

Report to the Community

Give Big Kern 2020



**The Year COVID
Couldn't Stop Good!**

Give Big Kern 2020: Like ‘A Fairy Tale of Giving’

Introduction

It was well known and proclaimed proudly throughout the land, from north to south and from east to west, from Delano to Frazier Park and from Ridgecrest to Taft, that the people of Kern County are a generous people.

And the best proof of that came during a year when a great sickness threatened all of society—and yet, the people looked for ways to help their neighbors and the charities that make Kern County a better place for all. And together they provided much help and strength and healing one to another.

And a playful little goat was their mascot, and a giving heart their shield. And they gave “B-i-i-i-g!” And that year went down in history as a most generous year: *“The Year that COVID Couldn’t Stop Good!”* And the giving was bigger than any other year till then, and it brought much hope to all. And the people went on happily Growing Community and Growing Philanthropy ever after.

But that was not the end of the story—far from it: **It was a beautiful new beginning!**



<u>Year-Over-Year Achievements</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Increase</u>
• Dollars Raised	\$429,755	\$738,518	72%
• Individual Donors Engaged	2,808	3,122	11%
• Average Donation Per Donor	\$153	\$237	55%
• Percentage of Donors Covering Donation Fees	94%	96%	2%
• Total Donations Received	3,157	3,819	21%
• Organizations Participating	114	125	10%
• Average Dollars Raised Per Participating Agency	\$3,770	\$5,908	57%
• Most Dollars Raised by One Agency	\$63,907	\$69,785	9%
• Number of Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Campaigns	110	199	81%
• Number of Matching Gift Campaigns	19	63	232%
• Volunteer Hours Pledged	88,600	155,544	76%
• Individual Volunteers Recruited	399	356	-11%
• Average No. of Hours Pledged per Volunteer	222	426	92%

An accounting of how great results were achieved

Since its launch in 2016, [Give Big Kern](#), observed on the first Tuesday in May as “*One Day to Celebrate the Giving Spirit of Kern County*,” has made it possible for hundreds of Kern County nonprofits to raise **more than \$1.7 Million** and receive **close to 385,000 pledged volunteer hours** from thousands of generous community donors and volunteers—**with more than 40% of those amazing results happening in 2020.**

How, one might ask, was this possible during a year when the worldwide health and financial crisis caused by the Coronavirus pandemic threatened to derail the online fundraising efforts of hard-working local nonprofits?

In the following pages, we will detail how all of us, as a community, following the lead of host agency [Kern Community Foundation \(KCF\)](#), came to the aid of struggling local charities through the biggest Give Big Kern Online Day of Giving to date.

Please enjoy this Report to the Community, share it with others, and, as Give Big Kern Mascot, Billy the Give Big Goat, likes to say, “Happy R-e-e-e-a-a-d-i-n-g!”

Sticking to our theme: The show went on as planned!

Long before COVID-19 was even an ominous speck on the horizon, Give Big Kern’s festive 2020 theme, “**Give Like It’s a Fiesta!**” was intended to capitalize on the fact that this year’s Giving Day fell on Cinco de Mayo. All sorts of fun Cinco-themed events and promotions in partnership with potential retail sponsors were being considered by participants. When social distancing orders went into effect, we realized in-person gatherings and event-based fundraising activities would not be possible. Rather than drop our theme altogether, however, we decided to go forward with it, allowing Give Big Kern to provide a ray of hope amid the barrage of negative news that had fallen over our community like a pall. Sticking to a festive theme seemed to inspire sponsors and online donors to, indeed, “**Give Like It’s a Fiesta!**” coming together for a celebration of giving that was as genuine as in other years—albeit strictly online.



Capitalizing on the safe, online nature of Give Big Kern

While Give Big Kern has always been an ONLINE Day of Giving, KCF traditionally conducts a series of live events (a Press Conference, a Meet & Greet the Nonprofits Day) starting a month out from Give Big Kern Day and culminating in fun day-of activities (the “Ringin’ In” of Give Big Kern Day at dawn at Bakersfield’s Downtown Liberty Bell, the Give Big Kern After Party at the end of the day). We knew these events could not take place this year, so we made 2020’s Give Big Kern a safe, fun, social-distancing-compliant, totally online Day of Giving. Participating nonprofits appreciated this—especially those that had been forced to cancel their spring fundraisers. GiveBigKern.org was therefore ideally poised to come to the rescue of local nonprofits.



