "Get Fully Funded" deluxe workbook, and free passes to any webinars or trainings I hold during the year. You'll also get me in person to lead a live training event or retreat for your Board. The cost for this program is \$15,000.

How many clients do you work with at one time?

I have lots of availability for 1-day retreats and short-term client engagements. My premium coaching/consulting programs are much more limited since I give these folks lots of attention and private time. Typically, I work with fewer than 10 clients at this level at any given time.

Do people ever re-up with you?

Yes! I'm tickled pink when people want to continue to work with me and it happens regularly.

Ok, I know which program I want. How do I get started with you?

Woohoo! I'm so excited! Congratulations on making a decision that will move your fundraising and your nonprofit's mission forward! The first thing I want to do is schedule a Get Acquainted Session with you so we can talk about your goals and what you want to achieve by working with me. Email me at sandy@getfullyfunded.com to schedule your session.

How does payment work? Can I make payments or do I have to pay up front?

I'm happy to spread your payments out over time to make it easier for you, but I also offer a small discount if you pay in full up front.

If I'm not sure, can I sample your work?

A great way to get a feel for who I am and how I can help is through my newsletter, "Hot Ideas for Fundraising." We publish it every other week and it's chock-full of "how to" articles that will get you moving.

I'm juggling a lot of responsibilities and don't have a lot of time for fundraising. How much time will I need?

You need to be prepared to spend at least 1 full day a week on fundraising if you are serious about fully funding your nonprofit. By keeping you focused on the most important tasks, I can help you get the most out of the limited time you have to work on fundraising.

If you want to secure your organization for the future, you must carve out time for fundraising. Period. What's more important than long-term sustainability?

I still have a couple of questions. May I call you?

Yep! The best thing to do is set up a Get Acquainted Session so we can talk. Click here to schedule your session.

What are some of your biggest accomplishments?

1. In 1998, I turned around a failing thrift store, going from operating in the red to clearing \$10K each month, all in about 3 months.
2. In 2002, I started a monthly giving program for the local food bank. Within a year, the program had 150 members giving over \$50,000 in the course of a year.
3. In 1999, I launched a direct mail program to generate revenue and grow the donor base for the local food bank. Within 4 years, we were raising hundreds of thousands of dollars through the mail.
4. I grew the donor base at the food bank from 1,200 to 8,500 people within 5 years.
5. In 2008, I showed a client nonprofit how to utilize a heart-based approach to create a signature event. In 2010, the event earned \$120,000 in gifts and pledges.

6. I've showed dozens of nonprofit Boards how to re-ignite their passion for their organizations and overcome their fear of fundraising.

About me personally

I'm a fun-loving, outdoorsy kind of girl. On a sunny day, you'll find me either brushing a horse or weeding the garden. And if I'm outside, there's probably a brown and white cat close by.

If the weather is bad, you'll find me inside working on a quilt. I have a whole room dedicated to creating scrappy quilts that I often give away. It's my creative outlet and keeps me sane when things get hectic.

I'm active in my East Tennessee community and have volunteered with many community organizations, including Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding (STAR), Lost Sheep Ministries, Horse Haven of Tennessee, and the Loudon High School Band Boosters. I'm a former Girl Scout Leader and currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Loudon County Habitat for Humanity.