



CENTER FOR CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT

Fundraising
101

Asking for Money: Top 10 Fundraising Tips

1. Believe in what you are doing. It's your passion and commitment that interests prospective donors.
2. Know what you are talking about – the issue(s), the program needs and future plans.
3. Tell a story. Share how the program is impacting a person or community and what's possible in the future.
4. Remember donors give to people, places, and issues they care about - not a need.
5. Listen to potential donors – what interests them?
6. Ask for money – you must ask! You can say, *"I'd like you to consider a gift of \$500 for...."*
7. After asking, be quiet and let the donor consider your request.
8. Make sure you say thank you and accept what you are given. Always send a thank you note and keep the donor informed of your good work.
9. Accept "no" for an answer with gratitude for considering your request.
10. Follow up regardless of the outcome of your request. No now does not mean no forever.

The Direct Ask

The direct ask is the most effective way to raise funds for your project

Keep in mind:

You are offering potential donors an opportunity to contribute to something they find valuable. Tap into their interest.

People give to people. Their trust in you equates to their trust in your project. All fundraising is people giving to people, no exceptions!

They can't say "yes" unless you ask!

Preparing for the ask:

Make sure you have taken the time to write out your own project goal, description and plan of action. This will help you to "own" the project when you make your case for support.

Before meeting with a prospective donor, practice describing why you contribute your time to the project as a way to demonstrate your commitment and knowledge of the issue you are trying to address.

The ask:

Note a specific connection between their interests and your project.

Briefly make your case for support...you know this already.

Ask for a specific amount and then listen your way to the gift.

DO NOT SAY A WORD! This is perhaps the most critical tip of all. You must let them think. Do not make the mistake of assuming their silence means they are upset. It simply means that you have asked them for money and they need to think before they can answer. Let them be the next to speak.

If they agree, show your gratitude and commit to personally keeping them updated on the progress – note this in your calendar and make sure it gets done.

They might ask for more specifics before they commit. This is fine, too, because it isn't a "no." Make sure you follow up as soon as possible.

They might say no. That's okay too. Remember, you'll never get a "yes" unless you ask and that always comes with some "nos." Be very gracious and thank them for their time.

Send a handwritten thank you note the next day no matter what the answer is.

"...I would have given but no one asked me."