“Pivoting” appeals to help meet nonprofits’ new needs

The Coronavirus health crisis caused many nonprofit needs to pivot at lightning speed beginning in March:

- The need to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE);
- The increased demand for basic services (food, shelter, safety) from community members impacted by reduced work/income, school closures, etc., while fee-for-service revenues were drying up;
- The need to lay off non-essential staff, with likely implications on service delivery;
- Unforeseen expenses in new technology needed to conduct meetings remotely in keeping with shelter-at-home and other social distancing orders.



GiveGab®

As needs pivoted, KCF, following the advice of giving day platform technology partner [GiveGab](https://GiveGab.org), encouraged participating nonprofits to pivot their Give Big Kern fundraising appeals to reflect these quickly evolving and very real challenges. KCF and GiveGab provided training tools, encouragement and extended deadlines so that nonprofits’ fundraising pages on GiveBigKern.org could clearly express these new needs to donors.

Believing a crisis could bring out the best in donors

Kern Community Foundation's fundraising technical assistance partner, [Network for Good \(NFG\)](#), which runs the **Jumpstart Program**, providing fundraising coaching and the use of state-of-the-art donor management software each year to a handful of local nonprofit grantees at a subsidized cost, brought us good news in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. **Americans were giving more to charity despite the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 crisis!** In fact, contrary to common wisdom, giving was up by 20% nationwide in March compared to March of 2019. KCF confirmed this by comparing the first 10 days of this year's Give Big Kern giving season (which began April 5) to the first 10 days in 2019: Indeed, giving was up by 23%! We dared to believe Give Big Kern could (and would) do well in 2020 thanks to donors' generosity, encouraged participating nonprofits to also believe, and adopted NFG's COVID relief hashtag as our fundraising battle cry, proudly proclaiming that **#COVIDCantStopGood!**

Jumpstart

Continuing to implement best practices in fundraising



Goal Setting



Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Fundraising



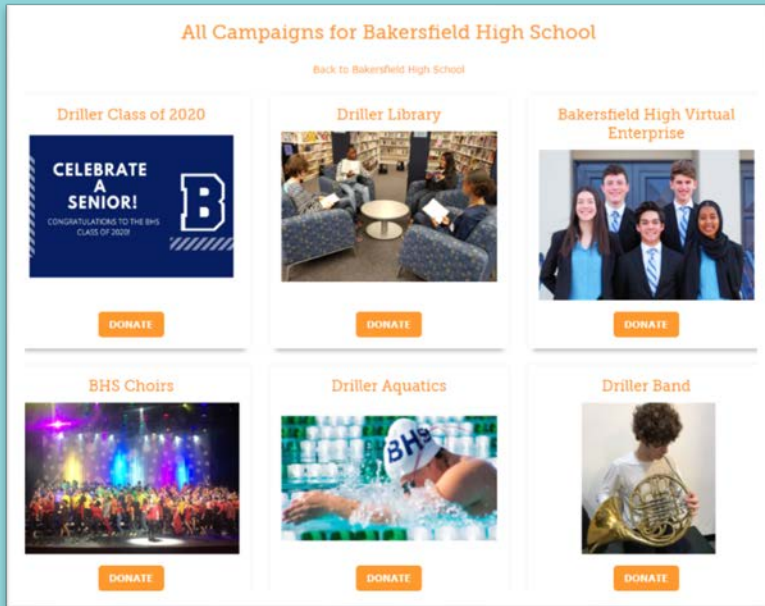
Matching Gift Campaigns

We continued to encourage and train nonprofits to use Goal Setting, Peer-to-Peer Fundraising (challenging friends to give) and Matching Gift strategies, which are proven to yield upwards of 2X, 3X, and 4X more dollars, respectively, if implemented. These tactics were a game changer for Give Big Kern 2019, helping it to surpass 2018 dollars by 86%. This year, participants boasted the following:

- **Fundraising goals set by 90% of participants** (vs. 80% in 2019—a 10% increase!)
- **199 Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Campaigns** (vs. 110 in 2019—an 81% increase!!)
- **63 Matching Gift Campaigns** (vs. 19 in 2019—a 232% increase!!!)

