RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING

More nonprofit organizations meet fundraising goal and plan for a strong 2018

New Orleans, LA: Three-quarters (75%) of surveyed charitable nonprofits reported meeting their fundraising goals for 2017, according to a new report from the Nonprofit Research Collaborative (NRC). The NRC began in 2010 and the result for 2017 is the highest percentage that have met goal. The results also showed that 63 percent raised more than in the prior year, which is an improvement over the 58 percent that saw increases in charitable gift receipts from 2015 to 2016.

“The 2017 NRC Study showed some amazing, record-setting results that reflect the professionalism, skills and ethical dedication of fundraisers and charities,” said Mike Geiger, MBA, CPA, president and CEO of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), which is one of the five members of the NRC. “There was such dramatic change over the past year—economic, political, social—but charities and their fundraising programs continue to inspire donors to take action. Through strong donor engagement, innovative programs and a commitment to high ethical standards, the charitable sector is raising more funds than ever to improve communities around the world.”

Organizations that were most likely to reach their goal include colleges and universities, with 85 percent succeeding in raising the amount they planned. The least likely to reach goal were charities in the “public society benefit” subsector, which includes consolidated fundraising activities such as United Way, Jewish federations, and community foundations plus groups that work on societal issues such as civic engagement, civil rights, or community and economic development. Among public society benefit organizations, 62 percent met their fundraising target. Other types of organizations, such as those working in arts, health, human services, or religion, fell between the high of 83 percent and the low of 62 percent.
“Successful fundraising requires a good plan and multiple approaches to appeal to donors,” said Eva Aldrich, Ph.D., CAE, (CFRE, 2001-2016), President and CEO of CFRE International, another NRC partner. “This wave of the NRC finds growth in major gifts receipts at 65 percent of responding organizations, plus continued success with appeals for smaller gifts through direct mail, online campaigns, and cash donations such as in an offering plate.”

PREDICTIONS FOR 2018
The Winter 2018 NRC survey also asked for predictions about 2018, whether individual giving might increase because of changes in the U.S. tax laws, and where fundraising professionals anticipate challenges. Among all survey participants in both the U.S. and Canada, 61 percent project another good year for fundraising in 2018.

In the United States, 10 percent of those surveyed thought the tax law change would help increase giving and nearly two-thirds (62 percent) thought giving would either stay the same or decline. Another 28 percent said the changes are too complex to attempt to guess.

In both countries, staffing and leadership for fundraising was mentioned by 24 percent of those who commented about what would most affect their results for 2018. The economy was the next most frequent, with 17 percent of respondents mentioning some aspect of global, national or local economic factors, including the U.S. stock market. About one in eight (13 percent) mentioned a specific type or element of fundraising, such as engaging individuals with the financial capacity to make a major gift or being more strategic about online communications or providing good reporting and accountability for all donors.

ABOUT THE SURVEY
The Nonprofit Research Collaborative (NRC) conducts surveys twice a year. Reports are available at www.NPResearch.org (the new report will be available April 16, 2018). This survey was conducted online and respondents form a convenience sample. There is no margin of error, as it is not a random sample of the population studied. Reported results are statistically significant using chi-square analysis.

ABOUT THE NONPROFIT RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE (NRC)
The NRC is a coalition of fundraising and charitable organizations dedicated to gathering and analyzing the most accurate data possible to help charities become more effective at fundraising. NRC members have direct experience collecting information from nonprofits concerning charitable receipts, fundraising practices, and/or grantmaking activities. NRC partners are the Association of Fundraising Professionals; Association of Fundraising Counsel; CFRE International; Giving USA Foundation; and the National Association of Charitable Gift Planners.