

MAY 2007
Nonprofit Postage Rules

*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 “Send It” Colleague,

Gifts from individuals acquired through the mail are the most cost effective, dependable means of income for social-profit organizations. In order to keep costs low, it helps to know something about postage, especially since rates are scheduled to increase this month. Gain some ideas for managing your postal solicitation expenses by using the ideas and information below.

[It's All in the Envelope](#)
[Postal Rate Distinction Summary](#)
[Test Your Response Rate Results](#)

Do you have questions about mail solicitation? Contact us through LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com. Access previous issues of On-the-Go eTA by clicking on the title at the right.

It's All in the Envelope

We all love to get a letter, especially when we are far away from family and friends. Direct mail is a fundraising technique that can bring your program to your donor's home or office. But, in order to receive a return gift, your letter has to be opened and read. The outer envelope is your first (and maybe your last) chance to appeal to the donor. Every inch of it is important. If the envelope is right, the prospective donor will open it.

Consider these aspects of your mailing envelope:

The Address

This is where the eyes go first. Although the size of the mailing and your resources may dictate which method you use, you should know that the method you use to address the envelope says a lot about your relationship to the donor. A hand-addressed envelope is very personal, indicates the donor is valued and therefore, will usually be opened. A label fixed to a card or letter inside an envelope viewed through a glassine window says mass-mailed. This is more impersonal, the donor is less valued and the chances of having your enveloped opened are greatly diminished.

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The Return Address

The address from which a mailing is sent lets the donor know that the letter they are holding is from your organization. Its type face should be consistent with other type faces you use to brand your organization. Often the return address will include the name of the person who wrote the letter as the first line. This is especially effective if the person is a leader in your community. And then again, sometimes leaving off a return address, especially if sent standard class bulk mail, can also get your mail opened if the teaser is compelling enough to increase their curiosity.

The Postage

You may choose to use a live stamp and send first class or print a permit imprint to send bulk rate (See Postal Rate Distinction Summary). Tests show that a first class stamp indicates a more personalized approach and will usually get the mail opened because it is important enough to spend the money to send first class. Other organizations do better when they show they are being economical. This may depend upon the size and timing of your mailing. Also you should incorporate both methods – use live postage for your special and major gift donors. Send the bulk rate imprinted permit to donors who give less.

A Teaser

A teaser is used to entice donors to open the letter. Sometimes it includes a picture, or gives an impelling reason to give. It may offer a benefit or pique curiosity.

The Logo

Your logo should be readily recognizable and lends credibility that you organization is who you say you are. It should be a point of pride for your initiative.

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Postal Rate Distinction Summary

Your mail costs will be lower the more work you are willing and able to do for the Post Office. By selecting from a variety of mailing options, you may be able to save a significant amount of money and still have your mailing reach your donors in a timely and efficient manner.

[Click here to learn about the different classes of mail you can choose:](#)

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Upcoming Training

Upcoming CNCS/Resource & Fund Development Initiative Offerings:

Resources Now!

National Institute:

Fundraising training and coaching opportunities offered over 3 days.

Next in **San Francisco, CA, May 22-24!**

NOTICE-Registration Deadline-April 23!!

[View brochure](#)

[Register Online](#)

Test Your Response Rate Results

Postage is a major expense of any mailing, so looking for ways to save money in this area is prudent. But where can you save and still maximize your dollar response from an appeal? Certainly you want to get more people to open your envelope, read your letter, and make a gift. You also want donors to give constantly larger gifts.

The major issue in testing is cost to dollars raised or the return. Will spending more money mean you will get more money? You can test many different factors of your direct mail package—your envelope, your letter, your reply device, but for a test to be valid, **you must test only one characteristic at a time** in a test mailing. Otherwise, you will not know for sure if your success is due to more expensive postage or a more personalized ask, for instance.

You can create a test mailing by randomly dividing your mailing list in half. Check to make certain you have equal representation of large and small donors and non-donors in each half. Code your gifts received so that you know which gift is from group A and which from group B. A simple way to do this is to run a colored highlighter along the bottom of a stack of reply envelopes for one of the mailing groups.

Here are some variables you may want to test:

First class postage vs. standard bulk mail rate
Nonprofit stamp vs. indicia
Reply envelope stamp vs. Business Return Envelope
Business Return Envelope vs. No return postage
Hand dressed envelope vs. laser printed envelope
Teaser on envelope vs. no teaser

At the end of your appeal season, tally the results. It may be worth spending more money to bring in more money. If there is no significant difference, you can probably save money using the less expensive alternative.

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Let us know

Do you have insights to share about making annual fund donor and prospect lists?

Contact us at 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

Share Square

To build volunteer support for your initiative's mail appeal program, ask for their help. Ask your volunteers to tally and give you the results of their responses to mail they receive during the week.

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“Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.”

Josh Billings, American humorist,
1818-1885

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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For more information, contact:
 CAMPAIGN CONSULTATION, Inc.
 2819 Saint Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21218 4312 USA
 T. 410.243.7979 F. 410.243.1024 Toll Free: 1.877.243.2253
LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com
www.CampaignConsultation.com

Details from above:

Postal Rate Distinction Summary

Listed below are the various options for your mailings and some of the requirements for each:

<p>First Class mail</p>	<p>Simplest, least labor intensive method of mailing, and also the most expensive. First class mail will be delivered as addressed, sent on to a forwarding address or returned to the sender with correct address information. You may use a stamp, a postal meter imprint, or a preprinted postal indicia. As a result, your mail will arrive within 2 – 3 business days.</p>
<p>Presorted First Class Mail (Bulk Mail)</p>	<p>Treated the same as first class mail, but you receive a discount for presorting and packaging the mail according to the Post Office criteria. Additional discounts apply if it is prepared with a barcode. You may use a postal meter imprint, or a preprinted postal indicia. You must have a minimum of 500 pieces. You must apply for and receive a permit to mail at bulk rates. You must be able to sort your list in zip code order.</p>
<p>Standard Class Mail (formerly Third Class Mail)</p>	<p>Slower, but less expensive. Does not provide return mail service or address correction. Each piece of mail must identical. There is a 200 piece or 50 pound minimum to use this service. This is a good choice for newsletters and annual reports, especially if you imprint Address Correction Requested.</p>
<p>Presorted Standard Class Mail (Bulk Mail)</p>	<p>Again, you receive an even greater discount for presorting. The Bulk Mail Permit is needed.</p>
<p>Nonprofit Standard Class Mail</p>	<p>Even lower cost than Standard or Presorted Standard Class mail. You must receive authorization through the Post Office to mail at nonprofit rates. All contents must be the same with no personal correspondence, handwritten notes or any other difference. The only characteristic that can be different is the address and personalized salutation of letters.</p>

[For more detailed information about each of the mail options and their requirements, go to www.usps.gov.](http://www.usps.gov)

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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

Resources Now! National Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 2006 - present

Support Center for Nonprofit Management at <http://www.supportctr.org>

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Additional 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

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 Power of Direct Mail**, an interactive cd-rom and detailed companion booklet on developing your direct mail program.

To order, contact us through

LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com

or call 410.243.7979

or toll free at 1.877.243.2253

For more information:

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[Gizmo Presentation](#)

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[Order Form](#)

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 in mastering key skills need to write for individual donors.

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, [Click Here](#)

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Tell Us!

Let us know by contacting us through LEADline@CampaignConsultation.com

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