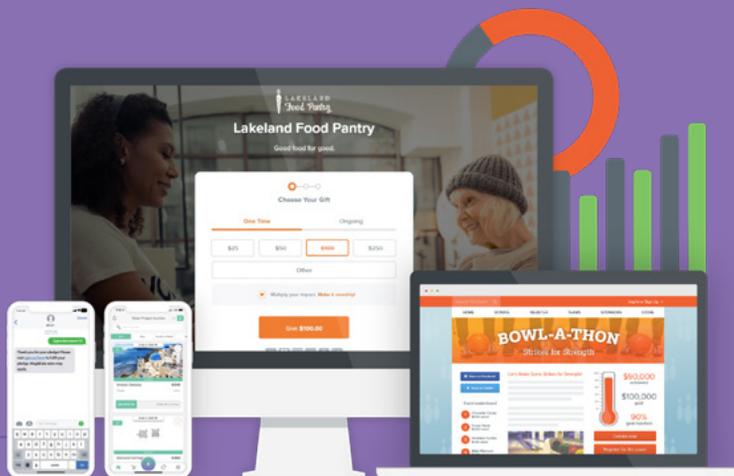
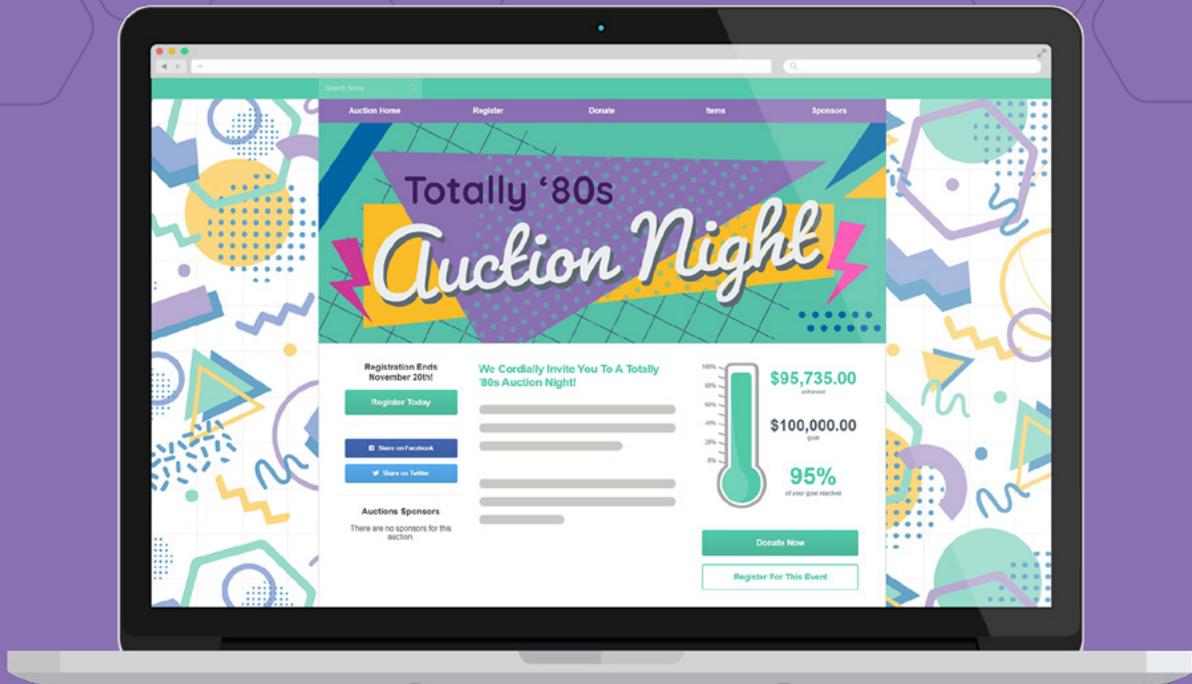




VIRTUAL Auction Planner



Virtual events aren't going away anytime soon! Qgiv's user-friendly fundraising tools make it easy to host virtual auctions, galas, board fundraisers, and more.



- Donation Forms ▶
- Event Registration ▶
- Peer-to-Peer ▶
- Text Fundraising ▶
- Auctions ▶

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Introduction

Virtual auctions are a great way to drive engagement among guests who can't make your live event. Whether they prefer to bid from their phone while grabbing some lunch or participate from their home states away, providing a virtual option can increase engagement and dollars raised at your next event. Although we've seen a recent surge in popularity of virtual auctions, they aren't a new phenomenon. eBay has been a virtual auctions platform since 1995!

