

**APRIL 2008**  
**The Big Ask**

*on-the-go!*  
*e-TA*

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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Resource and Fund Development Initiative

## Dear “Asking” Colleague,

To raise funds you have to ask another human being for money. Whether you ask in writing, or phone, or face-to-face, it takes knowledge, planning and commitment to successfully ask other individuals for gifts. Remember, even if the hoped-for gift is coming from a business or foundation, you still have to deliver your ask to a person. And this interaction often causes great anxiety. To help build “asking” confidence, click on the titles on the right to learn about...

### **Asking All Around**

### **The Best Person to Ask for a Gift Is...**

### **Double Teaming**

Do you have questions about asking for funds? Contact us through [LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com) for more information. You can still access previous issues of On-the-Go eTA by clicking on the title at the right.

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## Asking All Around

Finding new donors and getting a first gift can be a challenge. To keep fundraising income growing, you need to find ways to constantly add new donors to your appeal list. You want to create opportunities for as many donors as possible to make a gift at any time. Here are some tips and ideas for approaching new donors, and even for asking committed donors for a second gift.

<b>Acquisition mailing</b>	This is a mailing to find new prospects who have never given. You may buy or rent a list, or you may exchange a list of names with another organization. Keep the ask amount low, but still be specific.
<b>Fundraising Special Event</b>	This is a great occasion to make new friends. An event volunteer should make a plea for gifts. Take-away information about the work of your organization should be displayed in a readily visible location at the event.

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<b>Brochure</b>	Someone you never met may read your brochure and be interested in your work. Always include information and an address where donors can send a gift.
<b>Web site</b>	For web surfers, gift information should be no more than one click away. Consider the benefits of accepting credit card donations on-line.
<b>Vendors</b>	Suppliers from whom you have purchased services or products are good prospects for gifts themselves, whether cash or gifts in-kind.
<b>Thank you note</b>	Add a donation envelope in your thank you note. Mention a new effort your organization is undertaking. Let the donor know you are open to receiving gifts at any time.
<b>Annual Report</b>	Include a tuck-in-gift envelope along with a panel dedicated to gift solicitation.
<b>Newsletter</b>	If cost prevents an enclosed envelope, at least include tear-out information about making gifts.
<b>Volunteer leadership</b>	Don't forget to ask your volunteer fundraisers for the first gifts. They should not ask for gifts from others until they have made their own gifts.
<b>Phonathon</b>	This volunteer-run appeal asks for gifts from donors who have made gifts in the past, but not yet this fiscal year.
<b>Special Appeal</b>	Contact your most loyal donors for a one-time gift during an emergency or when an unexpected opportunity arises.
<b>Staff</b>	Staff support no matter the size of the gift sets a positive example of commitment for fundraising volunteers and donors.
<b>Year end</b>	If your fiscal year ends on any date other than December 31, send a second spring appeal to past donors who have not given yet this year.

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## The Best Person to Ask for a

### Share Square

When you have identified a prospect who is capable of making a gift and should be solicited face-to-face, ask and support a fundraising volunteer to make the appointment. The solicitation is much more likely to

# Gift Is...

Getting to “yes” depends upon who is doing the asking. The best person to ask for a gift is...

- A fundraising **volunteer** who
- **Understands and appreciates** the work of your organization, and who has
- Made his/her **own personal gift**, and is
- **Well respected** in the community, and who is
- A **peer** of the person being asked, and who has been
- **Well prepared with information** about the prospective donor, his/her capacity and interest in making a gift, while being
- **Accompanied by staff to help answer questions** about your organization, and who has
- **Rehearsed** the ask with a staff member, plus knows how to
- **Close a gift** and get to “yes” and can
- **Accept “no”**, realizing that it means “not now” and with your encouragement, be ready to
- **Ask another time and not be discouraged!**

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## Double Teaming

For some people, the idea of sitting across the table from someone and asking them for money causes great anxiety. Please know that you do not have to do this alone. In fact, it is better not to go alone if you are being paid to run your program. As we see above, the best person to ask for money is a **volunteer**.

Fundraising volunteers have the advantage when it comes to asking for money because they are recognized as performing a purely selfless act. Also, a volunteer can utilize the concept of “peer pressure” when asking a friend for a gift.

By working as a team, you have an opportunity to practice the ask and support each other. Use this tool when planning an ask with a fundraising volunteer teammate.

Actions	Staff	Volunteer
Leads with thanks for appointment, sets tone by describing the importance of project or program and introduces staffperson.		✓
Describes need, program and its	✓	

Solicitation is much more likely to succeed if the prospect is being solicited by a friend and peer – your volunteer!

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*"It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

impact. Engages prospect.	✓	
Augments with additional program or project information. Engages prospect.		✓
Asks for the gift, citing his / her own commitment and gift		✓
If useful, reinforces the “ask” by describing how this support specifically will further mission. References prospect’s interests, etc.	✓	
Makes the “big ask” to the prospect for a specific gift – i.e., dollar amount		✓
Wait. Wait. Wait. Listen.	✓	✓

[Click here to view a sample a possible Asking Script using a fundraising volunteer and a paid staff member.](#)

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## Let us know

Have you found effective ways to ask for gifts for your program?

Contact us at [LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com) (LEADline is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service through its Resource & Fund Development Initiative.) We would be happy to answer questions or to give you more support.

