

# Sustainability

## The Power of Small Gifts

March 2009

*On-The-Go!*  
e-TA

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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Special Projects and Sustainability Initiative

## Dear "Small Gifts" Colleague,

We hear the most about mega-gifts of \$1 million and more that go to the larger social profit organizations. However, according to the 2007 Nonprofit Almanac published by the Urban Institute, more than half of the 1.4 nonprofit organizations in the U.S. are small with gross receipts of \$25,000 or less. The majority of gifts are small as well with two-thirds of donations being made at \$99 or less. Click on the titles at the right to learn about...

### The Value of Small Gifts

### eGifts

### Tribute and Memorial Funds

Do you have questions or ideas about raising small gifts? Contact us through [Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com) for more information. You can still access previous issues of On-the-Go eTA by clicking on the back issues at the bottom of the page.

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## The Value of Small Gifts

Since most gifts are not mega-gifts, and most organizations are not mega-institutions, it is important to note that small gifts do indeed have a major impact on our communities:

- Small gifts are given by 60 to 70% of most programs' donors
- Small gifts are essential to small community based organizations
- Small gifts usually can be raised in a shorter period of time, as opposed to major gifts that often take years of cultivation
- Small gifts give the average individual a voice in the community through small nonprofits that have a direct impact on the quality of life in a community

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- The consistency of a donor who makes small gifts year after year through an annual fund appeal allows small nonprofits to establish a dependable operating expense budget baseline
- Small gifts often become the basis for larger gifts
- There are many stories of a donor who has supported an organization with small gifts over a lifetime and then leaves a legacy gift to the organization
- Groups of individuals can leverage many small gifts by forming a “Giving Circle,” providing greater philanthropic impact
- Foundations often look at the quantity and consistency of support from the local community when considering their gifts and grants

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## eGifts

Most small gifts come from direct mail campaigns. However, the internet is providing a rapidly growing platform for gifts, especially from new donors. Take a look at the six platforms below that are being utilized by charitable organizations and their supporters to raise funds from a broad audience:

What is it	How it works
AMMADO	This international community of supporters pools its resources to support charitable organizations. In addition, nonprofits are able to upload information about their missions, publish news and articles, receive online donations, list and recognize stakeholders, create media libraries sharing images, videos and documents, mobilize through polls and petitions and communicate instantly with their supporters, potential partners, and other nonprofits from around

## Tips for Tough Times

The financial climate is having its greatest impact in the area of major gifts. It is the small gifts that will continue to sustain your program’s operating budget. Pay attention to these donors and be sure that they hear your appreciation for their continued support.

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and other nonprofits from around the world.

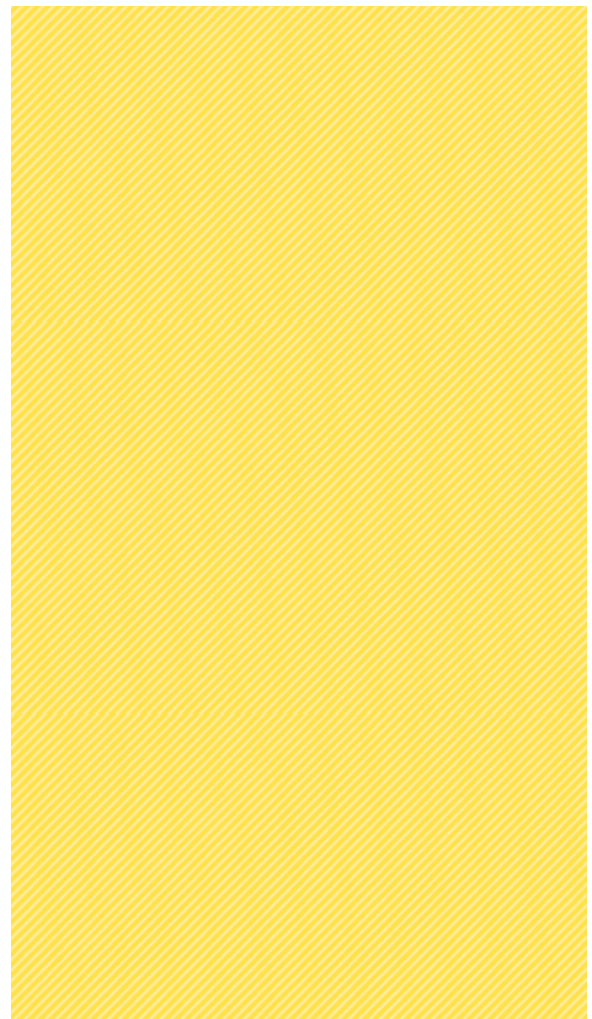
<http://www.ammado.com/>

#### DonorsChoose

Public school teachers create student project proposals for classroom needs. Concerned individuals fund the student projects of their choice—in whole or in part—and are emailed immediate email gift acknowledgments from DonorsChoose.org which can be used for tax deduction purposes.

