

OPR: SPIRIT OF AMERICA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

REVIEW DATE: 2020



**SPIRIT OF AMERICA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION
501(c)(3)
CHAPTER GUIDANCE**

15 June 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE NUMBER
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. PURPOSE	3
3. FUNDING RESOURCES	3
4. SPIRIT OF AMERICA EDUCATION FOUNDATION 501(c)(3)	4
5. GRANTS:	6
6. FUND RAISING:	10
7. BEST PRACTICES	11
APPENDICES	11

1.0 INTRODUCTION. Sojourner Chapters are expected to implement Americanism and Bridge of Light (BOL) programs as part of their outreach mission and in furtherance of the purposes of the Order. While the selection of the number and types of programs remains at the discretion of the members, many require significant monetary expenditures. Such patriotic and Americanism educational programs may include some or all of the following: JROTC and ROTC Medals, Youth Leadership Conference Scholarships, Essay Contest Awards, as well as, the purchase of requisite program materials including ceremonial flag kits, promotional/educational materials, recognition certificate's, parade floats, website development and other miscellaneous items. Raising the necessary funds is often a limiting factor—hence, the National Sojourners have established the Spirit of America Education Foundation (SAEF) 501(c)(3) which enables Sojourner Chapters to expand their fund raising activities by permitting tax deductible donations.

2.0 PURPOSE. This publication provides guidance for Sojourner Chapters in using the Spirit of America Education Foundation 501(c)(3) to raise funds for approved patriotic and Americanism educational programs, as well as: (a) guidelines for using the Grant process; (b) general information on soliciting donations; and (c) recommended best practices.

3.0 FUND RESOURCES. Sojourner Chapters acquire operating fund resources in a number of ways as summarized in the following table. The last highlighted category is made possible by the Spirit of America Education Foundation (SAEF) 501(c)(3).

FUNDS RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Annual Chapter MIP Dividend	Provided by National HQ
Donations	Provided by members and individuals
Honorariums	Provided by organizations for patriotic & Americanism programs
Fees	New Member
Raffles	50-50*
Other Income Projects	Fund raising dinners, etc.
National Americanism Committee Scholarships	Provided exclusively for funding students to YLCs
In Memoriam Chapter Support for JROTC & ROTC Medals	Provided by the National HQ to chapters in the same state as the In Memoriam chapter to assist in defraying the cost of medals assumed by chapters still operating in the state
<i>Tax Deductible Grants, Donations and In-kind support from organizations and individuals</i>	<i>Based on actions of the chapter to implement and pursue tax deductible grants, donations and in-kind support!</i>

*NOTE—Chapters must comply with the directives of their local Grand Lodge with respect to the operation of raffles. Some chapters solicit member donations and provide a donated prize as an incentive in lieu of a 50-50.

4.0 SPIRIT OF AMERICA EDUCATION FOUNDATION (SAEF) 501(c)(3).

4.1 IRS APPROVAL. The SAEF 501(c)(3) was approved by the IRS on 23APR2014 (see copy included as Appendix 8.1.1).

4.2 FUNDING CATEGORIES.

4.2.1 APPROVED CATEGORIES. Funds may be solicited under the auspices of the SAEF for the following National and Sojourner Chapter patriotic and Americanism education purposes:

- A. JROTC & ROTC Medals
- B. Youth Leadership Conference Scholarships
- C. Essay Contest Awards
- D. Promotional Materials
- E. Program Materials — flag kits, color guard supplies, etc.
- F. Parade floats
- G. Website operations — National and chapter that support patriotic and Americanism education
- H. Recognition materials

4.2.2 PROPOSED CATEGORIES. A Chapter may nominate other types of expenditures for approval by submitting a proposal to the Spirit of America Education Foundation via the National Secretary-Treasurer at hq@nationalsojourners.org.

4.3 CHAPTER PROCEDURES:

4.3.1 Planning for Tax Deductible Fund Raising. Review Section 6 “Fund Raising” of this publication.

4.3.2 Tax-Deductible Fund Raising. Review the tax deductible Grants sources available to you in your Chapter’s hometown and apply the guidance provided in the Section 5 “Grants” of this publication. Keep in mind that there are many local community resources such as the Rotary, Lions Club, Kiwanis, and many local non-national organizations that may be viable sources for donations for National Sojourner patriotic and Americanism education programs — be sure to approach and use all of your local resources. Often chapter members are members of such organizations and can act as your chapter POC — ask! In addition, you may wish to seek additional donations from chapter members and community businesses and entrepreneurs who share a like-minded interest in our outreach programs as such donations are now tax deductible under the SAEF.

4.3.3 **In-kind support** is a way for your chapter to collect resources other than money. Instead of buying everything with cash, you can look for donations from community members. In-kind resources, or non-cash contributions, might be things you'd otherwise pay for, or they might be things that money just can't buy. When someone volunteers to give you a service, supplies, or free help, you're receiving in-kind support. Seeking in-kind support should be an integral part of your plan for action and sustainability. If your Chapter is going to succeed, you'll need more than just money: you'll want goods, people, and services.

4.3.4 Crediting Tax Deductible Funds to Your Chapter SAEF Account. Grant and donation checks shall be made payable to the *SPIRIT OF AMERICA EDUCATION FOUNDATION*. To ensure credit of the donation to the chapter, the check shall be forwarded to the National Secretary-Treasurer together with the *SPIRIT OF AMERICA EDUCATION FOUNDATION DONATION FORM* (see appendix 8.1.2) with the proper fund category designated (see 4.2.1 above). [EDITOR's NOTE—the form requires revision to add a list of approved fund categories]. It is emphasized that all funds raised by a chapter shall be reserved in the Spirit of America Education Foundation for the exclusive use of that chapter!

4.3.5 Funds in Your Chapter SAEF Account. Funds in your SAEF account shall be disbursed by direction of your Chapter Secretary by the National Secretary-Treasurer to your designated payee. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall mail the check directly to your designated payee or to the Chapter Secretary to deliver to the payee. Note that funds shall only be used for the purposes given by the donor. As an example, your chapter receives a \$1000 community grant from your local Wal-Mart for Youth Leadership Conference Scholarships. Accordingly, the Chapter may direct the National Secretary-Treasurer to disburse these funds on behalf of your chapter to either Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge or to a regional Military Order of World Wars Youth Leadership Conference account.