Qgiv's auction platform has empowered nonprofits to host silent auctions without the need for pen and paper bid sheets. Bidding by paddle or pen was replaced with a smartphone app or the ability to bid directly on the auction event page. These innovations make it easy to host virtual auctions your supporters can attend from anywhere (Like from the couch. While wearing fuzzy slippers.).

This virtual auction planner will guide you through the process of setting up, executing, and reconciling your virtual auction fundraising events. It includes a checklist of items to complete within Qgiv and outside of the platform to ensure you provide the best bidder experience for your virtual auction attendees.

Happy planning!

3-4 MONTHS *before the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Form event planning committees
- Establish the objective, registration, and fundraising goals for your event
- Create an event budget
- Create your marketing and communication plan for the event
- Select a platform to run your auction event
- Create an outreach list of past donors and sponsors
- Create a web page for the auction event
- Recruit an emcee and auctioneer
- Recruit or hire entertainment for livestreaming during the event, if necessary
- Add a donation link on your web page and across your virtual auction pages
- Determine which livestreaming service you'll use to showcase auction items

Qgiv Tasks

- Create auction event in Qgiv
- Enter auction items in auction as they're donated
- Schedule an auction kick-off call with Qgiv team to go over ideas, schedule training, and plan for success



Pro Tips!

It's tempting to form a committee and trust they'll get the job done. Don't fall for it! Each committee member should have a defined area of responsibility with applicable tasks list and deadlines.

If you aren't already familiar with the kinds of items your audience would like, poll trusted volunteers to learn what appeals to them. They'll be honest with you and can probably offer some item ideas you hadn't considered.

Building a web page for your auction is really helpful when you're planning your event promotions. Even if you don't have items ready to share, you can use the web page to promote your event, post details, updates, and other information that will be useful for potential registrants to know.



2-3 MONTHS *before the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Send procurement letters requesting item donations to past donors
- Send and post multi-channel save-the-dates
 - Direct mail item
 - Email with a calendar appointment
 - Social posts
- Create a technical support plan for the day of the virtual event
- Identify technology needs and work with the IT department to secure them
- Arrange for a secure space to catalog auction items and store them
- Assign committee member jobs (enter auction items and write appealing item descriptions, write script for the livestreamed portion of the virtual event, coordinate how to send or offer pick-up for attendees' goodie bags or meal/drinks if offering them for your virtual auction event)
- Establish points of contact for your virtual audiences (technical support, registration questions, bidding questions, etc.)
- Begin familiarizing event staff with the livestreaming platform for smooth livestream performance during the event

Qgiv Tasks

- Enter auction items into Qgiv with the auction item import tool
 - You can download the item import template and use it to track items, then upload in bulk if you receive multiple items in one day
- Start building item pages for auction items as they're received
- Start building the base settings, packages, and design of your auction in Qgiv
- Event staff should complete their training and start becoming familiar with the Virtual Terminal

Pro Tips!

Instead of building your auction items' pages all at once, build them as you receive them. Sitting down to build 50 item profiles is daunting, but building them a few at a time spreads out the workload.

A save-the-date mailer is great for giving attendees a physical reminder of when your virtual auction is taking place. The save-the-date also acts to get your event on attendees' radar early. You can pair information about your virtual auction event with the date event registration opens to build excitement around the event and gain virtual auction attendees quickly.

A virtual auction doesn't have to lack in-person elements. If your nonprofit is known for hiring great caterers, consider recruiting a caterer to make boxed meals for event attendees and coordinate for boxes to be delivered or picked up the day before the auction. If sending actual food is logistically difficult, consider sending gift cards to meal delivery services like Door Dash or Uber Eats so auction attendees can order their favorite foods while enjoying your virtual auction. This adds value to your ticket price and can keep supporters engaged throughout the entire event.

When designing your Qgiv auction form, be sure to include the fundraising thermometer widget so attendees can visualize progress toward your fundraising goal during the event. It also helps to ask your emcee to share regular fundraising updates during the livestreamed portion of the event.

Recruit event staff and train them how to use the virtual terminal to manage checking attendees in and placing bids in case some attendees struggle with tech issues when trying to participate in the virtual auction. Having people at the ready to help your guests will ensure a better event experience.

Set aside a designated room or space for cataloguing and tracking your auction items. Prepare a manilla envelope for each auction item that includes the item description. When you livestream the event, recruit a member of your

event staff to arrange the item nicely on a table so that the cameraperson can show off the item. The emcee or auctioneer can read the enclosed item description off camera or while pointing out features of the auction item on the livestream to help your guests will ensure a better event experience.

