

# The Famous Foolproof Fundraising Formula



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**Morton Blackwell's  
Famous Foolproof Fundraising Formula**



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**Morton Blackwell** is the founder and president of the Leadership Institute (LI), which has trained more than 170,000 students for success in the public policy process. He founded the Leadership Institute in 1979 with the first LI training, the Youth Leadership School. Since then more than 20,000 students have taken LI's flagship training.



*Leadership Institute founder and president Morton C. Blackwell with President Ronald Reagan*

receives more than 11 million page views annually, and is now America's number one site for campus news.

In youth politics, Mr. Blackwell was College Republican state chairman and Young Republican state chairman in Louisiana. He served on the Young Republican National Committee for more than a dozen years, rising to the position of Young Republican National Federation national vice chairman at large.

Morton Blackwell is one of the eight original Steering Committee members of National Youth for Goldwater in 1963. He was the youngest elected Goldwater Delegate to the 1964 Republican National Convention in San Francisco.

Off and on for five and a half years, 1965-1970, he worked as executive director of the College Republican National Committee under four consecutive College Republican national chairmen.

In 1980, he organized and oversaw the national youth effort for Ronald Reagan. Mr. Blackwell served three years in the Reagan Administration as Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison.

Using his experience from personally recruiting on 312 campuses, Morton created the LI field program in 1997. This program provides young activists the skills required to follow in Morton's footsteps. LI field staff travel campus to campus to identify and organize students to create their own independent conservative campus groups and publications.

This program has already identified tens of thousands of young conservative students, resulting in the creation of hundreds of new campus groups in all 50 states.

In 2009, Morton launched CampusReform.org, the Leadership Institute's campus news website focused on exposing liberal bias and abuse in American higher education. LI's CampusReform

# Introduction

Of the many ways students raise funds for campus public policy activities and organizations, only the following method, personal solicitation, has proved to be universally successful. That's why it's known as foolproof. And why it is famous.

I developed, practiced, and refined this technique in the early 1960s while a student at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

If properly asked, many people will gladly give contributions to support conservative student activities. Such people can be found in every community and in every state, including yours.

Having taught the formula to students since 1962, I am confident of its success. I maintain an open-door policy with my students. Each student is invited to contact me if the formula doesn't work. No one using it has ever reported anything but success.

## The First Stage - Your Budget

The first step in the Famous Foolproof Fundraising Formula is to make a complete annual budget for your program or organization. This system works for funding single projects, but you'll raise a lot more money if you don't have to repeat the process with the same prospective donors for each project.

The budget should be reasonably detailed and easy to understand.

Briefly and simply outline your budget so a person not affiliated with your organization can understand each entry. For example, don't put down an item as "LI SCHOOL." Instead, write "Leadership Institute's Youth Leadership School training" or "Leadership Institute's Student Publications School registration."

The budget should be organized by category with a final total at the bottom. The budget should not be more than one typed page.

Brainstorm with others to list all the appropriate expenditures for the coming year.

Below are sample budgets for an independent newspaper, a campus political club, and a speakers program. Your specific budget requirements will vary, but these provide a good base from which to start.

### ***Independent Student Newspaper: Annual Budget***

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Grants	\$1,600.00
Contributions	2,920.00
Advertising	1,500.00
Direct Mail	2,000.00
Subscriptions	370.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,390.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Leadership Institute's Student Publication Training	\$350.00
Printing	3,760.00
Layout	550.00
Postage	150.00
Office Supplies	80.00
Travel	270.00
Photocopying	275.00
Photography	205.00
Direct Mail	1,000.00
Rent/Utilities	1,750.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,390.00</b>



### ***Campus Club: Annual Budget***

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Student Auction	\$1,400.00
T-shirt Sales	430.00
Dues at \$10.00 per member	270.00
Contributions	6,600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,700.00</b>