4.3.6 Questions — Where to get Help. Send and questions you may have regarding the subject addressed by this National Circular to the Spirit of America Education Foundation via National Secretary-Treasurer at hq@nationalsojourners.org. Your inquiry should clearly articulate your question(s) and include your name, e-mail address, and phone number.

5.0 GRANTS.

5.1 Community Service Grants: Community Service Grants provide a means for funding qualifying Chapter programs. The Grant process employs the following steps: (1) Identify sources, (2) Qualify for the grant, (3) Comply with the requirements, (4) Justify your request, and (5) Apply on time.

5.1.1 Like the complexity and skill required in locating, writing detailed cover letters and lengthy proposals seeking large governmental, educational, foundation, and corporate grants, community service grants are readily available and fairly easily obtained without the necessity to prepare complex cover letters and proposals. Grants are available from a number of local sources and these will become more apparent to you when you begin your research in locating them. The longest journey begins with the first step, so here it is:

5.1.1.1 Identify

A. Community Service Grant Sources

B. Individuals

C. Local Companies and Corporations

D. Local Foundations

E. Large Corporations or Entities with community ties or operations {WAL-MART, Costco, Walgreen 's, Office Depot, K-Mart etc.

F. Grant sources can be researched utilizing computer search, personal contacts, bankers, newspaper editors, Chambers of Commerce, lawyers etc. It is as simple as inquiring and making known your interest in securing a community service grant. Simply researching local newspaper files for grants will often reveal entities that offer grants locally as they relish the image and publicity of being "good citizens" in their communities. When you have determined available grant sources, you are ready for step two in the process:

5.1.1.2 Qualify

A. After determining grant sources, as in most instances the source will be local, place a telephone call to the source and ask for the name and title of the individual responsible for community service grants. Thank that person for the information and ask if that individual is available. If unavailable, inquire as to their availability and state you will contact them at that time. Do not speak with anyone on initial contact that is not responsible for community service grants. You are simply "spinning your wheels" as having your request being related by a third party loses much of its impact in translation. If available, address the individual by name and/or title.

B. Addressing an individual by their name and/or title on first contact immediately establishes a personal relationship. Remember that the initial contact will not secure the grant, it is an information-gathering foray. Introduce yourself, state the name of your organization, and inquire if community service grants are available for 501(C)(3) organizations in your community. If not, thank the individual for their time. Upon the determination of availability of a grant, inform the individual that your Chapter is a subsidiary of the National Sojourners, Inc. which has been designated a 501(c)(3)

organization and as such is eligible to receive tax exempt grants from most individuals, foundations, and organizations. At this time attempt to schedule a personal visit to further discuss grant requirements and to pick up any material pertinent to applying for the grant. A one-on-one situation is highly desirable as this will afford the opportunity to fully discuss the National Sojourner youth related programs, their potential impact on youth in the community, and how the funds will be utilized to advance interest in these programs by offering scholarships, awards, or in furthering patriotic education and Americanism education programs. Briefly state your reason for need and how it will benefit the local community. Perception of community benefit is a very critical factor in the determination of need for community service grants by almost all entities. Education is a common theme for considering grant requests, so emphasize the educational aspect by utilization of the grant to further the education of our community youth in the heritage and history of the United States of America through participation in the National Sojourner youth related programs. Be sure and mention the lack of education available to our youth in the heritage and history of our country, which is being eroded daily and is sorely deficient in most of our schools and communities. However, it is necessary that you are prepared to fully discuss the grant request at the time of initial contact in the event that a personal visit is unavailable or not desired by the grantor's representative. Be prepared to discuss your request and necessary requirements for qualification and submission of the grant proposal. Items such as: specific qualifying factors, opening and closing dates for grant submission, the need to specify amount of funds requested, if attachments are advised, and does the grantor have their own Grant Request Form (e.g., the WAL-MART request form).

C. Additional required forms include the 501(c)(3) Advisory Letter and State Tax Statements. Many grant awarding entities now also require a USA Patriot Act Compliance Form: (see sample attached). It is advisable to include a completed USA Patriot Act Compliance Form with all grant request submissions. Fully cover all aspects of the items mentioned above and inquire where and when any material necessary for grant proposal submission will be available. If possible schedule an appointment to pick up related material. Having compiled all necessary information and required documents, you are ready to prepare the grant proposal, step 3 in the process.

5.1.1.3 Comply: Simply stated, "comply with ALL requirements and rules of the grantor, otherwise, your grant will be disqualified and receive no consideration." Consider there are dozens, perhaps hundreds of groups seeking the same grant funds as you. Many, if not most, submissions are simply disqualified, "out of hand" for non-compliance or failure to meet the requirements of the grant. Be keenly aware of this "winnowing process" utilized by grantors, as it is the first hurdle to overcome.

5.1.1.4 Justify:

A. The Who, Why, What, and How's of Grants: All grant proposals have common factors that must be fully defined and directly conveyed to the grantor in the proposal. These factors include the following and must be fully defined: Who you are; Why you need the grant; What is your proposal to justify granting the funds; How will the funds be spent; and How will your program benefit the local community. These questions must be clearly and fully related in terms easily interpreted by the grantor.

B. The Introduction: Keep your Introduction as interesting and informative as possible as in most instances only the first few pages will be read unless the reader's interest is piqued. The Introduction offers the opportunity to fully justify your proposal as well as to cover the items stipulated

in (A) above. The opening few paragraphs are critical in "grabbing" the reader's attention to entice he or she to continue reading your proposal. Incorporating quotes from the Sojourners' National Americanism Committee or a quote by President Reagan into the introductory paragraphs of the proposal template work well (e.g., Teaching young Americans about America). Confusing and uninteresting proposals get you little except non-consideration when seeking community service grants. Keep it simple, interesting, and easily understood or it will in all likelihood not be considered. In the case of WAL-MART and other large corporate grantors, they have numerous requests on a daily basis and simply do not have the time or personnel to fully consider all grant proposals, especially those that are poorly written, uninteresting, and difficult to understand. These in all probability go to the bottom of the pile or are briefly considered and rejected.

C. The Proposal: The proposal should be straight forward and to the point. It should fully detail all aspects of the project as defined above and comply with all requirements of the grantor. Utilization and intended expenditures of requested funds should be fully detailed. The proposal should include a proposed project budget for usage of the grant monies. The rationale and justification for the grant have been defined in the Introduction so there is no need to repeat former justifications for the grant. Fully review the proposal to assure all requirements and stipulations of the grantor are fully met. The proposal template once completed can be re-cycled by being adapted and customized for specific grant requirements or Chapter programs.

