

## Planning a Capital Campaign for a Public Library

A **capital campaign** for a public library is a structured fundraising effort to raise funds for a specific, tangible project—such as a new building, major renovation, or facility expansion—beyond what can be covered by the annual budget. Success depends on careful planning, strong leadership, and community engagement.

### 1. Assess Readiness

Before launching, evaluate **internal** and **external** readiness:

- **Internal:** Board capacity, fundraising experience, staff skills, and organizational stability
- **External:** Community perception of the library, economic climate, and potential donor base

A **feasibility study** (campaign planning study) is a key first step. It identifies:

- Fundraising strengths and weaknesses.
- Community perception of the library.
- A compelling case for support.
- Potential leadership donors and prospects.
- Opportunities and threats to the project.

### 2. Define the Campaign Goal and Timeline

- Set a clear, achievable goal (e.g., \$2M for a new branch).
- Plan for **18–24 months** from feasibility study to campaign close.
- Break the process into **Quiet Phase** (individual solicitation of major donors) and **Public Phase** (broad-based outreach).

### 3. Build a Leadership Team

- Recruit a **Campaign Chair** and **Steering Committee** to oversee strategy, fundraising, and communications.
- Assign roles for cultivation, solicitation, and event planning.

### 4. Identify and Cultivate Major Donors

- Engage **local business leaders, community philanthropists, and wealthy individuals** who value the library's role.
- Use personal connections (e.g., Rotary, civic groups) to access potential donors.
- Start with smaller, achievable asks to build trust.

### 5. Develop a Strong Case for Support

Create a **Case Statement** and collateral materials that:

- Clearly explain the project's need and benefits.
- Highlight the library's impact and community value.
- Show how the campaign will be managed and used.

## 6. Execute the Campaign

- **Quiet Phase:** Individual meetings, tailored asks, and relationship-building.
- **Public Phase:** Events, direct mail, social media, and community visibility.
- Maintain consistent communication and donor recognition (e.g., “Donors Circle” parties).
- Develop an **online presence** on the library’s website and update regularly.

## 7. Monitor and Adjust

- Track progress against the timeline and budget.
- Address challenges early, and adapt strategies as needed.

## 8. Celebrate and Sustain

- Once the goal is met, celebrate with donors and the community.
- Use the campaign to build a **long-term donor base** invested in the library’s future.