

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.

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Letters Work

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.

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)

[Questions I'm Most Often Asked About Direct-Mail Fundraising](#) (GuideStar)

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

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

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

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)

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

Applicable to Both

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

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

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

[10 Steps to Create an Appeal Letter That Brings in the Money](#) (Fired-Up Fundraising)

[10 Key Fundraising Best Practices for Direct Mail](#) (NonProfit PRO)

[11 Cardinal Rules of Direct-Mail Copywriting](#) (Mal Warwick)

Examples

[Analysis of a Donor Appeal Letter](#) (Museum Hack)

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

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

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

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)

[The Best Opening Line for a Fundraising Envelope](#) (Haines Direct)

[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.

[Don't Just Sit There! Follow Up!](#) (Smart Annual Giving)

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

[How Many Renewal Letters Should We Send?](#) (Development for Conservation)

[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. These links offer tips on writing effective thank-you letters.

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

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

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

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

Analysis

These links explain how to analyze the results of a fundraising campaign in order to make future appeals more successful and track improvements over time.

[Analyzing Renewal Response Rates](#) (Smart Annual Giving)

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

[Evaluating Your Annual Appeal](#) (Smart Annual Giving)

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)

[Integrated Fundraising: Digital Fundraising and Direct Mail](#) (Lawrence Direct Marketing)

[Top 6 Ways to Boost Your Direct-Mail Campaigns Through Digital Fundraising](#) (MobileCause)

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

Resources at ConservationTools.org

The most recent version of this guide can be found online at <https://conservationtools.org/guides/161>.

[Nate Lotze](#) compiled this guide.

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