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
State Convention Delegation Expenses	\$3,000.00
Leadership Institute's Youth Leadership School training	350.00
Paper/Photo Copying	780.00
Postage	215.00
Direct Mail	1,250.00
Facility/Audio Rental	595.00
Charter Fee	300.00
Refreshments	1,080.00
Transportation	220.00
Office Supplies	440.00
T-shirts/Buttons	470.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,700.00</b>

### ***Independent Club Speakers Program: Annual Budget***

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Allocation from Student Government Funds	\$11,000.00
Contributions at Events	810.00
Personal Solicitation	8,300.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,110.00</b>

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Speakers' Honoraria	\$14,700.00
Newspaper	250.00
Posters	650.00
Fliers	280.00
Postage	540.00
Student Transportation	150.00
Speakers' Lodging	860.00
Speakers' Travel Expenses	2,190.00
Audio Equipment Rentals	250.00
Hall Rentals	240.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,110.00</b>

## The Second Stage - Identifying the Most Likely Donors

Next, make a list of people, both in and out of the local community, whom you believe are most likely to make substantial contributions to your cause.

Convene a few students who will be working closely with you. Have another brainstorming session. Start by listing the best fundraising prospects already known to students in your group. Then think of other sources of potential donors who may be willing to contribute to conservative, campus-related activities.



*Start by listing the best fundraising prospects already known to students in your group.*

Some wealthy conservatives or libertarians may already be members of your college or university board of trustees or board of supervisors. Others may already be well known as donors to the university or to the alumni association.

Look around. Perhaps the recently built Picklesimer Hall is named for the Picklesimer family, generous donors to your university. Are members of this family strongly conservative or libertarian? If so, make them a priority for your fundraising visits.

Other potential donors would be those who have contributed to conservative candidates for public office.



*Charles Koch Arena at Wichita State University is a good example of a university building named after a conservative donor.*

# WARNING

It is contrary to federal law to use the names and addresses of donors to federal candidates or federal political action committees for any commercial purpose if those names and addresses are obtained from the Federal Election Commission.

Note: It is contrary to federal law to use the names and addresses of donors to federal candidates or federal political action committees for any commercial purpose if those names and addresses are obtained from the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

“Commercial” includes fundraising! You may not legally use FEC lists for fundraising purposes. You’d break federal law and be subject to fines and criminal penalties if you did.

However, at the state level, the required funding reports for candidates, political action committees, and political party organizations are normally not under any such prohibition in most states. Check the law in your state.

Find out which office in your state capital receives the reports filed by candidates, political action committees, and political parties. (Often it’s the Secretary of State’s office or the State Election Board.) Then ascertain if it is legitimate in your state to use information from this source for fundraising purposes.

If it’s legal in your state, you may go to the appropriate state agency and copy the names and addresses of each donor who has given substantial amounts of money to conservative candidates, political action committees, and party committees.

Even in the case of federal elections, the candidates and the campaign organizations have their own copies of lists they previously submitted to the Federal Election Commission in their periodic reporting records.

A friendly former candidate, winner or not, may legally allow you to use his or her list and to select from it the names and addresses of likely donors.

Another ready source of potential donors is the conservative and libertarian leadership in your local community. Ask them who likely donors are and how they can be contacted.

Conservative professors at your school may suggest some local business contacts, whom you may add to your prospective donor base.

Even if you don’t have many of the above sources, you can find enough good prospective donors to launch this

## ***Helpful tip:***

Another ready source of potential donors are the conservative and libertarian leaders in your local community.



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program. With just a handful of libertarian and conservative students at your brainstorming session, you should be able to come up with many good donor prospects.

Do not spend more than a day or so creating your initial list of prospects. You should pick out the top half-dozen or so, those you think most likely to give substantial contributions to your organization.

Next, designate teams of two, preferably a guy and a gal, to make an appointment with each person on the list.

## **The Third Stage - Meeting With Potential Donors**

Many of your potential donors will have secretaries. A secretary can be a strong ally if treated with respect. The secretary of a potential donor will probably ask, “Well, what is it you want to come talk about?”

You should be reasonably frank with them.