New in 2020: Targeted area fundraising campaigns

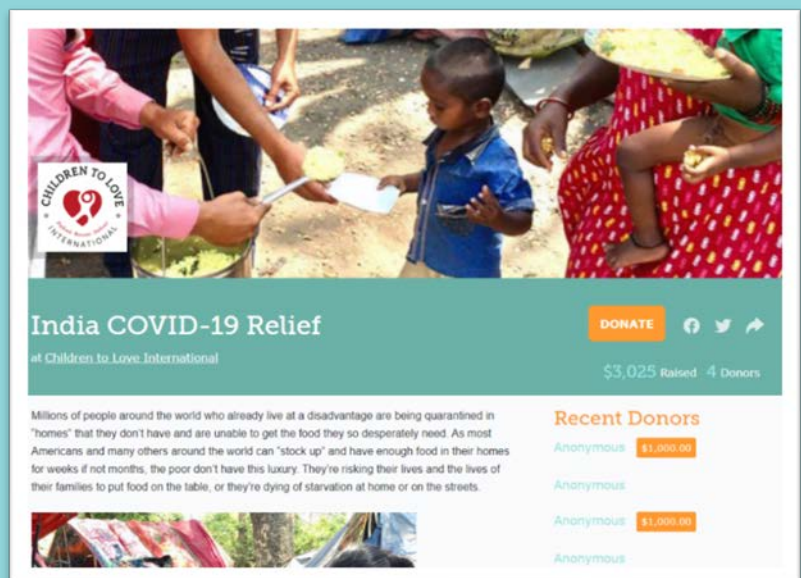
A new product enhancement to GiveGab's Giving Day Platform this year allowed Give Big Kern participants to create individual pages for targeted (or support area) fundraisers to highlight special programs and projects to donors.



This feature made it easy for schools to include fundraising campaigns for individual classrooms or clubs as part of their Give Big Kern strategy, and other nonprofits to fundraise for anything from capital expenses (facilities expansion, equipment purchases) to regional efforts to emergency preparedness and more. Donations designated to specific areas of need within each nonprofit could be easily tracked this way as well.

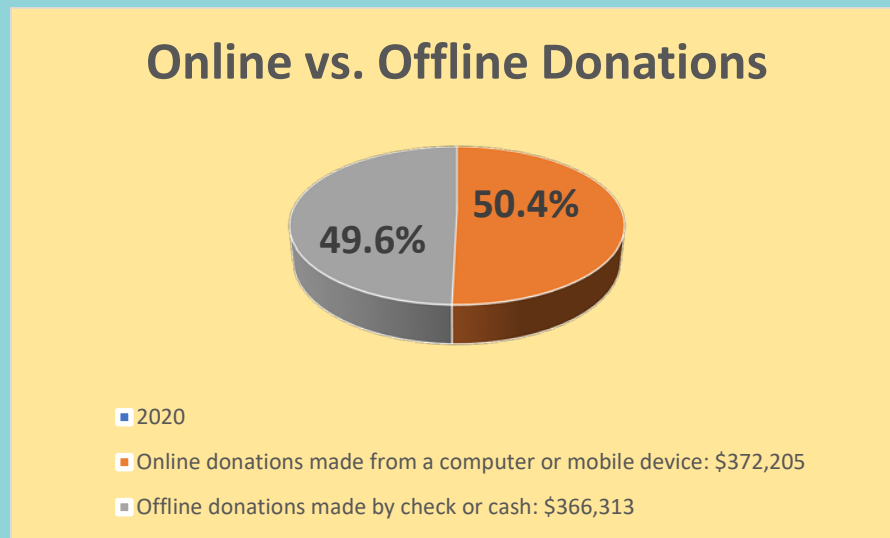
Feedback from some nonprofits who took advantage of this feature includes the following quotes:

- ***"This was a huge component of our entire fundraising."*** – Bakersfield High School Endowment Fund.
- ***"People gave significant amounts to the specific projects."*** – Children to Love International.
- ***"Good feedback from donors that there was an option to direct funds. It gave them more control over their donation."*** – Optimal Hospice Foundation.