Thank you for your interest in On-The-Go eTA, We encourage you to [send this and other issues of OTG eTA to friends and colleagues](#) who would benefit from the information. Also, if you’re on information-overload, you may request [email removal](#). Otherwise OTG e-TA will be back soon with another edition.

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*Details from above:*

## The Asking Script – a fictional scenario...

Program Director David Thomas and Fundraising Volunteer Susan Stevens have an appointment to meet with Harry Edwards, a friend of Susan’s. They are going to ask Harry for a gift to support Project Coming Home. Susan made the initial contact and got the appointment. Take note of the efforts to engage the prospect through references to his interests, questions, etc. The goal is to generate a two-way conversation and thereby prospect interest.

Susan:

Harry, thanks for taking time to meet with me and David Thomas this morning. David Thomas is the AmeriCorps Program Director for St. Lucien Parish Project

<p><i>Leads with thank you for appointment, introduces and sets tone</i></p>	<p>Coming Home. I have watched him in action since I joined the PCH Advisory Council shortly after Hurricane Katrina over 2 years ago and I have seen the great work he and the young people of his team do to rebuild the Gulf area.</p>
<p>David:</p> <p><i>Engages prospect by learning about regional connections. Useful for building rapport and future program references.</i></p>	<p>Thanks, Susan. I also appreciate your time, Harry – and would like to learn more about your connections to the Gulf area.</p> <p>I grew up in St. Lucien Parish too! Project Coming Home is bringing this community back to social and economic stability. Specifically, in 3 ways. 1) Young people are learning valuable construction skills that ensure future job security. 2) Young people are helping former residents by rebuilding their damaged and destroyed homes. 3) Both young people and the former residents are working, living and helping to bring the Parish back to social and economic vitality that you and I remember growing up.</p>
<p>Susan:</p> <p><i>Describes more details of program or project to be funded</i></p> <p><i>Asks for support, citing her own gift</i></p>	<p>Harry, I can't emphasize the young people enough!</p> <p>Project Coming Home trains young people ages 15 to 21 in construction skills. These students left school without a high school diploma. They use skills they are gaining to build new, affordable homes for those people who lost theirs in St. Lucien Parish during the storm. As part of their experience, the young people also earn a GED. They make a great contribution to the community.</p> <p>Harry, I am here today to ask for your support of this project. The cost of training, transportation, tools and supervision for each student for a year comes to \$8,000. During the first year I was a volunteer for Project Coming Home I sponsored a student for the year. This year I am sponsoring two students for \$16,000.</p>
<p>David:</p> <p><i>Reinforces the "big ask" by clarifying the existing need and current and how much more is required.</i></p>	<p>The good news is, volunteers like Susan, have stepped forward to sponsor 75 young people. We have requests out to a number of other friends of St. Lucien such as you. We have the training and supervision capacity for another 25 students.</p>
<p>Susan:</p> <p><i>Makes the "big ask" with a specific dollar amount and waits, waits, waits, listens, parlays questions and closes.</i></p>	<p>Harry, here comes the ask ... I'd like you to match my sponsoring support with a gift of \$16,000.</p> <p>(Long pause, followed by Susan's responses to Harry's questions)</p> <p>Yes, this is \$16,000 to sponsor two youth for one year.</p> <p>Yes, we can send you reminders for \$4,000 every quarter.</p> <p>Harry, thank you so much. Your pledge of \$16,000 made payable in 4 installments over this year will fund two young people! You're the best! We will send you a letter of confirmation. Thanks again!</p>

## Resources

*The National ASK (Awareness, Skills, Knowledge) to Sustain Institute*, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 1998, 2002

*The CNCS Resources Now! National Institute*, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 2005-07

# Learning Products and Services

## **LEADline:**

(*Learning Experiences At a Distance*) LEADline is designed to give information fast. Have a resource & fund development question? Use LEADline and within 24 hours you will receive response and advice from a fundraising professional.

## **Contact us**

[LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com)

## **GIZMOs:**

(Giving Information for Zooming Money Objectives) GIZMOs are resource and fund development tools for you and your volunteers. They are tangible products in packets, pocket brochures, CD-ROMs, games, etc. They feature a myriad of fundraising topics such as The Case for Support, an interactive online resource. To order, contact us through [LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com) or call 410.243.7979 or toll free at 1.877.243.2253

View and use our newest GIZMO, Building Your Case for Support, at

[www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmos/case](http://www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmos/case)

## **The Chronicle of Philanthropy:**

: Everyone who comes to a Resources Now! National Institute gets a free subscription to the Chronicle for a year. Participants in CNCS Campaign Consultation workshops receive the latest issue free of charge plus a \$20 discount on one year's subscription.

## **Workshops/Clinics:**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), through its T/TA service provider Campaign Consultation, Inc., offers a three-hour workshops and clinics for those interested.

## **Online Courses/Webinars:**

Web course delivery of topics pertinent to resource development such as — **Build Fundraising Volunteer Champions** and **Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Partnerships**. Available through the Resource Center at <http://nationalserviceresources.org>

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## Read Back Issues of OTG e-TA

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- [Mid-February 2008 Using Fundraising Consultants](#)
- [February 2008 Raising Funds from Neighbors and Friends](#)
- [January 2008 Fundraising in Diverse Communities](#)

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