Respond with something to the effect of: “We are very concerned about outrageous left-wing activity on our campus. We’d like to talk with you about the problems we are currently having with liberals at our school. We would like to show you some of the things we are trying to do to correct this imbalance. And we would very much appreciate having your thoughts on the matter.”

The team of two should arrive slightly ahead of time for the appointment. Dress better than average for the students on your campus. This will vary from area to area and from campus to campus.

At New College in Sarasota, Florida, a little better than average means that you wear shoes. On a few other campuses, a little better than average would mean that you would wear a suit and tie.

### ***Helpful tip:***

Arrive slightly ahead of time for the appointment. Dress better than average for the students on your campus.



*Donors respond best to intelligent students who have a pleasant demeanor and a solid plan of action.*

However, don't go overdressed to meet a potential donor. A student who solicits funds in a three-piece, heavy wool suit with a big gold-link watch chain looped across his vest may not seem to be a credible student leader.

Talented people are highly successful in personal solicitation. You should not send out utter klutzes who have not brushed their teeth in the past five years. Donors respond best to intelligent students who have a pleasant demeanor and a solid plan of action.

When you arrive, introduce yourselves. Take some time to discuss with potential donors where you're coming from philosophically. Describe the problems you are fighting on campus. Ask them about their philosophy. Most people like to talk about their ideas. And, this will alert you to issues which motivate them to act.

If the student government has recently paid \$5,000 or \$10,000 apiece to bring speakers, such as, say, communist activist Angela Davis or an environmental wacko to your campus, express your outrage about this.

If your school newspaper has written some particularly outrageous left-wing articles, cite them or, better still, take them along with you and show him or her at this time. Or mention any unfair, leftist professors or college administrators who persecute students who stand up for free enterprise or traditional values.

You'll be surprised how many business people and

**THE ITHACAN**  
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**Ithacans occupy Wall Street**

**BY PATRICK FEENEY**  
STAFF WRITER

Ithacans are moving beyond the local level to join the national Occupy Wall Street protest. Last weekend, more than two dozen students, professors and residents from the Ithaca area joined the burgeoning movement in New York City. Across the country, citizens who are upset with the current state of the government are coming together in major cities to protest "the greed and corruption of the 1 percent."

The protest has been gaining ground in cities such as Austin, Texas, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Boston and even in Ithaca. Last week, more than 250 locals protested on the Commons.

New York City protesters on Saturday held signs and marched through the streets shouting "People's Needs, Not Corporate Greed" and "We are the 99 percent."

As the protest entered its fourth week, more than 25,000 supporters have flocked to Zuccotti Park and other areas of the financial district in New York City.

The movement has been strengthened through social networks such as Twitter and Facebook.

Kelly Dietz, assistant professor of politics at the college, lent her support at the protest Saturday.

"In some ways the protests are similar to the early tea party actions a couple of years ago," Dietz said. "Both reflect deep frustrations about current circumstances and about not being heard and a lack of trust in political parties and

See **OCCUPY**, page 4

*If your school newspaper has written some particularly outrageous left-wing articles, cite them or, better still, take them along with you and show them at this time.*

conservative or libertarian donors are knowledgeable about what's happening on your campus.

Then take out your one-page budget. Hand it to him or her. Let him or her examine it carefully.

***Helpful tip:***

Be prepared to defend the various budget items, showing why each is a responsible use of money.

Prospects are usually people of substantial means. They quickly understand a clearly written budget. They'll be able to judge whether or not it's realistic. Be sure not to include items for all-expenses-paid trips to the Bahamas for sun and fun. Present a realistic and sensible budget like the examples presented in the budget examples.

Ask him, "Does the budget contain any items which aren't clear? May we clarify any entries for you?"

The prospect may well come up with one or two things which he doesn't understand.

Be prepared to defend the various budget items, showing why each is a responsible use of money. If you're getting a cheap rate on something, point it out.

Once you're sure he understands the budget, look him directly in the eye and, with a pleasant expression on your face, say this important sentence: "We were hoping you'd be able to help us financially to meet this budget."