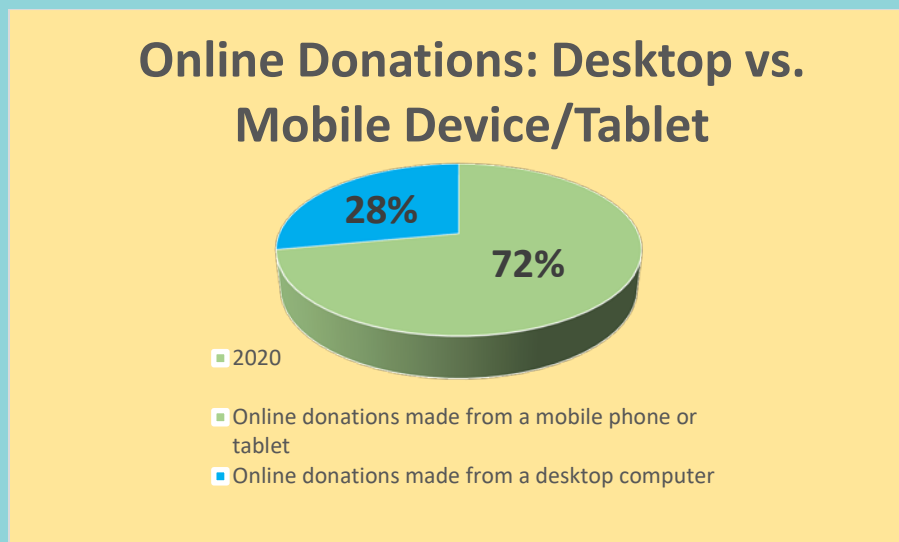


Tech Trends: Donor engagement with Give Big Kern

Online and offline (by check or cash) giving through Give Big Kern was pretty much evenly split in 2020, as seen in the chart below. There was a slight (about 3.5%) variance in this ratio vs. 2019, when online giving was 47% and offline giving 53%. Give Big Kern will continue to offer our donors the freedom of donating online *and* offline.



Close to three times as many online donations were made from a mobile device or tablet on Give Big Kern Day as were made from a desktop computer. In 2019, 80% of online donations were made from a mobile device or tablet, and 20% from a desktop. The 8% variance may be due to fewer people being out and about during Give Big Kern 2020 due to shelter-at-home orders.



By the Numbers: Give Big Kern 2020 for Nonprofits

Based on data from nonprofits' Give Big Kern performance results, a Nonprofit Participant Survey, and a Training and Marketing Material Needs Survey, we learned the following from our nonprofit partners:



- **9% of Peer-to-Peer Fundraisers met or surpassed the goals set by Fundraising Champions**
- **40%** of survey respondents said they met or surpassed their fundraising goal
- **53%** “pivoted” fundraising appeals to donors in response to new COVID-19 needs
- **56% of Matching Gift Campaigns were successfully completed**
- **65%** said they acquired new donors
- **73%** reported direct engagement in giving from their Board of Directors
- **92%** are likely to rethink their agency’s need for traditional event-based fundraising considering what they learned about online fundraising through Give Big Kern
- **98%** said they would (86%) or might (12%) participate in Give Big Kern again
- **100%** said their organizational capacity grew in one or more of the following areas: online fundraising, social media, marketing, donor and board engagement.

Opportunities for improvement (*Items in red above*)



While the number of **Peer-to-Peer Fundraisers** and **Matching Gift Campaigns** increased tremendously over 2019 (Pg. 1), and most participants included goal setting as part of their fundraising strategy (Pg. 4), there is still much room for us to help participating nonprofits improve results in these areas through **more realistic goal setting**. Training is a big part of Give Big Kern, and we can apply lessons learned in

these best-practice areas in 2020, to help nonprofit partners move closer to the 100% mark in 2021. There is also opportunity to help them **think of ways to acquire new donors**.