5.1.1.5 Apply (use of the grant request template is recommended).

A. Retain duplicate copies of all material submitted. Compose the proposal as a standard business letter, paragraphs left justified with a space between paragraphs. As a minimum use 12pt Times New Roman type and the brightest paper available for all correspondence with the grantor. If the type is too small and the paper too dingy to be easily read, it probably will not be read. Small considerations like these allow your proposal to "stand out" and are greatly appreciated by individuals reading dozens of pages of grant proposals on a daily basis. If you have diligently followed the preceding steps, you are now ready to submit your Chapter's proposal. All correspondence and submissions should be on Chapter letterhead (make up your own Chapter letterhead), as this indicates a sense of professionalism. Carefully review the completed proposal for spelling and grammatical errors, as these are a definite "turn off" for proposal readers. Fully and accurately complete any required forms and attach any supporting news items or documents if allowed.

B. If possible, schedule an appointment to hand deliver your proposal. This creates an additional opportunity to further interact with the grantor on a personal basis. Otherwise, send the grant proposal by certified or delivery confirmed mail to assure your proposal has been delivered and received in a timely manner. In either situation, it is worthwhile to contact the grantor to assure that your proposal has been received. In the initial grantor contact, you should have ascertained the opening and closing dates for their grant. The proposal submission should be approximately thirty (30) days prior to the closing date to allow for the submission of additional information or for requests for clarification. Most grants are awarded within two (2) months of the closing date. It is imperative that you follow up on the decision regarding your proposal on a regular basis beginning approximately two (2) months after the closing date and continuing on a bi-weekly schedule or until you are advised of a decision by the grantor.

C. When you are notified of grant approval, immediately respond by telephone or mail and thank the grantor for the grant. At this time schedule a convenient time and location to present a

Patriot of '76 Certificate (available from National HQ) and send a formal thank you letter. The presentation of the Patriot of '76 Certificate Appreciation should be fully publicized in local news media and the grantor mentioned as source of funds in all publicity regarding youth related activities where the grant funds are utilized, i.e. "funds for the scholarship were provided by a generous grant from the WAL-MART Foundation." Note: Not all grantors want the publicity and prefer to remain anonymous. However, in any instance, stay in contact with the grantor throughout the year and keep the grantor updated and informed of the Chapter's youth related activities and use of grant funds. Regular updates and proper utilization of grant funds almost guarantees renewal of the grant for future requests.

D. If your grant proposal is rejected or not funded, it is critical to determine the reason(s) for non-funding of your proposal in order to correct it for future submissions. Simply ask the declining grantor, why the proposal was rejected, then correct it. Don't become overly discouraged by a refusal. Grants are like talent contests, if you don't succeed the first time, benefit from your mistakes, correct them, keep trying, and re-groom your future submissions until you are successful.

6.0 FUND RAISING.

6.1 Chapter fund raising requires planning, commitment, and leadership.

A. Start early!

B. Upon establishing the goals for the patriotic and Americanism programs your chapter has elected to pursue will readily identify the requisite funds required and permit calculation of the funding shortfall or the amount of tax deductible funds to be raised.

C. Decide who or appoint a committee to implement the fund raising using both Grant and donation resources.

D. Review this circular for guidance.

E. Implement the plan.

6.2. Contributions and In-kind Support: Obtaining support through successful grants and submitted proposals is important to the financial sustainability of many community organizations. However, we all know competition for grants can be tough. You should consider what types of other resources may be available within the community.

A, Contributions: The idea of contributions sounds simple – it's money that people, businesses, or groups give your Chapter. That's essentially right, but there are a lot of variations. Some contributions are tax deductible and some are not, depending on the tax status of the receiving organization, what it uses the money for, and whether or not donors get anything in return. **It should be emphasized that the Spirit of America Educational Foundation is the charitable organization, the chapters are not.** Cash contributions and recognition of in-kind support must go through SAEF to meet the IRS requirements.

B. In-kind Support: In-kind support is a way for your chapter to collect resources other than money. Instead of buying everything with cash, you can look for donations from community members. In-kind resources, or non-cash contributions, might be things you'd otherwise pay for, or they might be things that money just can't buy. When someone volunteers to give you a service, supplies, or free help, you're receiving in-kind support. You can look for in-kind support both from within your Chapter's members, and from your local community. Some donors – people, groups, or businesses – may feel more comfortable donating something other than cash. In-kind support should not be seen as a second best to cash donations, but as an equally important part of the resources available to your chapter.

6.3 Planning to Solicit Support

A. Plan how you will approach various members of your community and ask for donations and non-cash resources. Do your members have good contacts with particular businesses, companies, institutions, or individuals? Think positively and creatively! The worst someone can tell you is "No!" Many businesses, corporations, or larger organizations are looking for smaller groups to donate to. Why? Often it's a tax write-off, and it shows their involvement and generosity to their

community. After all, if they are going to be making donations anyway, why not have them be to you?

B. Set clear goals for your campaign. If you don't know where you're going, you won't be able to congratulate yourselves when you get there! Assign specific people to solicit particular groups, particularly those where they already have contacts. A lot of support you get will come from local contacts. In other words, the support will come from the relationships you've already established with people in your community. If they know and trust you, they will want to support you.

6.4 General Fund Raising Guidance: Refer to “7 Tips on Asking for Donations” included as Appendix 8.1.5.

7.0 BEST PRACTICES. All Sojourner Chapters are encouraged to submit examples of successful fund raising projects to include application examples, letters of appreciation, news articles, etc., as well as, statements of lessons learned to the SAEF via the National Secretary-Treasurer at hq@nationalsojourners.org. The SAEF will review recommend best practices and post selected items on the Sojourners website (new page in the SOJOURNERS ONLY section to be implemented) and, from time to time, add items to this Publication. In this manner, all Sojourner Chapters may have an opportunity to apply and benefit from individual chapter successes and lessons learned.

