

Create a Basic Website

- 1. Determine what you want the website to accomplish and set appropriate goals.** These goals might include obtaining new donors, participants, or volunteers, increasing their involvement, facilitating dialogue, connecting people to community resources, or building momentum for the cause for which you work.
- 2. Decide what information you are going to share via the site.** The following are often included:
 - Your mission statement and program information
 - News about programs and special events
 - Complete contact information
- 3. Obtain website design software.**
- 4. Develop a mechanism to collect information about your website visitors**
 - A form to capture visitor contact information including name, address, email, interests, and demographics
 - Online registration for programs and special events
 - Polls to measure visitor attitudes and opinions about relevant issues
- 5. Provide a way for visitors to interact with each other and build community.** This may include:
 - A guestbook where visitors can share feedback
 - Message boards/blogs where visitors can share ideas and information
 - A chat room where visitors can instantly contact each other or your organization
 - Provide a way for visitors to donate such as with a link to NetworkforGood.org
- 6. Design the site so that it is...**
 - **Easy to navigate** – Every page should link to the home page. Every other page should be one or two clicks away from the home page. It should be easy to get around the site. Consider including a site map.
 - **Content-rich** – Include resources that make your visitors use your site as their homepage or bookmark your page and return in the future. Include links to other sites, news, articles, reviews, or any other kind of useful information.
 - **Accessible to people with disabilities** – A free service called Bobby™ at <http://bobby.watchfire.com> will help you detect any problem areas.
 - **Consistent with offline promotional materials** – Use similar colors and fonts. Use a similar style of language and incorporate your logo.

To get online you need a domain name, hosting service, and ftp software. Your **domain name** (also known as URL or address) is the www.yourname.org. The **hosting service** is the space on another computer where you will upload your website files so that they can be shared with anyone connected to the Internet. Your hosting service will also provide statistics about website usage, including number and time of 'hits' or visits to your site. **FTP software** is used to transfer files from your computer to your host's computer.

After transferring files to your host, use a web browser to view your site as it appears online. Many times things look different online than they do on your local computer. Double check every link periodically to make sure that they still work.

There are many companies that make it easy to design, upload, and edit a website by offering everything in one package, sometimes for free. These companies include Homestead.com,