

"Spring Housekeeping!"

At this time of year, we typically all begin doing a little Spring housekeeping: cleaning the yard, the garage, numerous closets, and all the nooks and crannies that rarely receive our attention. Your house corporation should also start some Spring housekeeping to prepare for the quickly approaching Fall semester and to support your chapter house's structural and financial future. Thanks to the steady increase in COVID vaccinations, every day we learn of more colleges and universities that will be back to in-person, on-campus living and learning later this year. We need to be ready!

From a fundraising standpoint, we recommend the following five steps be on your list for spring housekeeping:

1. Consider contracting with a professional housing management firm that can help assess the quality and operation of the chapter house and, most importantly, provide estimates for improving the existing space and begin creating a 10-year capital budget. ***Identifying future funding needs is the first step in any fundraising plan.***

Always remember that a safe, modern and comfortable chapter house is your "brand" and plays a direct role in member recruitment. Renovations or complete rebuilds and the fundraising required should become a routine for any house corporation.

2. Continue (or begin) an annual fundraising program asking graduates to get in the routine of making regular contributions to the house corporation. ***An annual fundraising program is the second step in any fundraising plan.***
3. Draft, edit and send a newsletter or communication to graduates. This past year has been different for all of us – let graduates know how the chapter has fared and what about post-COVID future plans. Contact the International HQ for more information on graduate communication services that they can provide. These services are professional, efficient,

and cost-effective. ***Consistent communication is the third step in any fundraising plan.***

4. Complete a wealth screening of your chapter graduates to help identify those brothers that have resources and may be able to assist with renovation and building campaigns. Many companies do this type of research by aggregating vast amounts of publicly available information. ***Understanding the financial capacity of your graduates is the fourth step in any fundraising plan.*** Contact us for more information on facilitating a wealth screening project – the cost is minimal.
5. Plan for a professional fundraising feasibility study to determine your graduates' willingness to participate in future fundraising efforts. Knowing what you can raise is a critical part of deciding on whether to renovate or rebuild. ***A feasibility study is the fifth step in any fundraising plan.***

When graduates feel confident that the house corporation manages the property efficiently and professionally, they are more inclined to make substantial long-term investments through a capital fundraising program. After completing our five fundraising housekeeping steps, you can consider initiating a capital campaign to raise the necessary funds.

The bottom line is that if you think you need a campaign in the next three years, the time to start planning for it is now, so let's begin working on our list of spring housekeeping items!

For more information on wealth screening programs, feasibility studies, and capital campaigns for your chapter, please reach out to the Columns Fundraising team.

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