After you've said this, keep your pleasant facial expression and wait. You wait. And you wait silently.

If you have to wait thirty long seconds, wait. Silence is your ally. At some point, the prospect will eventually respond to what you've said.

The reply will fall into one of these three categories:

- 1) "Well, I think it's a good idea, here's a contribution."  
And he will make a contribution or pledge right there.
- 2) Or some version of: "I'm sorry, I can't help you. I've got cancer, my wife is divorcing me, business is terrible, and my children are now being prosecuted for various crimes." If a prospect says he just can't give you any money, thank him for his time and input, then leave.
- 3) However, by far the most frequent response you will

***Helpful tip:***

Don't bother to solicit anyone for a student activity whom you couldn't ask for at least \$100.

receive is something like: “How much are you asking me to contribute?” or “What are we talking about in terms of money?” In other words, the person will ask you how much to give.

***Helpful tip:***

Always ask for the higher amount in the range you think reasonable.

Don't bother to solicit anyone for a student activity whom you couldn't ask for at least \$100. Some people should be in the \$500 to \$1,000 range or even higher. Always have a figure in mind before you meet with a prospective donor.

Most students have never asked a perfect stranger for \$500 or \$1,000. But you shouldn't feel reluctant or awkward about this. Well-known donors are often asked personally to make contributions. Major donors are not ashamed or embarrassed to be asked for \$1,000. So you shouldn't be ashamed or embarrassed to ask them for \$1,000.

If you're in doubt as to whether to ask a person for \$100 or \$500, ask for \$500. If in doubt between asking for \$1,000 or \$2,000, ask for \$2,000. Always ask for the higher amount in the range you think reasonable.

My experience has shown that rarely do donors give more than they are asked for; however, they often give less.

You may happen to misjudge a person's ability to give. You may ask her for \$2,000 although she's never given more than \$100 to anybody in her life. This won't grossly offend her.

In fact, she may even chuckle, saying, “I don't know where you got the idea I could give \$2,000. I've never given more than \$100.”

Then ask for the \$100.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, when a donor prospect asks you, “What are we talking about in terms of money?” the dynamics of the Famous Foolproof Fundraising Formula make it inevitable that you will leave with some donation or a pledge.

Sometimes a donor will say, “I'm sorry. I'm happy to give you the money, but I can't give



*Whether donors give you a check, cash, or a pledge, you should thank them genuinely.*

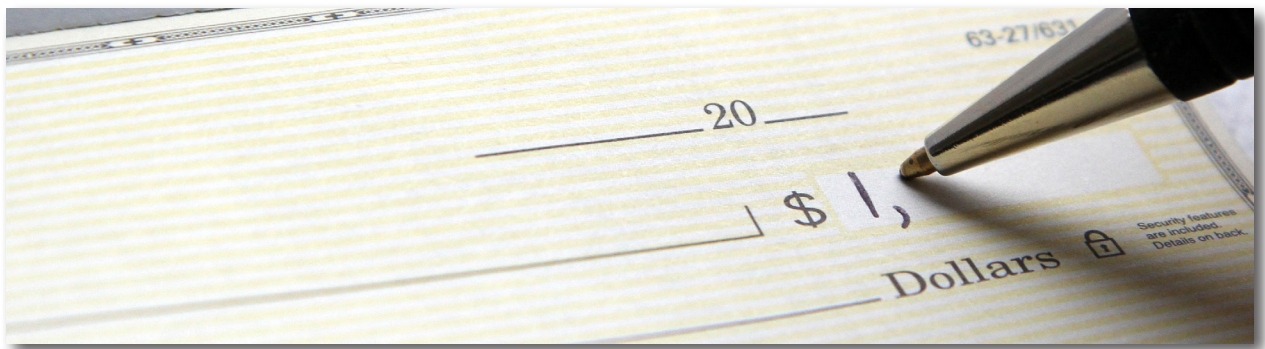
you anything until my stock dividend check comes in on the fifteenth of the month.”