8.0 APPENDICES.

8.1 GENERAL:

8.1.1 IRS Form—Spirit of America Education Foundation 501(c)(3) dated 23APR2014

8.1.2 Spirit of America Education Foundation Donation Forms

8.1.3 Companies that Donate to Nonprofit Organizations”

8.1.4 Donation Request: The Top Companies”

8.1.5 Tips on Asking for Donations”

8.2 BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES:

8.2.1

8.2.2

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: 4, 1. 0
i4

SPIRIT OF AMERICA EDUCATION
FOUNDATION
8301 E BLVD DR
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22308-1399

Employer Identification Number:
45-3563522
DLN:
17053023407023
Contact Person:
BRENDA WILKINS ID# 52338
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
170 (b) (1) (A) (vi)
Form 990 Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
May 20, 2011
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c) (3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

RECEIVED
APR 26 2014

Sincerely,



Director, Exempt Organizations

Enclosure: Publication 4221-PC

Letter 947



Spirit of America Education Foundation Donation Form

FORM PURPOSE

This form is to be used for making tax deductible donations to the National Sojourners, Inc. Spirit of America Education Foundation (a 501c3 foundation). All donors will receive a letter acknowledging the date and amount of their donation. Make checks payable to the Spirit of America Education Foundation. National Sojourner Chapters may also reserve donations secured through their efforts for use in payment on their behalf of tuition for Freedoms Foundation and MOWW Youth Leadership Conferences, ROTC/JROTC Medals, and other future Americanism and Patriotic youth programs that may be approved. Complete this form, retain a copy for chapter files, and mail the original with donation check to:

Spirit of America Education Foundation
c/o National Sojourners, Inc.
7942 R Cluny Court
Springfield, VA 22153-2810

DONOR INFORMATION

DONOR NAME	AMOUNT (\$):
ADDRESS	DATE:
CITY: STATE	CHECK NUMBER:
ZIPCODE:	<u>SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS</u>

CHAPTER INFORMATION

CHAPTER NAME:	CHAPTER NUMBER:
CHAPTER SECRETARY NAME:	
PHONE NUMBER:	E-MAIL:
ADDRESS:	



**SPIRIT OF AMERICA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

IN-KIND DONATION FORM**

FORM PURPOSE

This form does not serve as a receipt for this contribution, but is intended for our internal record keeping purposes only. A receipt describing the items or merchandise donated will be mailed to the address supplied below. The Spirit of America Educational Foundation is unable to include the estimated value on the donor receipt. It is the responsibility of the donor to substantiate the fair market value for his/her own tax purposes. The donation of services, although very valuable and much appreciated, is generally not considered tax deductible by the IRS. Please consult with your tax advisor to determine the tax implications of your gift. Complete this form, retain a copy for chapter files, and mail the original to:

Spirit of America Education Foundation c/o
National Sojourners, Inc.
7942 R Cluny Court
Springfield, VA 22153-2810

Date: _____

Donor Information

Company

Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Email: _____

Chapter Name _____ Chapter # _____

Gift Description

Estimated fair market cost by donor: \$ _____

Special Instructions: (e.g. item delivery or pickup, restrictions, etc.)

Companies that Donate to Nonprofit Organizations



Have you ever wondered which companies donate to nonprofit organizations? Well, at Double the Donation we're asked that exact question all the time!

Most companies, big or small, have a budget for charitable giving to nonprofit organizations, though it can be done in any number of ways. These include:

- Employee matching gifts
- Individual volunteer grants
- Community grants
- Volunteer support / team volunteer grants

Of course all companies claim they donate to nonprofit organizations, but which do the best job of supporting nonprofit organizations?

Companies that Donate to Nonprofit Organizations through Various Giving Programs

Matching Employee Donations

One of the most common methods for companies to donate to nonprofit organizations is through employee matching gift programs. These are charitable donation programs where companies match donations made by employees to nonprofits. **Double the**

Donation's service is based around helping nonprofits raise money from the multitude of companies that provide these programs.

Here's a sampling of a few companies which **double** the Donation tracks:

Bank of America

Bank of America is just one of many financial services companies that match employee donations nonprofits. Every Bank of America employee is eligible to request up to \$5,000 per year in matching gift funds to nearly any organization.

One of the nice features of Bank of America's matching gift program is that the company will match donations made to nonprofit organizations up until March 15th of the following year. That means you have plenty of time to make a last minute **end of year appeal** or **start of year appeal** to remind their donor base to submit match requests.

View more details on Bank of America's matching gift program or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/bank-of-america-merrill-lynch>. *[click on link]*

Google

As you'd expect from a company who's slogan is "Don't be Evil", **Google is very generous with its nonprofit donation programs.**

Its matching gift program is no exception with Google matching up to \$12,000 in donations per employee each year.

One of the highlights of Google's match program is that the company not only matches personal donations to nonprofit organizations, but also matches funds employees personally raise for a charitable event which they actively participate in (ex. walks, marathons, bike rides, etc.)

View more details on Google's matching gift program or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/google-inc> *[click on link]*.

GE

Did you know GE was the first company to institute a matching gift program for employees? Ever since 1954, GE has been known as one of the top companies that donates to nonprofits.

While GE initially only matched employee donations to colleges and universities, the company has expanded its match program to include nearly all nonprofits.

View more details on GE's matching gift program or
<https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/general-electric> [click on link].



or

<https://doublethedonation.com/matching-grant-resources/list-matching-gifts-companies/>
[click on link].

Community Grants

Most large companies provide grants to nonprofit organizations through community grant programs. It's a way for companies to support their local communities by giving back to nonprofits which work to improve the lives of employees, customers, and entire communities.

Unlike matching gift programs where employees initiate the grant requests, nonprofits must individually research and apply for community grants. This often involves applying electronically through a company grant making portal where the nonprofit outlines how the funds will benefit the community.

Note: If you ever see a link to **Cybergrants** [or <https://doublethedonation.com/blog/2013/07/cybergrants/>] or the **JK-Group** [or <https://doublethedonation.com/blog/2013/05/jk-group-easymatch-companies/>] on a company's website, you're being directed to the company's electronic grant making software where you can apply for a community grant. [click on link].

Volunteer Grants

One of the other most common ways companies donate to nonprofits is through volunteer grant programs. These are corporate giving programs where companies give grants to nonprofits where employees volunteer regularly. They can be a great source of incremental fundraising for nonprofits such as Big Brother / Big Sister organizations, Girl Scout or Boy Scout Councils, or any other group with a large number of volunteers.

Here are a couple of companies that donate to nonprofits through employee volunteer grant programs:

Microsoft

Microsoft is well known within the corporate giving world for having some of the most generous employee grant programs. In fact, over the years **Microsoft has donated more than \$1 billion through its employee donation programs.**

Microsoft's grant of \$17 per hour exceeds the average volunteer grant of \$8-\$15 per hour. All employees are eligible for both the volunteer grant as well as the matching gift program.