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2 MONTHS

before the auction

Event Planning Tasks

- Create an event hashtag and begin social media promotion
- Create an event timeline: day before, day of, follow-up
- If you haven't done so already, roll out your communication plan
- Finalize virtual auction event invitation list
- Send formal email and physical invitations

Qgiv Tasks

- As part of your auction training plan, schedule a session with your Qgiv team to go over final details of your auction prior to launching your registration website
- Open auction registration to the public
- Add raffle tickets and store items (t-shirts and other event swag) and offer them for sale during the registration process
- Interested in remote support from the Qgiv team? Make sure to book this right away!



Pro Tips!

Sit down with your speakers to go over exactly what they want to say in their speeches. You don't need to have a script finalized yet but ensuring early on that you and your speaker are on the same page will save you some potentially embarrassing moments.

Give donors the option of buying raffle tickets and other items during the event registration process. It's an easy way to boost sales!

If you've created an event hashtag or text-to-donate keyword for your auction, include them on your event invitations, event emails, and in your event-related social media posts. People are more likely to use them if they're easy to find!

Meet with speakers/hosts to discuss details and talking points.



3-4 WEEKS

before the auction

Event Planning Tasks

- Finalize meal box order with catering company or coordinate delivery of gift cards for meal delivery services to attendees
- Collect final items promised by contributors
- Compile all speaker, program, and bidding details into one presentation
- Create a “program-at-a-glance” and FAQ cheat sheet for event staff
- Set a rehearsal date for 2-3 weeks before the auction to run through the program with speakers and staff
- Take time to make gift baskets and auction items look presentable and camera ready
- Finalize the event program
- Establish a plan for getting auction items to guests after checkout

Qgiv Tasks

- Send email/social messages with item previews based on item details in your Qgiv auction
- Begin reaching out to guests about downloading Givi and logging in to the auction so the check-in process can be expedited the night of the event
- Schedule a Virtual Terminal training with your Qgiv team to understand the check-in, registration, bidding, and checkout process of your auction
- Finish entering all your auction items into the auction



Pro Tips!

Combining all presentations into one file will make your event go smoothly. Instead of awkward transitions between speakers and fumbling with USB drives or files, the proper slides will always be queued up and ready to go. Plus, for virtual events, you can make the slides to the program available to guests they can follow along with the presentation during the livestream. It's easier for them to navigate a single slideshow than multiple, separate presentations.

Before sending emails containing previews of your items, make sure you test your email on different devices or email service providers. Check for broken links, wonky images, and broken styling.

Chances are, you'll either need to deliver store purchases and won items to virtual attendees or arrange a time for them to pick up their items at your location. Create a schedule with dates and times to pick up items so after the auction ends and winning bidders are determined, they can select a date and time to pick up their items. To keep the office from getting too crowded and hectic, space out pick-up times so you can deal with only one or two bidders at a time.

2 WEEKS *before the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Review roles with auction event staff
- Organize auction items by feature order
- Pay vendors or submit check requests for those who will be paid on the day of your event
- Create a plan for auction items that don't get purchased
- Have a plan in place for delivering large auction items to the winning bidders
- Finalize guest lists and provide final head count to the caterer for meal preparation or to the person in charge of ordering and sending gift cards for meals

Qgiv Tasks

- Assign items to live* or silent auction categories
- Set sequence for live auction items
- If hosting a fund-a-need appeal, build out categories in the auction event and schedule during/around the live auction portion
- Build auction push notifications in advance
 - Countdown to auction ending at 15, 10, and 5 minutes
 - Template for message to promote items with only a few or no bids
- Check on event attendees in the Virtual Terminal to determine how many have downloaded the Givi app. For those who haven't downloaded, reach out and inquire whether they plan to bid using Givi or on the auction event page. Offer to help them get set up and ready for the auction event
- Schedule a Virtual Terminal training with event staff who will be assisting virtual auction attendees with getting checked in and checked out of the virtual event

*Note that the Qgiv auction tool does not manage live auctions. Creating and designating items to a live auction category is just for recording the winner for payment processing and reporting.



Pro Tips!

Sending push notifications to bidders using the app to bid from their phone is an effective way to share important details and information. You can even use them to boost low-performing items. When possible, build push notifications ahead of time so you won't have to scramble to do so mid-event. To ensure your web-based bidders get the important information they need, schedule emails to go out that are consistent with your push notifications. Decrease the send frequency compared to the push notifications by sending a few bullet points within one email.

You can send out text messages from the Virtual Terminal to remind registrants to download the Givi app before the bidding begins. The message contains the ticket code they'll need to enter, as well. It's a real time saver!