Offer to come back at her convenience to pick up her donation.

In any case, whether donors give you a check, cash, or a pledge, you should thank them genuinely. “We really appreciate what you’ve done for us. Because of your help, your principles will make a great impact on campus.”

## **The Fourth Stage - Expanding Your Base of Good Prospects**

Now you have the check in hand or a good pledge. And you’ve expressed thanks.



The next step is to say, “Sir, there is another thing you can do to help us. We’d greatly appreciate it if you would suggest others whom we might go see who might be willing to help us meet our goal.”

The donor has already made an investment in your program, actually or with a pledge. He made that donation because he wants you to succeed. If you don’t get enough money to succeed, his \$100 or \$500 or \$2,000 may be wasted.

When you ask new donors for additional names, the great majority will give some to you. They will know many potential donors whom you do not know.

We all have different friends. Your new donor may know, among others, a conservative little old lady who lives at the edge of town in that ramshackle house with the broken-down fence who happens to own 10,000 acres of Colorado timber on which they have just opened a big gold mine.

Your new donor will provide you with names. He’ll say, “Well there’s Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Picklesimer.”

Make sure you carefully write down everything about the new prospects.

“This is Dr. Jack Johnson, the orthopedic surgeon. This is Mrs. Elvira Picklesimer, a widow, who lives out on Green Hollow Road near the corner of Hammond Highway.”



***Helpful tip:***

Make sure you have each new donor identified very clearly.

Make sure you have each new donor identified very clearly. You don't want to go back to your new donor and ask, "Who is this person again? I can't find her."

A new donor will give you a few names, ordinarily a handful. When she has finished listing names, ask her, "Can you think of any more?" Very often that first extra name will be the best prospect of all.

When the new donor finally runs out of names after you've prodded them a couple of times, you will have, on average, six or seven new names.

Almost everyone who gives you a donation will come up with additional names.

There is some other psychology involved in this. The donor thinks, "Well, these kids just hit me up; I'm going to send them down to hit up my old buddy Charlie, too."

Your new donor will have friends with whom he does business or plays bridge or golf. Perhaps the donor will smile and send you to a friend of his who has recently raised money from him.

Once you have the names, look through the list and say, "Well, I know Dr. Johnson because he's the one I went to last winter when I had a broken leg. And we know Mr. Kelly because Susie's father buys a car every year from Mr. Kelly's Chevrolet dealership. But I don't know Mrs. Picklesimer and I don't know this one or that one."

Ask if your donor would be willing to call the ones you don't know and give you an introduction over the phone. Say, "That way, when we go to see them we won't be complete strangers."

Again, in the overwhelming majority of cases, because the donor already has an investment in your project, they will be willing to make these calls for you.

Sometimes a donor will tell you they'll write a letter or email to introduce you. However, writing a letter or email is a big effort for most people. They delay writing them, and many times, despite good intentions, never send them.

A telephone call is much easier than a



*Sometimes a donor will tell you he'll write a letter or email to introduce you. Kindly ask for a copy, so you know when to follow up.*

**Helpful tip:**

Within 24 or no more than 48 hours, write a warm letter of thanks to your new donor.

letter or email. But, if your new donor says they're going to write letters or emails, say, "Thank you very much. Would you please send me a copy of each letter or email so I'll know when to follow up?"

You can then be sure when and if the letters or emails are sent.

You will probably walk away from that first successful meeting with a contribution or a pledge and a list of other good prospects.

Immediately after this meeting, take a moment to write down anything personal you observed about the contributor: their key interests, their spouse's name, number of children, hobbies, secretary's name, award certificates on the wall, etc. Write and keep a short summary of what was said. Refer to these notes before

any subsequent communications with the donor.

Within 24 or no more than 48 hours, write a warm letter of thanks to your new donor. It's been my experience that any conservative student group which sets out on this kind of program soon has more good prospects for giving money than they have time to go out and ask.

The three requirements for achieving any project are time, talent, and money.

It doesn't cost much to raise funds by personal solicitation. Because you are volunteers, gasoline may be your only expenditure.

