



## Tips for Asking Individuals for Donations or Sponsorships

Directly asking people for donations, is not only the most efficient method of fundraising, it is also one of the most effective for raising money in larger amounts. This is an opportunity to create direct and personal connections to individuals in your community who may or may not be involved with 4-H but who have an interest in the impacts you create through your projects and activities. There are several ways individuals can be asked directly. Use this [Sample Solicitation Letter for an Individual](#) as a template for your own letter.

- **Drafting and sending appeal letters**

A gentle way to reach out to your mailing list of prospective donors is with an appeal letter, reminding them of what your group does, highlighting current goals and projects, and requesting donations. You can either prepare a standard letter in the name of your group, or divide up your mailing list and have volunteers send out personal letters based on a sample you provide. **Your letter should be one page (best) or two pages (at most).** Always include a self-addressed return envelope and a reply card (or preprinted sheet of paper) allowing donors to indicate how much they're giving and by what means (check, cash, donation of goods or services) with your letter, follow this [link for a Sample Pledge Form](#).

This is a personal letter – use personal pronouns and avoid using acronyms, organizational jargon or overly flowery language. The letter should address the reader as “you,” and be written in the honest voice of the “I” who will sign it—you or perhaps your youth project leader.

The most important elements to include in your letter are:

- **A personal story or hook.**  
For example, recount a story about an individual that will benefit from your project, possibly including a quote. For example, for a project that is providing books to low income children, you might include a quote from a child who likes to read and would like to have access to more books.
- **A description of your project or event and what you expect the impact to be on your community when this project is completed**  
This is your reason for writing a letter. For example, if you are creating a community garden to teach children how to grow vegetables and to encourage healthy eating, you can explain why this is an issue (lack of healthy food alternatives) in your community and ways in which your garden will help to address that issue (helping people learn how to plant and tend gardens to provide healthy food choices). This makes for a good story and provides a clear reason for your prospective donor to support your project.

- **Be clear about the costs associated with the project, and how donations of specific amounts can make a difference. Be sure to include:**
  - A reminder of your group's overall mission and how your current appeal fits into it. Tie your appeal to your group's purpose and goals.
  - A request for a donation (as well as for volunteer help, if appropriate).
  - A clear message regarding how their support will help to make your project or event happen.