DonorsChoose.org purchases the student materials and ships items directly to the school along with guidelines for preparing thank-you packages, and a stamped envelope in which to enclose the feedback. The teacher photographs the students participating in the project and writes an Impact Letter to the donor. Students write their own thank-you notes which are then returned to DonorsChoose.org headquarters.

<http://www.donorschoose.org/>



<p>eBAY Giving Works</p>	<p>The program is administered by the licensed nonprofit organization, MissionFish. Any eBay seller who has a current account in good standing can create an eBay Giving Works listing.</p> <p>There are two types of sellers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eBay Community Seller: Individual eBay sellers who want to donate 10% to 100% (5% for eBay Motors vehicle sales) of their final sale price to a certified nonprofit.</li> <li>• Nonprofit Direct Seller: Certified nonprofits can sell their own items on eBay and collect 100% of their final sale price. Nonprofit Direct Sellers create their eBay Giving Works listings with the same selling forms as a Community Seller. <a href="http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/selling-nonprofit.html">http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/selling-nonprofit.html</a></li> </ul>
<p>Network for Good (powered by groundspring.org)</p>	<p>DonateNow service for nonprofits is set up to accept credit card gifts on the Web. Customized donation pages are created that look exactly like your Website. The service processes donations plus provides on-screen and email receipts, and sends instant donation notification to the organization. <a href="http://www.groundspring.org/services/donatenow.cfm">http://www.groundspring.org/services/donatenow.cfm</a></p>
<p>Tweetsgiving (powered by epicChange)</p>	<p>EpicChange uses the power of stories to create social change. Tweetsgiving utilized twitter and social media to raise \$10,000 in 48 hours. 336 contributors collectively raised enough money to fund a new classroom for a school in Tanzania in November 2008. <a href="http://tweetsgiving.org/">http://tweetsgiving.org/</a></p>

*“A gift consists not in what is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer.”*

– Lucius Annaeus Seneca,  
Roman philosopher

Small gifts often begin with donations to Tribute and Memorial Funds. You can establish a tribute and Memorial fund to a birthday, wedding, new baby, graduation or any special occasion. Memorial gifts are made to honor the memory of a friend or relative.

Like any other gift, tribute and memorial gifts are tax deductible for the donor under the usual U.S. tax guidelines. Your organization or program acknowledges the gift with a thank you note to the donor that includes the following:

- Amount of the gift
- The date the gift was made
- The person or occasion being recognized
- And the designated purpose of the gift, if any.

In addition, an acknowledgment of each gift is sent to the person, or to the family of the person in whose name the gift was given and includes:

- Name of donor
- Name of person being memorialized or recognized
- Contact information
- Purpose of the gift
- Gift amounts are not mentioned in this letter. [Click here](#) for a sample memorial gift notification.

If the donor and/or the honoree is not one of your regular donors, you should include information about your program or project with your thank you and acknowledgement notes. Continue to provide program updates to the appropriate individuals throughout the year. If appropriate, you can attract more small gifts by including the Tribute Fund donor in your annual solicitation.

[Click here](#) for more information about tribute and memorial gifts.

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## Let us know

Contact [Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com)  
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

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## Tribute and Memorial Gifts (cont.)

There are a number of ways to incorporate tribute and memorial gifts into your stewardship program.

- Name of honoree and donor are recognized in publications
- A special memorial/tribute page is designated on a website
- A tribute/memorial list is posted in a prominent place in the organization
- Special tribute/memorial items, such as bricks, plaques, garden items are reserved by the organization especially to serve as tribute/memorial name recognition

Some organizations set up structured levels of donations for tribute/memorial gifts. [Click here](#) to view how one organization provides information about tribute gifts.

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## Resources

### eOrganizer

eOrganizer is an interactive clearinghouse for the latest and greatest web instruments of change. This GIZMO shows you how to maximize free and inexpensive online tools and resources to mobilize people around issues and within organizations. Structured around eight categories important to community organizing, it offers descriptions and provides access to many of the most current web arenas and strategies for bringing groups together to create community change.

<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/GIZMOs/eorganizer/index.html>

*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.

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## Learning Products and Services

**Sustainability:**

Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com is designed to give information fast on building capacity. Use this online support for advice from a fundraising professional.

Contact [Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com)

**GIZMOs:**

(Giving Information for Zooming Mission 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. View and use our newest GIZMOs at

[www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash](http://www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash)

**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.

**WebWizard:**

CNCS sponsors this new service that Campaign Consultation provides to assist programs and projects in maximizing their websites for program, client, volunteer and fundraising needs.

**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://www.nationalserviceresources.org>

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## Read Back Issues of OTG e-TA

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