You're limited only by the amount of time and talent you can put into this project. Within those limitations, the sky's the limit.

You will find there's a lot of money out there. Conservatives are genuinely concerned about what's happening on campus. They're concerned about what's wrong in our country. They want to help you make changes.

As you use this process, you will find that many people are delighted to see you.

You may make friendships and political alliances with some which will last a lifetime.

**Helpful tip:**

The three requirements for achieving any project are time, talent, and money.

## **The Fifth Stage - Re-prioritize**

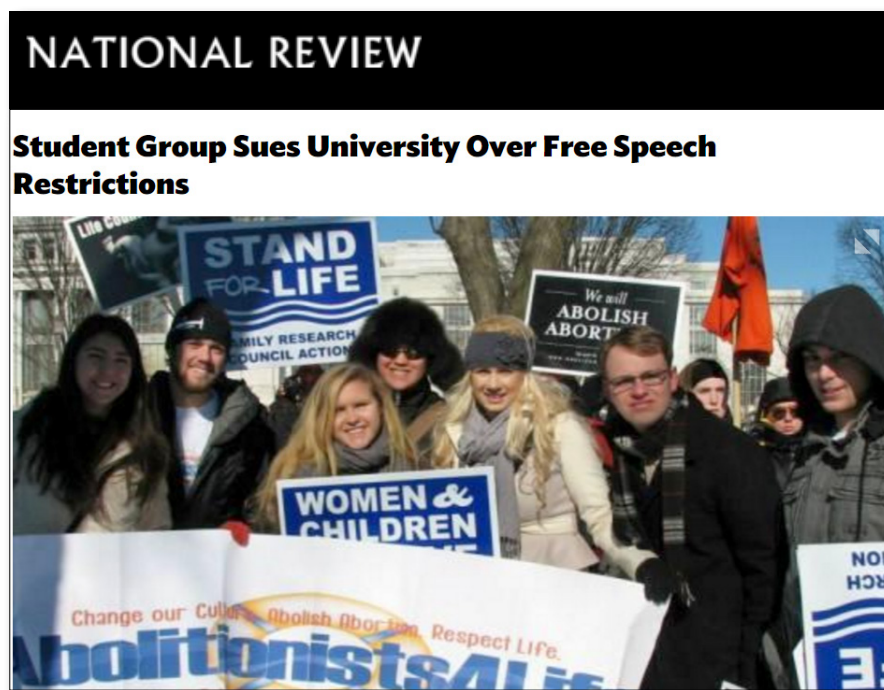
Choose the next prospect from your list, the one you now think most likely to make a generous donation. Make an appointment and repeat the third and fourth stages -- meet with potential donors and ask them for other potential donors.

## **The Sixth Stage - Building Strong Ties With Your Donors**

The majority of your subsequent communications with your donor should not be about money.

Invite your donors to meetings and any functions you organize.

Introduce them to prominent guests or visiting campus speakers. Send them your publications and news clippings about your activities. Help them feel linked to your organization. When you make a donor a part of what you do, you make it easy for him or her to contribute again.



*Send donors news clippings about your activities.*

My very first personal solicitation of this kind was when I was a junior at rural Woodlawn High School near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We had a very small class of twenty-eight. Our school had never had a football team.

We students decided to raise money to pay for equipment in order to field a football team our senior year.

Some of us began to raise money through projects such as cake sales. I worked hard on a scrap metal drive, driving a truck to local farms, asking farmers if they had any scrap metal to donate for us to sell.

The biggest contribution we received was a check for \$500 from a very nice lady over 80 years old. We were astonished at the size of the contribution, since it was not a rich area. And \$500 was worth a lot in 1955-56.

Before long, we raised enough money to buy the uniforms and equipment necessary for the football team. We scheduled a fried chicken banquet to celebrate.

We decided to honor the wonderful little old lady who had given us \$500. One of the students created a neatly drawn lifetime pass to the Woodlawn High School football games. We gave the pass, framed, to this lady at the celebration banquet. She was tickled pink.

