

# Identity Theft: Protecting your Organization's Nonpublic Information

NPO leaders probably know best how long it takes to form strong, mutual relationships with donor groups, and how quickly those relationships can dissolve. Well imagine how quickly these relationships could be destroyed if donors, volunteers, clients, or sponsors discovered that their nonpublic information was compromised from a breach that originated from within your NPO. This breach can result in identity theft, which is America's fastest growing white-collar crime. And with today's ever-changing technology, including online access to the global marketplace and personal data files, this is becoming a concern and even greater risk.

The following are some ways Kimberly Woods, a twenty-year development professional, discusses how an NPO can experience a devastating breach of security:

- An employee is reviewing the giving history of a large contributor, but leaves their desk to pick up data from a printer down the hall.
- The fiscal year has ended and it's time to toss old files in the dumpster outside the building.
- Copies of donor's contribution check were left behind on the copy machine.
- An employee left your organization two weeks ago, but they still have password access to online data and their building security card was never turned in.
- The receptionist has slips of paper on her desk containing donor credit card information.
- Nonpublic information and data was mistakenly made available on the website.
- Your organization has a formal Privacy Policy, but employees haven't been trained on it yet.
- A company laptop was stolen from a locked car or left unattended in public "just for a moment."
- The flash drive was left behind on the key chain of the company vehicle while being serviced.
- Information was faxed or given over the phone to unauthorized recipients.

It is important to remember to take extra precautions when handling people's nonpublic and personal data, especially with today's technological advances.

*Reference: "Identity Theft—the Perfect Storm: How Safe is your Organization's Nonpublic Information" By Kimberly Woods*