By the Numbers: Give Big Kern 2020 for Donors

Based on a Donor Survey conducted after Give Big Kern, we learned that:

- **15%** of donors also pledged volunteer hours to a nonprofit; however, **20%** didn't know they could pledge volunteer hours through Give Big Kern.
- **22%** gave to an agency from which they had received assistance in the past
- **27%** gave to help a nonprofit win a competitive prize
- **30%** gave in response to new COVID-19 needs and challenges
- **31%** gave to a Matching Gift campaign to make their donation count 2X as much
- **34%** supported an agency (agencies) for the first time through Give Big Kern
- **43%** considered it important that they could donate before and after Give Big Kern, and not just on the day
- **58%** supported a specific fundraising campaign/project they feel passionate about
- **59%** donated through Give Big Kern for the first time
- **70%** told others about Give Big Kern
- **75%** supported agencies they had supported in the past
- **76%** supported one organization; **19%** supported 2-3; **5%** supported 4 or more
- **77%** gave to help a nonprofit meet the fundraising goal highlighted on their page on GiveBigKern.org
- **90%** believe that Give Big Kern is an important yearly event for our community
- **95%** rated their Give Big Kern donor experience a 7 or higher on a 10-point scale, with **77%** rating it a 9 or 10
- **95%** said they would participate in Give Big Kern again!



Donors are both passionate *and* practical about their giving. By educating donors about greater engagement opportunities through Give Big Kern (volunteering, special project fundraisers, greater impact through matching gifts and competitive prizes for nonprofits), both participating agencies and KCF could increase the percentage of new, repeat and engaged donors going forward, helping the **lower-scoring areas in red above** move closer to the 100% mark.

\$7,750 in cash prizes awarded to some BIG winners!



Competitive Prizes*

- *\$1,500 for Most Individual Donors – Bakersfield High School: 258*
- *\$1,000 for Most Dollars Raised – Independence Through GRACE: \$66,050 Raised*
- *\$1,000 for Most Dollars Raised by a Rural Nonprofit outside of the Greater Bakersfield Metro Area – Marley's Mutts Dog Rescue: \$41,588 Raised*
- *\$1,000 for Most Individual Volunteers – Hoffmann Hospice of the Valley: 48 Recruited*
- *\$500 for Most Volunteer Hours Pledged – Portrait of a Warrior Gallery: 19,449 Hours*
- *\$250 for the Donation Received from the Farthest Away – Marley's Mutts Dog Rescue: 11,625 Miles (Western Australia)*
- *\$1,000 Cinco de Mayo 'Happy Giving Hour' Top Prize for the Agency that Raised the Most Dollars Online from 5 to 7 p.m. on Give Big Kern Day – Strength of Shadow (SOS) Dog Rescue: \$4,330 Raised*
- *\$500 Cinco de Mayo 'Happy Giving Hour' Runner Up Prize – Independence Through GRACE: \$3,895 Raised*



Opportunity Drawing Prize*

- *\$1,000 Board Giving Challenge (Participating agencies with 100% of Board Members donating to them through Give Big Kern were eligible for this drawing) – Be Finally Free*

* While the GiveBigKern.org website continued to receive donations and volunteer pledges the day after Give Big Kern Day, no donations or volunteer hour pledges received after 11:59:59 pm on Give Big Kern Day, May 5, counted toward the Competitive or Opportunity Drawing Prize Competitions.

Prizes, and much more, courtesy of our Sponsors!



Platinum: Patricia C. Brown Foundation

Silver: Calpine-Pastoria
Energy Facility



Bronze: DeWalt Corporation · Tejon Indian Tribe ·
Walmart · Greater Bakersfield Chamber ·
Valley Republic Bank

In-Kind and Special Promotions:

Providence Strategic Consulting · Deprigo ·
Cornerstone Bakery · Sequoia Sandwich
Company · Sam Lynn Ballpark/Bakersfield
Train Robbers · Raul Gallardo Graphic Design ·
CSUB Department of Communications - Dr.
Kyung Jung Han



Media: KGET TV-17 / Telemundo ·
The Bakersfield News Observer ·
El Popular News · Kern Valley Sun

LEAGUE OF DREAMS

HIGHLIGHTS • NOVEMBER 2019

Local

League of Dreams' Levi (8) (Abner, 9) of Bakersfield is also athletic. Interacting on the basketball court. (Photo courtesy of League of Dreams)

League of Dreams

League of Dreams

League of Dreams is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a safe, fun, and healthy environment for children and youth in Bakersfield. The organization's mission is to provide a safe, fun, and healthy environment for children and youth in Bakersfield. The organization's mission is to provide a safe, fun, and healthy environment for children and youth in Bakersfield.