We did not risk a great sum of money by awarding her a lifetime, free pass. But she loved it.

Just a couple of years later, this lady gave the school five acres of land adjacent to the school, on which the stadium was built where the Woodlawn High School Purple Panther football team played their home games.

And the reason she gave that land? Very simple. She felt a strong personal tie with this football team.

**Helpful tip:**  
The majority of your subsequent communications with your donor should not be about money.

**Helpful tip:**  
Donors will strongly identify with your project if you thank them, involve them, inform them, and credit them.

People will strongly identify with your project if you thank them, involve them, inform them, and credit them with the good results they make possible.

On the other hand, if you ask them for money at every meeting, then soon they will dread to hear from you. They will not give you appointments. You will not raise any more money from them.

But, if you operate on the basis I have outlined, you will almost surely be successful.

When you get each contribution or pledge, you should immediately write a strong thank you letter. If you then give donors a great deal of attention and respect, they will give you, or your campus successors, more money and other help.

Quite frankly, most organizations, whether conservative, liberal, charitable, or non-philosophical do a poor job of thanking their donors.

Donors motivated by charitable impulses or by philosophical causes seldom expect to get any personal return or benefit. They give money to improve society, to help their country, or just to assist nice young people.

Donors feel put upon when people to whom they give money perpetually pester them for more money.

Donors lose interest if an organization's entire communication with them is always the same: gimme, gimme, gimme.

Some friends of mine who head conservative organizations claim it's harder to raise money now, which may be true. However, it's not true that there's less money being given for conservative causes.

I probably have as wide a view of what's going on across the country in conservative organizations as anybody. I can assure you there isn't a decline in the amount of money being given.



*When you get each contribution or pledge, you should immediately write a strong thank you letter.*

There are more people giving more money to conservative causes than ever. But they necessarily give to a smaller percentage of the growing number of organizations which solicit them. More groups mean more competition.

Organizations fail financially if they do not persuade their donors they are doing a good job. Consider all the party organizations and the focused-issue organizations like right to work, right to life, right to keep and bear arms, or liberty movement groups. Add in the traditional values groups, including the religious ministries which focus on conservative, traditional values. Billions of dollars are given each year to conservative and libertarian causes.

There's money out there you can find. All you have to do

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Donors lose interest if an organization's entire communication with them is always the same: gimme, gimme, gimme.

is follow the systematic, step-by-step approach I've outlined for you.

You'll discover the amount of money you can raise is limited only by the amount of time you have to go out and persuasively ask.

There's an old saying in the insurance industry that the most successful insurance agent is not the one who sells to the highest percentage of people she asks. It's the agent who persuasively asks the greatest number of good prospects to buy insurance.

So don't be distressed if you go to two or three people who do not give you money. Not everybody will.

But if you've developed a good list from the outset, by the time you've met with four or five potential donors, one of them will have given you both money and new names.

If you ever meet with failure after having followed the steps outlined above, please call or write me at the Leadership Institute. As I wrote at the start of this guide, no one who has followed this formula has ever told me it did not work.

***Helpful tip:***

Don't be distressed if you go to two or three people who do not give you money.



If you ever meet with failure after having followed the steps outlined above, please call or write me at the Leadership Institute.

As I wrote at the start of this guide, no one who has followed this formula has ever told me it did not work.

## Student Group Resources

To be a successful student group, you must have funding. Some universities may offer funds. Even so, it is important to organize your own independent fundraising operations.

Your Leadership Institute Regional Field Coordinator can help you craft an effective fundraising strategy. The Leadership Institute can help you draft an effective direct mail fundraising letter, identify potential donors, and provide other assistance for top groups.

The Leadership Institute also has a variety of grants for activism, speakers, and publications (online and print).

For fundraising help, contact your Regional Field Coordinator at:  
**[LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus/RFCMap](https://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus/RFCMap)**

For information on how the Leadership Institute can help you on campus, visit:

**[LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus](https://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus)**



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