

Be The One



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of Sarasota County

NONPROFIT NEWS

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Nonprofit News: January 2026



**Registration for the 2026 Giving Challenge Is
Officially Over**

Now comes the fun part!

The deadline to register for the 2026 Giving Challenge has passed, but there's so much more to do to prepare your nonprofit to succeed. We have **several upcoming virtual trainings** packed with useful information about things you can do to help your nonprofit maximize its Giving Challenge results, and we've also unveiled **a flurry of prize opportunities**, some of which you'll need to apply for and some of which you will be automatically entered to win. Get the scoop on everything you need to know below.

Prize Opportunities Galore!

Prizes are an engaging way for nonprofits to dive deep into their capacity-building efforts and explore partnerships, opportunities, and connections that last far beyond the Giving Challenge itself. Of course, they also provide a fun, friendly outlet for those organizations with fierce competitive spirits.

We recently updated the Giving Challenge website with information about several prize opportunities. Many prizes are awarded automatically (like "**The Fast 50**," \$250 prizes that will go to the first 50 nonprofits to inspire 50 unique donors to give through the challenge), while others require a special entry. For example, through Jan. 30, we are accepting entries in the **Best Video Commercial** contest: We're looking for short videos (30 seconds max) that tell a compelling story about a nonprofit's work and incorporate the Giving Challenge "**Be The One**" concept.

Learn more about those prizes, and many others, at the link below.

[Explore Giving Challenge Prize Opportunities](#)

Upcoming Giving Challenge Trainings

Training #1: Giving Challenge Campaign Communication Planning

Strong campaigns start with strong communications. This practical online training session will **help you and your organization craft clear, compelling messages to use before, during, and after the 2026 Giving Challenge**. Learn how to create a streamlined communications plan, tailor your messages for different audiences, and maximize your reach across social media, email, and other channels. You will also receive practical templates and a timeline to keep outreach focused and on track.

The training will begin at **noon on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026**, and will be led by [Jennifer Abbott, CAP](#), and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson Foundation** as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative.

[Register for the Jan. 21 Training](#)

Training #2: Countdown to Impact

This hands-on session will guide participants through creating a detailed "run of show" for the big day, testing planned activities, and spotting potential gaps. You'll also explore strategies to begin stewardship planning early—so **your organization is ready to thank, engage, and retain donors long after the 24 hours have ended**.

The training will begin at **noon on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026**, and will be led by [Victoria Finley, CFRE](#), and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson**

Foundation as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative.

[Register for the Feb. 4 Training](#)

Training #3: Final Steps to Success

In this webinar led by GiveGab, we'll cover **last-minute tips and best practices to engage with your supporters and be successful in the 2026 Giving Challenge**. The GiveGab and Community Foundation teams will also answer **any and all last-minute questions**.

The training will begin at **noon on Tuesday, March 10, 2026**.

[Register for the March 10 Training](#)

Watch Past Giving Challenge Trainings Online

All training webinars and support materials can be viewed at any time.

Last fall, we hosted **"Set Your Organization up for Giving Challenge Success,"** an online training session for nonprofits looking to jump-start planning for their 2026 Giving Challenge campaigns. Led by [Josephine Eisenberg](#) and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson Foundation** as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative, the session helped participants set realistic fundraising goals, determine the central focus of their campaigns, identify the right prize opportunities, recruit strong support teams, and align Giving Challenge activities with their broader fundraising efforts.

If you missed it, we strongly suggest watching our recording of it as you and your nonprofit begin planning your campaign for this year's challenge. You can also view the slideshow that accompanied the training [here](#).

[Watch the "Giving Challenge Success" Webinar](#)

Recordings of other Giving Challenge trainings, as well as support materials, will also be made available on [the foundation's YouTube channel](#) and [the Giving Challenge website](#) after they have taken place.

Community Impact Grants



Community Impact Grant Applications Now Being Accepted

Nonprofits must apply before Feb. 1.

Community Impact grants are designed to support nonprofits that help families, children, and households achieve lasting economic stability and mobility, a complex undertaking that involves addressing the many factors that affect a family's well being. Community Impact grants are designed to support the development of programs and systems that strengthen our community through neighborhood and family-focused initiatives—ultimately creating an environment rich in opportunity for all.

Community Impact grant requests **should not exceed \$25,000**. Please note: The **average Community Impact grant award is approximately \$15,000**.

[Learn About Community Impact Grants and Apply](#)

Scholarship Opportunities



Still Accepting: Scholarship Applications

Students age 24 and under have until Feb. 1 to apply.

Our ongoing round of scholarship applications ends soon. Here's what you need to know:

- This round of scholarships is for high school and college students 24 years old or younger
- Applicants must be residents of or high school graduates of schools in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, or DeSoto County
- Students can complete **one common application** for multiple scholarship opportunities
- Scholarships are available for accredited universities, community colleges, technical schools, and certification programs
- The deadline to apply is **Feb. 1, 2026**

[Find Out More About Scholarships and Apply](#)

Got Questions? We've Got Answers!

Our Community Impact department holds weekly Zoom sessions for nonprofits from **11 a.m. to noon every Friday**. This is **an excellent opportunity** to ask specific questions about the 2026 Giving Challenge, as well as any other questions you may have about grants or grant applications.

There's no need to pre-register. Just click the link below to join.

[Join Us for Office Hours](#)

Nonprofit Job Bank

Whether you're seeking a new nonprofit position or you want to post an open position at your organization, your local resource is the Association of Fundraising Professionals Southwest Florida Chapter's [Job Bank](#), supported by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

[Browse the Nonprofit Job Bank](#)



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