



## I TO I RETURNS

Each year, I to I is one of WID NY's most popular events, offering targeted, small group conversations on essential topics in the fundraising field. On September 22nd, I to I attendees convened for the flagship event of the year, not at round tables as usual, but in Zoom breakout rooms which maintained I to I's trademark intimate feeling.

Five topics were on the agenda: Re-Telling Your Organization's Story — Building the Case for Support During This Time; Building Relationships: Donor Cultivation and Solicitation When You Can't Meet in Person; Campaigning in the New Normal; Career Transition: How to Begin A Consulting Career; and Transition Your Events From Live to Virtual And Still Raise Money. Each session offered attendees the chance to share concerns, questions, strategies, and successes with peers, as reflected in comments shared by some of the participants.

"The format of I to I worked really well in a virtual setting. Small break-out groups around a shared interest allowed attendees to talk about challenges they are facing, including how to tell your organization's story during this unprecedented time. This story may be one that is directly related to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic for those in healthcare; could include leadership donors reaffirming to the community why they continue to support a school or college; or could take the format of a virtual gala that keeps constituents connected and engaged while staying true to the organization's mission."

"The ideas around 'transitioning' events at I to I were wide-ranging, but there was agreement that organizations have to be ready to move beyond the pared-down Zoom events seen early in the pandemic. If financially feasible, consider investing in new technical capabilities that provide more sophisticated virtual gatherings, or in higher quality videos — both of which can be reused not only for future events but for programming as well. Organizations are delivering food and wine to event-goers' homes for online parties; using outdoor spaces such as drive-in theaters; and hosting intimate conversations between high level donors and prominent guests in the arts, education or government. Generating resources without events was also discussed; in this economically challenging time, our



missions must be in the forefront, and converting past event donors and honorees to ongoing supporters is more important than ever.”

"I to I was a welcomed session where we were not only able to exchange ideas on how best to navigate the new normal in our field — due to the intimate setting, it also became a safe space where we were able to share and acknowledge how our struggles during this time intersect the personal and the professional. For instance, job loss and the challenges of searching for a new role have to do with the downturn in fundraising. Any improvements in the outlook of the field would both improve our professional, and in turn personal, health and growth."