

Optimizing Direct-Mail Fundraising Appeals



Letters, Envelopes, Follow-Up, and Digital Integration

A collection of links to resources that can help organizations large and small raise more money from their appeal letters.

Letters Work	1
General Information.....	1
Creating an Effective Appeal Letter.....	1
Envelopes.....	2
Follow-Up Letters.....	2
Thank-You Letters.....	2
Analysis.....	2
Integrating with Online Fundraising.....	2

Letters Work

[Statistics and research](#) support the idea that appeal letters sent via the postal service can still be an effective fundraising tool for nonprofits, even in this age of the internet. Many land trusts send one or more mailings each year, generating gifts from previous and new donors. The links included in this guide, sorted by category, can help organizations raise more money through the mail.

This collection of resources represents a wide range of best practices collected from the authors' professional experiences working in development and fundraising for the nonprofit sector and conservation community. Many of the tips suggested are also rooted in research-based or data-based practices. Some of the advice may even contradict from resource to resource a bit—these resources reflect a wide range of thinking on how to approach this work. Reading a wide range of perspectives from a variety of experts should help an organization decide on which approach may work best for them. Some of the tips and advice included here will be included across many of these resources. It is safe to consider those oft-mentioned best practices as tried and true options.

General Information

These links offer information about the basic components and effectiveness of direct-mail campaigns.

[Fundraising with Direct Mail: What Every Small Non-profit Needs to Know](#) (Network for Good)

[What Every Nonprofit Ought to Know About Direct-Mail Fundraising](#) (The Fundraising Authority)

[Year-End Giving Prep: 21 FAQs Answered by Fundraising Experts](#) (npEngage)

[Fifteen Odd Things That Make Direct-Mail Fundraising Appeals Successful](#) (Boomerang)

[Take the Time to Write Well](#) (Development for Conservation)

Creating an Effective Appeal Letter

These links provide guidance for writing and sending letters that generate donations. Many organizations develop two letters: one for previous donors (renewals), and one for people who have never given (acquisitions).

Acquisitions

[Using Fundraising Letters for Donor Acquisition](#) (Fundraiser Help)

Renewals

[Writing Renewal Letters](#) (Development for Conservation)

[Five Ways to Enhance Your Membership Renewal Letter](#) (Fundly)

Applicable to Both

[Creative Ideas for Your Appeal Letters](#) (Fundraiser Help)

[Write a Better Fundraising Letter](#) (Development for Conservation)

[Writing Appeal and Recruitment Letters](#) (Development for Conservation)

[Eight Steps to Writing Successful Fundraising Letters](#) (npENGAGE)

[Ten Steps to Create an Appeal Letter That Brings in the Money](#) (Fired-Up Fundraising/Gail Perry Group)

[Ten Key Fundraising Best Practices for Direct Mail](#) (Non-Profit PRO)

[Four Tips for Designing Fundraising Mail That Works](#) (The Fundraising Authority)

[Five Steps for Writing Profitable Fundraising Letters](#) (Fundwriter.ai)

[How to Write Fundraising Letters That Motivate](#) (Fundraiser Help)

Examples

[Fundraising Appeal Template](#) (Network for Good)

[Year-End Appeal Letter](#) (Eastern Sierra Land Trust)

[6 Examples of Effective Fundraising Letters](#) (The Balance)

[Fundraising Letter Sample Template](#) (Fundraiser Help)

Envelopes

Many potential donors throw away fundraising letters without even opening the envelope. These links offer tips to increase the open rate; a higher open rate usually leads to more donations.

[Fundraising Letter Envelopes: How to Make Them Irresistible](#) (Fundraiser Help)

[6 Tips to Get Donors to Rip Open Your Next Direct-Mail Appeal](#) (Heroic Fundraising)

Follow-Up Letters

These links describe strategies for sending additional letters, which can generate donations from people who did not respond to the initial appeal.

[Following Up on Your Annual Appeal](#) (Ann Green)

[How to Follow Up on Your Direct-Mail Appeal Letter](#) (Development Consulting Solutions)

Thank-You Letters

Thanking donors increases the likelihood that they will donate in the future. Thank you letters are critical in building a supportive multiyear relationship between donor and organization. These links offer tips on writing effective thank-you letters.

[How to Craft a Killer Thank-You Letter](#) (Fired-Up Fundraising/Gail Perry Group)

[Steal This Thank-You Letter!](#) (The Fundraising Authority)

[Writing Thank-You Letters](#) (Development for Conservation)

[Thank-You Letters Donors Will Love](#) (The Balance)

Analysis

The post linked below offers a rather dynamic crash course in how to analyze the results of a fundraising campaign in order to make future appeals more successful and track improvements over time.

[Direct-Mail Metrics: How to Measure ROI](#) (Fundraising Report Card)

Integrating with Online Fundraising

These links offer tips on integrating a direct-mail campaign with online fundraising tools such as email and social media. Multi-channel campaigns have the potential to reach a wider range of potential donors.

[How to Integrate Your Direct-Mail Appeals with Your Online Presence](#) (Classy)

[What's Really Driving the Increase in Online Giving?](#) (npENGAGE)



[Nate Lotze](#) compiled this guide in 2018. It was reviewed, revised, and updated by Robert Campbell in 2022.

WeConservePA offers this guide thanks to support from the William Penn Foundation and the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

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v. 2022.10.04