[View more details on Microsoft's volunteer grant and matching gift programs.](https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/microsoft) or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/microsoft> [click on link].

Chevron

Like most major oil and gas companies, Chevron provides millions of dollars through its employee giving programs.

Through Chevron's Grants for Good Volunteer Grant Program, the company provides funding to nonprofits where employees and retirees volunteer on a regular basis. There are two tiers for individuals who volunteer regularly:

- 20 volunteer hours = \$500 grants
- 40 volunteer hours = \$1,000 grants

And don't forget about Chevron's matching gift program!

View more details on Chevron's volunteer grant and matching gift programs. or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/chevron-corporation> [click on link].

Starbucks

Not only is Starbucks well known for its conservation and environmental efforts, but it also offers multiple ways for employees to designate donations to nonprofits of their choosing. One such way is through its Partner Match Program for US and Canadian employees. Like Chevron, Starbucks has multiple tiers of volunteer grants:

- 25-49 volunteer hours = \$250
- 50-74 volunteer hours = \$500
- 75-100 volunteer hours = \$750
- 100+ volunteer hours = \$1,000

View more details on Starbucks' volunteer grant and matching gift programs. or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/starbucks-corporation> [click on link].



or

<https://doublethedonation.com/matching-grant-resources/list-volunteer-grant-companies/> [click on link].

Team Volunteer Grants

Best Buy

Best Buy's employees are some of the most active volunteers in the country. In the 2013 fiscal year, 10,000 employees volunteered for over 100,000 hours which resulted in about \$2.5 million dollars being donated to nonprofits through the company's volunteer grant programs.

Groups of Best Buy employees who volunteer together can earn grants for the respective nonprofit.

When groups of two or more **Best Buy Mobile** employees collectively provide volunteer services to a nonprofit organizations, they can earn up to \$500 annually for a nonprofit.

When groups of five or more employees at **all other Best Buy locations** volunteer together, they can earn \$1,000 awards for the nonprofit.

View more details on Best Buy's volunteer grant and matching gift programs. or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/best-buy-co-inc> [click on link].

Verizon

As one of the largest employers in the country, it isn't surprising that the company is one of the largest corporate contributors to nonprofits. Since 2000, Verizon has provided grants to over 54,000 nonprofits. Additionally, Verizon employees have volunteered over 6.8 million hours.

One of the unique aspects of Verizon's corporate giving program is its team fundraising match for employees who collectively participate in an organized fundraising event. The Team Fundraising Program is open to teams of ten or more Verizon employees who participate in cause-related walk, run, or bike events. Verizon will match up to \$1,000 in funds raised per team member and up to \$10,000 per team event.

And all of this is on top of Verizon's regular volunteer grant and matching gift programs!

Learn more about Verizon's employee giving programs. or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/verizon> [click on link].

Donation Requests: The Top Companies

Donation Requests for Nonprofits

Double the Donation's core business is providing employee matching gift services to nonprofits yet we also hear from countless organizations that they're looking for information on requesting donations from companies. Here's a list of the most common donation requests as well as information on each company's donation request process and details on the company's matching gift or volunteer grant programs.

1. Macy's Donation Requests:

Requesting Donations from Macy's --- Macy's offers three main methods in which it donates to nonprofits: (1) My Macy's District Grants; (2) Employee Matching Gifts; and (3) Employee Earnings for Learning.

a. My Macy's District Grants:

Through Macy's District Grants the company supports nonprofit organizations and initiatives that are important to the individual local communities where Macy's operates. Macy's recommends that organizations only request donations if they fall within the following Macy's focus areas:

- Arts and culture
- Education
- The environment
- HIV/AIDS
- Women's issues

It's important to note that Macy's District Grants program is designed to support local 501(c)(3) organizations in markets which Macy's or Bloomingdale's operate. Donation requests are accepted online on a year-round basis but it may take four to eight weeks to hear back from Macy's.

b. Macy's Matching Gift Program: Through Macy's matching gift program the company supports nonprofits which employees personally donate to. Each Macy's employee is able to request up to \$15,000 in matching donations per year.

c. Macy's Earnings for Learning Grant Program: Through Macy's "Earnings for Learnings" program, Macy's provides grants to nonprofits where its employees volunteer on a regular basis. The company offers \$250 grants to educational institutions (K-12 included) where employees volunteer 15 hours in a calendar year.

d. Learn more about **Macy's District Grants donation request process** or <https://www.macysinc.com/community/grant-information/district-grants/default.aspx> [click on link].

2. Best Buy Donation Requests:

a. As one of the leading electronics retailers in the world it should come as no surprise that Best Buy focuses its philanthropic giving on causes that promote technological literacy. In fact Best Buy is dedicated to supporting nonprofit organizations and programs that provide teens with opportunities to develop technology skills.

b. In terms of donation requests Best Buy handles all of the donation requests through local stores. Each Best Buy store has a pool of funds allocated to providing grants to local nonprofits. To request a donation from your local store take the store donation eligibility quiz. Assuming your organization qualifies, you can then complete the application and submit it to your local store for a decision.

c. In addition to each store handling requests for donations from the greater community, Best Buy also offers a team volunteer grant program. When groups of employees volunteer together the team is eligible to request grants for the local organization.

d. Learn more about **Best Buy's donation request process** or <https://corporate.bestbuy.com/community-grants-page/> [click on link].

3. Starbucks Donation Requests:

a. There's a running joke that 99% of individuals in the US are less than 15 minutes away from a Starbucks at any time. Thus given the sheer number of Starbucks stores the company often pops up when nonprofits are looking to request donations. Unfortunately at this time Starbucks is focused on funding communities through grants from The Starbucks Foundation and does not accept requests for products or in-kind donations.

b. The Starbucks Foundation is interested in supporting organizations that equip young people ages 15 to 24 years old in the three following areas:

1. Business Savvy: Having the ability to leverage opportunities with integrity and innovation; to make good decisions and achieve results.