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Kern Alliance of Nonprofits holds a training on Nonprofit Marketing. (Photo courtesy of Leila Medina)

KAN

kern alliance of nonprofits

Kern Alliance of Nonprofits

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Now Is The Time To GIVE BIG KERN!

In this and other upcoming issues of the Bakersfield News Observer, readers will have an opportunity to learn about hard-working Kern County nonprofits that are fundraising through the website GiveBigKern.org, a crowdfunding opportunity hosted by Kern Community Foundation. Give Big Kern is celebrated as Kern's own official Day of Giving on May 5, but the website is already open for donations and will remain open till May 6. As you read these agencies' brief profiles and learn about their needs, please consider donating to them especially now, during the COVID-19 crisis, which has negatively impacted charities in a big way. Just go to GiveBigKern.org, search for an agency by name or cause, find your passion and give. You can also fundraise for a nonprofit you love, and invite your friends, peers and loved ones to donate. Too if you don't have money to give but would like to pledge volunteer hours—because nonprofits are going to need a lot of help when the statewide shelter-in-place order is lifted—find the Volunteering page on the drop-down menu of GiveBigKern.org. Use the button at the bottom of the page to submit your volunteer pledge. Thank you and we hope you will enjoy reading about local charities and how you can support them through Give Big Kern!

Missing in Action Remembrance works to make sure no fallen soldier is ever forgotten. (Photo courtesy of MIA Remembrance)

Missing in Action Remembrance

Missing in Action Remembrance (MIA Remembrance) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a safe, fun, and healthy environment for children and youth in Bakersfield. The organization's mission is to provide a safe, fun, and healthy environment for children and youth in Bakersfield.

KERN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION | Growing community.
Growing philanthropy.

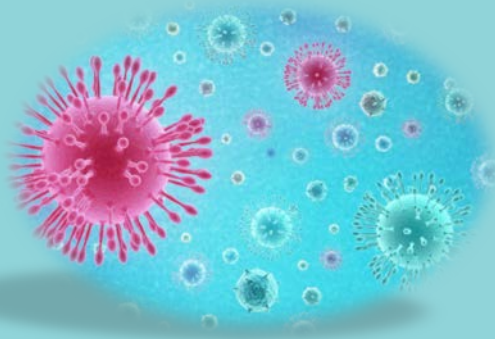
Analysis - Fundraising during a crisis: Lessons learned

Every cloud has a silver lining, the old saying goes. That turned out to be the case for this year's Give Big Kern experience against the backdrop of a world pandemic. Fortunately for Give Big Kern, "pivoting" and adjusting to the new normal of social distancing simply meant canceling ancillary in-person events that support an already online effort, to make it truly—*virtually*—100% online.



While our large and small in-person trainings in Bakersfield, Ridgecrest and the Kern River Valley were finished by early to mid-March, just in the nick of time before the world started shutting down, we were forced to cancel April and May social events through Give Big Kern Day, May 5. These included:

- The Give Big Kern Press Conference at The Padre Hotel on April 21;
- The Meet & Greet the Nonprofits/Driven to Give Test Drive Dual Event in partnership with Sam Lynn Ballpark and Jim Burke Lincoln on April 25;
- The gathering of nonprofit partners at Bakersfield's Downtown Liberty Bell at dawn on May 5 to "ring in" Give Big Kern; and
- Our traditional Give Big Kern After Party at Temblor Brewing Co., also on May 5.



And yet, this year's Give Big Kern was the best ever, raising close to three-quarters of a million dollars for participating nonprofits, and surpassing 2019's results in dollars raised and volunteer hours pledged by more than 70% (Pg. 1).

