

Making “the Ask:” Reaching Potential Donors in Your Community

The typical mission of a library Foundation is to raise significant money for the library. This money is often used to build an endowment, support a capital campaign for a building, or perhaps to fund special programs or services for the library. While a Foundation's fundraising may be ongoing, there will no doubt be times when the Foundation engages in an organized campaign with a monetary goal in mind.

Before the campaign can begin, there will be much background work to be done. A case statement must be developed outlining the reason for the campaign and what will result from its success. Based on the need, a goal for fundraising must be set, and finally, potential donors will have to be identified.

Potential donors could be those who have shown generosity previously - either because they've given to the Foundation in the past or because they have donated to similar community services in the past. They might be persons who are personally known to Board members and have the ability to donate a significant gift. They may be library volunteers or regular patrons who, again, have the means to make a large gift.

Once you've identified prospects, you