

Laura MacDonald, CFRE

President & Founder
Benefactor Group

Laura MacDonald, President of Benefactor Group, is a certified fundraising executive with more than 25 years' experience in nonprofit leadership, fundraising, and philanthropy. She has served as the vice president and creative director of a national fundraising firm and chief development officer in arts and higher education.

In 1999, she established a consulting firm to serve the needs of those who serve the common good®: nonprofit institutions, donors, and civic leaders. Benefactor Group is currently working with arts, culture, and educational institutions; human service organizations; women's funds; and others working to improve the quality of life. In the summer of 2015 the firm celebrated the opening of new arts facilities where Laura and her team served as counsel: the expanded Columbus Museum of Art, the COSI Planetarium, and the grand openings of the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts in Ohio and the AMAZEUM, which is adjacent to the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas. Current clients include the Norman Rockwell Museum, Speed Art Museum, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

The firm she established has served more than 200 clients, ranging from big ten universities and global NGOs to start-up community organizations. Laura has helped her clients achieve unprecedented successes: the largest contribution ever to an arts organization in central Ohio; engaging board retreats for a national conservation organization; consistent increases in annual fund revenue for a women's fund; an innovative digital giving strategy for a social justice organization; a reinvigorated board for a literary society.

Prior to establishing Benefactor Group, Laura was chief development officer at The Ohio State University's Wexner Center for the Arts where she helped the organization secure its largest-ever corporate sponsorship and foundation grant and highest membership. During her tenure she also served as a senior development officer in the University's \$1.2 billion capital campaign.

She is a frequent speaker at local, regional, and national conferences — most recently at the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Art Museum Development Association (AMDA). For many years she served on the Development and Membership Executive Committee of the American Alliance of Museums. She chairs the editorial review board for *Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy*, the seminal publication reporting on the sources and uses of charitable giving in the United States, and this year contributed to the *Giving to the Arts* chapter. Laura is frequently sought for her expertise, and has been quoted recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, *CNN Money*, *Sophisticated Giving*, and other local and regional publications.