Based on this experience, plus the results of a post-Giving Day survey of participating nonprofits on their training and marketing materials needs, we have realized that a shift to a stronger online focus on Give Big Kern activities—ranging from training, to virtual events, to the production of more digital (as opposed to printed) marketing materials—could turn out to be more efficient and cost-effective for future Give Big Kern endeavors, beginning with 2021, which still faces short-term uncertainties regarding live events because of a possible resurgence of the virus. ***In short, the show WILL go on, but what might it look like?***

Planning – What’s in store for Give Big Kern in 2021?

While seeing the tremendous value of focusing more Give Big Kern activities online, our nonprofit partners still recognize the value of coming together at trainings and outreach events to meet new people, network and brainstorm with other nonprofit leaders, and to simply enjoy the camaraderie.



Training Options

Although 100% of surveyed nonprofit leaders report having the capability at work or at home to attend Give Big Kern trainings virtually, **91%** still favor a combination of virtual + in-person training options if possible. They like the convenience, time savings, capacity for greater attendance, and digital recording capabilities (for future self-help/reference) that virtual trainings provide, but also value the more personal human interaction and dynamic brainstorming of ideas that happens naturally in an in-person, classroom style setting. Also, **95%** of respondents said they can commit to referencing online training materials for self-study to ensure success in their Give Big Kern campaign.

Marketing Materials

Surprisingly, **94%** of respondents said they would be fine receiving fewer printed marketing materials—which KCF provides free of charge—and greater digital marketing support to promote Give Big Kern online. This information is extremely helpful for Give Big Kern 2021 marketing and budget planning purposes.



Having options is key, and donors reflect that wish as well, with **71%** indicating in the donor survey that they like both online and event-based fundraisers; **25%** stating a clear preference for online fundraisers; and just **6%** favoring

event-based fundraisers. Staying nimble and flexible to respond to donor and participant needs, as well as public health and safety directives, will serve us well in 2021 and beyond.

A Call to Action on behalf of Kern's Nonprofits

As they registered for Give Big Kern, participants were asked to share a little about themselves and their goals, aspirations and concerns. Here is a peek at this year's participating nonprofits:



MOST AGENCIES ARE SMALL: **52%** have an annual operating budget of under \$100,000, and **73%** have a staff of 10 or fewer employees.

MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH WORK WITHOUT PAY: **28%** are all-volunteer-run.

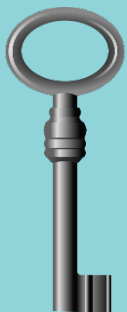
THEY HAVE GREAT NEEDS: More than **90%** of them said they were looking to raise funds and engage new donors—with an emphasis on raising unrestricted funds.

MOST ARE HUMBLE IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS: **52%** set a Give Big Kern fundraising goal of \$10,000 or less, and only **12%** set a goal of more than \$25,000.

MOST SEEK TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPACITY: **62%** said they hoped to acquire new skills in marketing, social media and web-based fundraising.

THEY ARE COMMITTED TEAM PLAYERS: More than **80%** want the community to learn about them and the services they provide, and to broaden their nonprofit partner network in order to work more effectively and collaboratively with other nonprofits.

THEY CAN HELP IDENTIFY COMMUNITY NEEDS: Homelessness/affordable housing, food insecurity, lack of services in rural areas, ensuring adequate services for seniors and at-risk/underprivileged youth, mental health and substance abuse services, pet overpopulation, environmental concerns, and greater awareness of nonprofit services are Kern's biggest needs according to most of them. And they are spot on!



Your support is key to helping meet local nonprofits' needs through Give Big Kern in 2021 and beyond! Give Big Kern helps each participating nonprofit raise their **Visibility** in the community and within the sector; increase their **Capacity** for social media marketing, online fundraising and more through training; and improve their long-term **Sustainability** by tapping into new dollars, donors and volunteers. ***Please stay engaged with the charities you feel passionate about and continue to support them through Give Big Kern!***

Visit givebigkern.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @GiveBigKern year-round. To learn more about Kern Community Foundation, visit kernfoundation.org.

Save the Date for next year's Give Big Kern: May 4, 2021!