2. Social Conscience: Valuing the impact an individual and enterprise can have on the community.

3. Collaborative Communication: Engaging others in an inclusive manner across teams, functions and cultures; ability to leverage new and creative ways of communication.

c. If your organization falls into one of the above categories then make sure you've marked November 1st – December 15th down on your calendar because this is when Starbucks accepts grant requests.

d. Starbucks' Employee Giving Programs: Starbucks allocates a large percentage of its corporate philanthropy budget to support the nonprofits which employees donate to or volunteer with. Through Starbucks' Partner Match Program the company will match up to \$1,500 in donations annually per

employee and provide up to \$1,000 in grants to organizations where employees volunteer on a regular basis.

e. Learn more about **Starbucks' donation request / grant-making process** or http://customerservice.starbucks.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2286/kw/donations%20request%20form/session/L3RpbWUvMTQwODMzOTcyMi9zaWQvRm5BM2c3Kmw%3D [click on link].

4. Kohl's Donation Requests:

a. Through the Kohl's Cares program Kohl's supports organizations which fall into the following categories: (1) Kids' health and education nationwide; (2) Environmental initiatives nationwide; and (3) Women's health in Wisconsin, specifically the fight against breast cancer.

b. The overall mission of Kohl's charity programs is to ensure a future where kids are healthy, resources are plentiful, and disease that affects women and their families is eradicated.

c. For nonprofits looking for donations from Kohl's the primary program is Kohl's Associates in Action program. Through Associates in Action Kohl's provides \$500 grants to nonprofits where its employees volunteer as a team. Specifically a minimum of five Kohl's Associates from one Kohl's location must volunteer for a minimum of three consecutive hours in one day. Requests should be initiated at least six weeks in advance.

d. Learn more about **Kohl's employee volunteer grant program** or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/kohls-corporation> [click on link].

5. Google Donation Requests:

a. While Google is known as being one of the most charitable companies in California it doesn't have what most nonprofits would consider to be a traditional donation request process. Instead the company offers three different grant programs: (a) Google Grants; (b) Google's employee matching gift program; and (c) Google's volunteer grant program.

b. Google Grants: Google Ad Grants is the nonprofit edition of AdWords, Google's online advertising tool. Google Ad Grants empowers nonprofit organizations, through \$10,000 per month in in-kind AdWords™ advertising, to promote their missions and initiatives on Google.com. If you aren't familiar with AdWords it's the advertising platform which business typically use to promote goods and services.

c. Through the Google Grants program your nonprofit can request a donation of up to \$10,000 dollars in free monthly advertising. Think of how impactful this money can be when it comes to advertising fundraising or volunteer events!

d. Google's Employee Matching Gift Program: Google offers a generous matching gift program where the company matches donations from employees to a wide range of organizations. This is through either the company's personal matching gift program or through the matching of fundraising efforts for events such as walk, marathons, bike rides, etc.

e. Google's Employee Volunteer Grant Program: In addition to supporting the organizations which employees donate cash to, Google also provides grants of \$10 per every hour an employee volunteers. So if you have any Googlers who volunteer with your organization make sure they're submitting their volunteer grant requests!

f. Learn more about the [Google Grants donation request process](#) or <http://www.google.com/grants/> [click on link].

6. Redbox Donation Requests:

a. Redbox, which is actually a brand of the parent company Outerbox, has a donation program where the company provides vouchers (packages of 25 promo codes) for free Redbox rentals. Nonprofits should submit donation requests at least six weeks prior to when the in-kind donation is needed as requests are reviewed once per month.

b. Additionally Outerbox (Redbox & Coinstar) offers a matching gift and volunteer grant program where Outerbox matches donations from employees up to \$5,000 annually and provides grants of \$15 per volunteer hour.

c. Learn more about [Redbox's donation request process](#) or <http://outerwall.livestories.com/inkind/request> [click on link].

7. CVS Caremark Donation Requests:

a. Requesting Donations from CVS Caremark CVS Caremark offers a number of philanthropic programs. For nonprofits in cities where CVS operates the company has a grant program where qualifying community-based organizations can apply for a CVS/pharmacy gift card of up to \$100 that can be used for items like school supplies, personal care items, water and sunscreen. The application process can be completed online.

b. Additionally through the CVS Caremark Charitable Trust, CVS supports nonprofits where its employee volunteer with additional grants ranging from \$500-\$3,000. The grant amounts are based on individual employees volunteering between 15 and 100 hours in a year or teams of employee volunteers who get together for either a charitable event (ex. run, walk, or ride), or ongoing volunteerism throughout the year.

c. Learn more about [CVS's donation request process](#) or <http://www.cvshealth.com/social-responsibility/cvs-health-community-grants> [click on link].

8. Walmart / Sam's Club Donation Requests:

a. As the largest company in the world it should come as no surprise that Walmart (including Sam's Club which is a subsidiary) also tops the list of companies which gives the most cash to charity. In fact when you combine cash and in-kind donations Walmart donates around \$1 billion dollars annually to nonprofits. There's a separate donation request process for Sam's Club and Walmart.

b. Walmart and Sam's Club Donation Requests: Walmart accepts online applications for community grants ranging from \$250-\$2,500. Community grant applications are accepted through an online application process and typically reviewed at the local store level within 90 days of being

submitted. While Walmart doesn't restrict community grants to any specific organizations those that align with the Walmart Foundation's focus areas of giving are given primary consideration. Focus areas include: (a) Hunger relief and healthy eating; (b) Sustainability; (c) Women's economic empowerment; and (d) Career opportunities.

c. Volunteerism Always Pays (VAP) Program for Both Walmart and Sam's Club Employees: Through Walmart's Volunteerism Always Pays (VAP) program, the company offers grants for Walmart and Sam's Club employees who volunteer with nonprofit organizations. These are either \$250 grants to a local nonprofit when an employee volunteers or grants ranging from \$500-\$5,000 when groups of employees volunteer or participate in fundraising walks / runs together.

d. Learn more about [Walmart's donation request process](http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/local-giving) or [http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/local-giving](http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/sams-club-giving-program) and [Sam's Club's donation request process](http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/sams-club-giving-program), or <http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/sams-club-giving-program> [click on link].r

9. Coke Donation Requests:

a. Coke Donations --- Coca-Cola is consistently ranked as having the world's #1 most recognized brand. As part of its commitment to ensuring the communities where the company operates are healthy and sustainable its investment priorities focus on the following global pillars: (a) Water stewardship; (b) Active healthy living; (c) Community recycling; and (d) Education.

b. Coke's donation requests can be divided into the following three categories:

1. Grants or Contributions are donations for programs, operating support or community projects.

2. Community Sponsorships are civic and community activities that are underwritten to raise money for charitable causes. Events may include benefit dinners, galas, breakfasts, luncheons and other activities.

