

Beyond Making the Ask

WHAT CAN I DO?

For many, the fear of asking people for money is right up there with public speaking or a visit to the dentist. Asking for a donation is only a small part of the process. Identifying prospects, getting them interested in your organization and then thanking them when they donate are all things that a passionate and committed board member can easily do.

Here are some activities that board members can do to help with fundraising that don't require making the ask:

- Call to thank donors for a recent gift. Engage the donors in conversation about why they give or how they became involved with your organization. Summarize your conversation to share with staff, so it can be recorded allowing future callers know this history.
- Host a party in your home or business to introduce your organization to a wider circle of people.
- Write a letter to 10 friends or relatives explaining why you support your organization and encourage donations to the organization - rather than gifts to you - to mark special occasions such as birthdays or holidays.
- Volunteer to match contributions from other board members up to whatever limit you are comfortable. Join with a few other board members to up the ante. Make it a fun challenge to hit the limit.
- Introduce your organization to others who might be interested by inviting them to a special event as your guest.
- Identify potential corporate donors. Go along with staff to meet with corporate representatives to make them aware of your organization.
- Find opportunities to speak about your organization, whether through service clubs, local publications, or programs.
- Speak often about the motivation behind your own giving.
- Write personal notes to lapsed donors explaining why you support the organization and encouraging them to re-engage.
- Identify future board members with the right connections and convictions for fundraising.
- Join staff on visits to donors, especially when you have an existing relationship. Agree in advance which role each of you will play - who sets up the conversation and who makes the request.