

Tips from the Experts:
How to Weather the Financial Storm
Center for Nonprofit Management, Nashville, TN
www.cnm.org

- Go back to basics: Refresh yourself on your core mission and make sure your organization is only serving that basic principal. If you have to trim, always trim back to your mission.
- To that end, put new initiatives on the back burner... unless you know how you will pay for them in a sustainable way
- If you were planning a capital campaign, consider moving back its starting date; if your capital campaign is in progress, consider a temporary pause in making requests.
- If you need to, cut something loose that you provide as a service that another agency does well. Inform that agency that you are stopping that service so it can pick up the ball.
- Develop contingency plans for different budget models (e.g. 10%, 25% cutback budgets) so you have a back-up plan if past funding sources don't come through. Use cost/benefit analyses to determine what to reduce and what to maintain.
- In an effort to cut costs, try to renegotiate your leases or other administrative arrangements
- Make sure you have a strong message that you can communicate easily, in writing and verbally, both to use with donors and with the public at-large
- Communicate with board and staff about what is going on
- Use volunteers wherever you can. Be creative. Contact Hands on Nashville at (615) 298-1108 for ideas and assistance.
- A special kind of volunteerism is a loaned executive program. Boomers or others from friendly corporations might take the place of paid staff.
- Don't be afraid to ask for anything you need. Whether it's an in-kind donation, or to a contributor that said "no" the first time.
- Consider asking past donors to change restricted gifts into unrestricted for the 2009 year.
- Consider asking past donors to make payments earlier of previously-made pledges.
- Look for creative and innovative ways to raise money.

- Save dollars by outsourcing programs instead of using staff.
- Don't be afraid to collaborate. Joint ventures can be a great thing for your organization and its long term viability.
- Keep your key funders in the loop (they should not find out what is going on in the media!)
- Engage government and business to influence public policy decisions.
- If it becomes necessary to merge the organization to keep the programs alive, this might be the time to take that action – remember it is the service that matters rather than the agency.