3. Product Donations

c. Nonprofits looking for Grants or Contributions as well as Community Sponsorships should [initiate the grant request process online here](http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/quiz.display_question?x_gm_id=3300&x_quiz_id=5942&x_order_by=1) or http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/quiz.display_question?x_gm_id=3300&x_quiz_id=5942&x_order_by=1. If you're looking for product donations then requests should be submitted through [Ask Coca-Cola](http://www.coca-colacompany.com/contact-us/) or <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/contact-us/>. [click on links].

d. Coke's Matching Gift Program: Coca-Cola offers a matching gift program for employees where the company triples donations to educational organizations, arts & cultural organizations and environmental groups. If you have donors who work for Coke then make sure they're submitting these grant requests as the tripling of employee donations can go a long way.

e. Learn more about [Coke's donation request process](http://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/community-requests-guidelines-application) or <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/community-requests-guidelines-application> [click on link]

10. Apple Donation Requests:

a. What's the hottest brand of electronics across the world? If you said Apple you're 100% right. Apple products may be the most in-demand items being requested for fundraising events but unfortunately Apple doesn't have a formal donation request process.

b. That being said Apple did institute an extremely generous employee matching gift program where the company matches donations up to \$10,000 per employee per year to nearly all 501(c)(3) organizations. So if you have any Apple employees donating to your cause make sure you're providing them with the information they need to submit a matching gift.

c. Learn more about **Apple's matching gift program** or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/apple-inc>. [click on link]

11. Nike Donation Requests:

a. Each year, Nike donates product to nonprofit organizations and NGOs which are focused on creating social change through sport and supporting disaster relief efforts across the world. It's important to note that Nike has a formal policy to not provide product donations to individual sports teams.

b. If you're a nonprofit looking to request a product donation from Nike then you'll want to fill out the **company's online donation request form** or http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/quiz.display_question?x_gm_id=2883&x_quiz_id=1873&x_order_by=1. [click on link].

c. In addition to having a formal process for nonprofits to request product donations from Nike the company also offers an employee matching gift program. Nike matches up to \$2,500 annually for each full-time employee and \$1,000 annually for part-time employees.

d. Learn more about **Nike's donation request process** or <http://about.nike.com/pages/grants-and-resources> [click on link].

12. Home Depot:

a. Home Depot offers three different programs where the company supports nonprofits looking for donations from either the corporate office, local stores, or individual employees: (a) Community ; (b) Impact Grants; (c) Framing Hope Product Donation Program; and (d) Employee Matching Gift Program.

b. Community Impact Grants: Through Home Depot's Community Impact Grants, Home Depot provides grants of in the form of The Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services. Community Impact Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community.

c. Home Depot's Community Impact Grants are designed to ensure that every veteran has a safe place to call home. Thus priority for Home Depot's Community Impact Grants is given to organizations or volunteer projects that fit the following criteria:

1. Projects that serve veterans and their families, whether that's repairing homes or improving facilities

2. Projects that involve veterans volunteering to help other veterans in the communities where they live

d. Framing Hope Product Donation Program: Home Depot's handles product donation requests through its national Framing Hope Donation Program rather than at the individual store level. Through the Framing Hope program The Home Depot contributes building materials to nonprofit organizations involved in community rebuilding efforts. It's Home Depot's national product donation program and is open to nonprofits located in communities with local Home Depot stores. While Home Depot makes no guarantees on specific item availability product donations may include building supplies and materials, plumbing products and assorted household and cleaning items. The available donation quantity will vary from store to store. If you're a nonprofit that's heavily involved in construction projects for your local community then this is the program for you.

e. Home Depot's Employee Matching Donation Program: The Home Depot Foundation offers a matching donation program for employees. Employees who donate to a nonprofit organization of their choosing can request their donation be matched by the Home Depot Foundation. The Home Depot Foundation will match donations of between \$25 and \$1,000 from each full-time or part-time employee to a U.S. 501c3 organization or Revenue Canada organization. While there's a \$1,000 limit per employee per nonprofit, each employee can request up to a total of \$3,000 per year as long as matches go to multiple nonprofits.

f. Learn more about [Home Depot's Community Impact Grants, Framing Hope donation requests](#) or <http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-gran>, or read about [Home Depot's matching gift program](#) or <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gifts/the-home-depot>. [click on link]

7 Tips on Asking for Donations

It's Intimidating --- we get it!

Fundraising by Marc Koenig

When it comes to asking for donations, most of us head for the hills.

We get it. It's intimidating to ask other people to part with their hard earned cash. They might ask, "Why?" And we might not have a great answer.

At its heart, fundraising is helping others connect an existing passion directly to your cause. We don't convince donors. We help them realize that they already care.

Once donors believe that your cause truly matters, giving almost becomes an afterthought. Of course they'll give! The question simply becomes how much to ask for.

But until then, you won't have to sweat your fundraising ask if you follow these seven tips:

7 Tips on Asking for Donations

asking-for-donations-read-minds

1. Research Your Donors to Read Their Minds

The words you want them to say: "Wow, it's like he read my mind!"

How do you get to that point? You research your donor as an individual, but you also have a broad depth of general research on the kinds of people who donate to your nonprofit as a whole group.

You need to be able to answer these questions if you want to get into a donor's heart:

- What kinds of words do they use? What do they talk about when they're feeling passionate?

- What do they care about? What other causes are they a part of?

- Do they have a history of giving?

- What are their common objections, fears and concerns about giving?

Thanks to the web, we have more access to information about our donors than ever, as well as the ability to survey our donors and examine how they talk about our cause.

Note, however, that if you survey your donors or ask questions of a potential donor, you have to learn to read the answer behind the answer.

We have to address the fears and risks every donor feels, even if the donor herself can't identify them out loud. And then, we get to connect their existing passions and desires to your NPO, using the same language they use.

In other words, understand your donor base so well it's like you've read their minds.

Don't worry, this is easier than it sounds if you follow the next six tips...

asking-for-donations-practice

2. Practice, Practice, PRACTICE – And Then Practice Some More

The best way to dominate your donor visits, get more funds and create real, lasting connections with your nonprofit ... is to PRACTICE every aspect of your ask.