Almost every silent auction has an item that doesn't sell. Have a backup plan for them! Consider using them at a later raffle, saving them for a future event, or even selling them on eBay or another site. Not every attendee will bid on your items, especially if you have many high-end items that may be out of donors' reach. Adding fund-a-need items and displaying them on-screen for added visibility gives donors a way to support your cause even if they don't bid during the auction.



1 WEEK *before the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Put together a file or binder of auction item detail pages in the auction's sequential order and share with the event auctioneer and emcee
- Hold training meeting with event staff to discuss their duties, the event timelines, and other necessary details needed to perform assigned role(s)
- Have a trusted volunteer or committee member review the individual item description sheets. This will give you a fresh set of eyes to catch any mistakes that may have been overlooked.
- Prep the filing system you created for auction items and ensure all the auction items have all of their items (gift card, gift certificate, etc.)
- Run another test of your event tech and internet connection to ensure you can run a livestreamed virtual auction event smoothly

Qgiv Tasks

- Check that all auction items have been entered into the auction event
- Make sure you have a volunteer prepped to answer any questions about event check-in
- Prepare guests' gift bags and auction materials including pre-purchased raffle tickets and store items



Pro Tips!

Tech problems can easily derail an otherwise successful event. The week before your silent auction, take some time to ensure your tech is working properly. Be sure to have power strips for your electronic devices readily available so you can keep them charged during the event. A charged power bank or two to extend the life of your smartphone battery during livestreaming is also helpful for keeping the show going.

Your event staff is eager to help, but they'll be most helpful if they understand exactly what to do and how to do it. Make sure each staff member has a job to do, and train them to do their job well. Your staff will be more confident and relaxed, and your event will run more smoothly!

Setting aside guests' raffle tickets and other purchases ahead of time will prevent confusion and ensure your virtual attendees get everything they're owed when they pick up their items. Doing this ahead of time may take a few extra minutes of your time, but you'll be glad you did!

DAY BEFORE AND *day of the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Test and verify lighting, sound equipment, internet connection, and device charges
- Do a sound check with all speakers and performers
- Perform a final event run-through
- Send the auction item pickup dates and times to attendees who need to pick up won auction items and purchased store items so they can set a pickup time.

Qgiv Tasks

- Ensure that when bidding is set to begin, the auction is active
- Have a laptop (or device with the Qgiv Virtual Terminal app) on hand to open checkout
- Send a 5 or 10-minute warning via push notification that bidding will be ending soon
- Open checkout when you're certain all bidding is complete
- Assist bidders who need help checking in
- Assist bidders who need help with checkout

Pro Tips!

The day of the event make sure to have a communication plan in place. Event staff should know who to contact (and how to contact them!) in case obstacles or questions arise.

Your virtual venue is just as important as the venue at in-person events. Make sure that where you're hosting the livestream from has enough space to hold each auction item, has sufficient lighting to help people see items clearly, is a quiet space with low to no background noise, and has a strong internet connection and enough outlets to power your devices. To get people in the spirit of the event, decorate the on-screen areas of your streaming space.



AFTER *the auction*

Event Planning Tasks

- Send attendee thank-yous
- Reconcile the auction event budget
- Send thank-yous to auction staff, sponsors, and vendors
- Arrange for auction item delivery or pickup using the pickup calendar responses from auction winners
- Follow through with unpurchased item plan for any items that didn't sell
- Disable your promotional event pages and stand up a splash page with a recording of the event to encourage visitors to attend the next event

Qgiv Tasks

- Enter any cash or check payments and donations accepted at item pickup via the Virtual Terminal
- Schedule an auction debrief with the Qgiv team



Pro Tips!

Make sure your event staff know the plan for storing items until they can be retrieved by or delivered to auction winners. Be sure to communicate where they should be stored, when bidders can retrieve them, and who is in charge of distributing them.

Automated thank-you receipts are nice, but they're no substitute for a genuine thank-you note. A day or two after your event, send guests an email thanking them for attending, sharing how much they raised, and how the money will be used.

An event survey is an outstanding way to end a major event. It shows your attendees that you care about their experiences and value their insight, and their feedback can help you plan better virtual events in the future. If you know next year's event date, include a save-the-date, too!

Congratulations on completing your auction!

NEED HELP GETTING STARTED

with virtual auctions?

Qgiv's auction platform offers a fully integrated, easy-to-use auction builder that makes event management a breeze.

Plus, with app-based and web-based bidding, guests can participate in your auction based on their bidder preference.



Have questions about hosting a virtual auction event with Qgiv?

Let us know. We're here to help!