



**BREAKING THE
GALA
ADDICTION**

A BOARD MEMBER'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND
ASSESSING THE VALUE OF FUNDRAISING EVENTS

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FOREWORD



Dear Nonprofit Leader:

We are delighted to bring you “Breaking the Gala Addiction,” a publication intended to help board and staff members work together productively and creatively in fundraising.

This document is the result of an almost yearlong process we collaborated on with nonprofit partners. The catchy title, “Breaking the Gala Addiction,” was intended to draw attention to economic challenges and social shifts that require a close examination of special events as a way to raise friends and funds for our nonprofits. “Breaking the Gala Addiction” is part of Prudential’s “Strength for Capacity Initiative,” a multiyear strategy partnering with nonprofits to strengthen their ability to deliver on their mission.

As grantmakers and sponsors of numerous events, we know the significance of the general operating support that special events generate — and how crucial general operating support is to the health of a nonprofit. But we are also aware that many nonprofits underestimate the true costs of raising funds, and that society is asking tough questions about how nonprofits operate. At Prudential’s clinic, also titled “Breaking the Gala Addiction,” we invited our nonprofit partners to examine the effectiveness of their galas and look at emerging trends in special events fundraising and general revenue generation.

This publication — written by BoardSource in partnership with The Prudential Foundation — is designed to stimulate the same dialogue among a broader range of board and staff members and to empower you with some important tools. We hope it enables your board and staff to collaborate in planning the most effective approach to raising general operating support for your organization. We expect it may also generate other conversations that help improve the overall efficiency of your institution.

Encouraging productive nonprofit board/staff partnerships is a long tradition at Prudential. As part of our more than 130-year commitment to corporate citizenship, we encourage company employees to volunteer as nonprofit board members — and we provide them with tools and training to help them be effective in their work. Our “Strength for Capacity Initiative” is an effort that yields multiple rewards for Prudential. We strengthen our communities at the same time our colleagues learn valuable skills and enjoy the deep satisfaction of making a difference.

We are delighted to collaborate with BoardSource in this work, knowing how well it encourages and supports effective board/staff partnerships. The good health of our nonprofit community is a crucial part of the good health of our society. We hope you find this publication and the work it guides you through helpful to creating a strong future for your nonprofit.

Gabriella E. Morris, President, The Prudential Foundation