In other words, by the time you are actually sitting in front of a prospect, you should have rehearsed the many paths the conversation could take MANY times before. Understanding your talking points, how you'll graciously address common objections and the exact way you'll frame your ask allows you to stop thinking about these things and just focus on talking with the donor.

Practice your ask. Can't emphasize it enough.

Run through how you'll call them on the phone. Plan on how to structure your meeting. Decide how long you'll small talk at the beginning, and how to transition smoothly into the ask itself. Leave no stone unturned!

The key to this:

- Practice out loud.

- Then, practice in front of a mirror.
- Then, record yourself on video practicing.

It's painful, but you'll learn things about your delivery and be far more confident and free when it comes to actually making the ask. Don't skip this step.

asking-for-donations-surprise

3. Never, Ever Surprise Your Prospect

If your potential donor is ever surprised you're asking them for money, something is deeply amiss.

Make it clear in your first call or contact that you're interested in talking to them about your cause and how they might be able to get involved. Make it clear that, while you're interested in them as a person, there's a deeper purpose for your visit. That way, they'll be able to prepare their response, objections and questions.

asking-for-donations-boring

4. Stop Being Boring (It Isn't Worth It)

Boring feels safe. No presenter who just reads bullet points off a PowerPoint instead does it because they want their audience to eagerly contemplate running from the room.

Nope, they do it because it feels safe. Reading a PowerPoint feels like an easy way to tell your audience all the info they want and be sure not to forget anything important. But instead, you fail to keep your audience engaged.

The actual way to be safe is what we discussed above: PRACTICE. Then you won't need slides, and you can focus instead on not being boring.

Don't be scared of sounding weird or too forward by asking things like, "What do you think is the biggest challenge we face in this area?" Provoke interesting reactions that are memorable, not boring, formulaic encounters.

Of course, your real goal is to make your donor both catch your enthusiasm and feel understood. But to get there, you need let yourself be not-boring enough that they can have fun talking to you.

asking-for-donations-advice

5. Ask for Advice – You’ll Usually End Up with Money

The old fundraising maxim applies here:

“Ask for money, you’ll get advice. Ask for advice, you’ll get money.”

What most people truly want is to be heard. Asking for advice means that they will freely tell you the secret thing they are most passionate about, as well as their biggest fears about giving.

And most importantly, the donor will feel valued and important. Which they are! They’re the ones whose enthusiasm makes changes happen in the world. So ask them for their input and impressions.

For more tips on the advice visit, check out Gail Perry’s great article on how advice visits can open any door in town.

asking-for-donations-silence

6. Your Secret Weapon is Pointed Silence

Our culture HATES silence. We want to fill it. This is one reason why extroverted salespeople and fundraisers can do worse than introverts.

But often times, the most important, meaningful thing – the thing your prospect REALLY wants to tell you – won’t be said if you quickly fill the silence.

Bad Fundraiser: “What’s the most important thing about the environment to you?”

Donor: “Well, I think environmental damage is a pretty big problem. We’re hurting the environment forever and we don’t even realize it!”

Bad Fundraiser: “Yeah, you’re so right! That’s why our Program X is so important! Let me tell you... [Donor hears: “blah blah blah”]

NOOOOOOOO—don’t do this! Your funding for next year will die a thousand painful deaths.

Here’s how that conversation could have gone:

Superman Fundraiser: “What’s the most important thing about the environment to you?”

Donor: “Well, I think environmental damage is a pretty big problem. We’re hurting the environment forever and we don’t even realize it!”

Superman Fundraiser: “How interesting!” [shuts up and looks genuinely interested]

Donor: [feels like he should talk because of the silence] “... yeah! It’s really crazy. In fact, the other day I was thinking about when I was a kid and would go out and look at the stars in the country and see meteors and all kinds of awesome stuff. But now that the city is so big, and there’s so much light pollution and smog, when I go out with MY kids to our cabin we’re lucky to see anything. It’s so sad.”

WOW. And you were about to start making a generic appeal about one of your programs, totally at random! Now you have so much material to work with, and know exactly the RIGHT program to talk about.

Your donor has practically sold themselves, all because you shut up! You’re fundraising for this guy’s kids’ happiness now, not your program!

Too many advice-givers say “just listen better!” but fail to tell you that means “shut up and allow silence, even if it feels awkward at first.” Great journalists love this technique – it gets them the best interviews and quotes.

By the way, this works in discussions of all kinds – whether you’re negotiating a contract, your salary, trying to understand your significant other or asking for a donation. Use strategic silence next time you talk with anyone. Its effects feel almost magical.

asking-for-donations-specific

7. Ask for a Specific Amount (Don’t Make Your Donor Do Any Work)

Finally, always ask for a specific amount to contribute to the cause.

Why is this important? Because it takes the burden off of the donor to figure out what size of a donation is necessary. They don’t know anything about your campaign goals. You do. So help them out. Don’t make your donor do the work.

For some great, non-confrontational phrases to ask for a specific donation amount, I recommend checking out Marc Pitman’s excellent post on his favorite major donor fundraising phrases. See <http://fundraisingcoach.com/> and <http://fundraisingcoach.com/2012/05/08/2-phrases-to-use-when-asking-for-money/>.

Here are the two phrases that are helping people the most:

1. "Would you consider a gift of \$X?"

Asking is challenging enough. A question like "would you consider a gift of _____?" accomplishes two things. First, it takes the pressure off the asker. People visibly relax when they hear that this is a good fundraising phrase. This feels like something they can naturally say.

Second, this phrase encourages askers to use a specific dollar amount. "Will you support our cause?" is a vapid cop-out for truly asking for money. One person's idea of "support" may be \$250 when you'd rated her as a \$25,000 prospect. Do the donor prospect the courtesy of plainly telling them what number you're thinking about.

A non-confrontational question like "Would you consider a gift of \$25,000?" accomplishes just that.

2. "Honestly, I have NO idea how much to ask you for, but is a gift of \$_____ something you'd be able to consider?"

Honesty is quite disarming. And despite our best research, peer reviews, and calculated guessing, there are times we really don't know how much to ask someone for. So let them know! This is especially powerful for volunteers who've been coached by excellent counsel to ask at a higher level than they feel comfortable asking at.

FINAL THOUGHT

We get it. Asking for money is intimidating.

But it's also an immense privilege. You're inviting other people to take action on a cause that they genuinely care about.

You're selling significance. And at the end of the day, most people don't mind feeling like they're making an outsized impact on the world.

You've just got to **ASK** them!