

Campaign Skills Handbook

Module 10 Mobilizing Resources *Support, Donations, Volunteers*



Introduction

Finding the financial, material and human resources your political party or electoral campaign needs can be a challenge. Most parties and candidates struggle to pull together all of the assets they require, especially in an election year when there are strong demands on resources.

For candidates, political fundraising is a skill that makes them valuable to party leaders and enables them to run a strong campaign, impress opinion leaders and connect with more voters. For political parties, fundraising is an important skill, not only for fielding strong elections but also for investing in its development and growth in the years in between elections.

Successful candidates and political parties know not only how to raise money, but how to bring in and manage other types of resources. This means finding supporters who can provide services or material goods in lieu of funds, and also recruiting volunteers who can offer free skills and labor.

This module explores the skills and techniques involved in resource recruitment and management. Topics include:

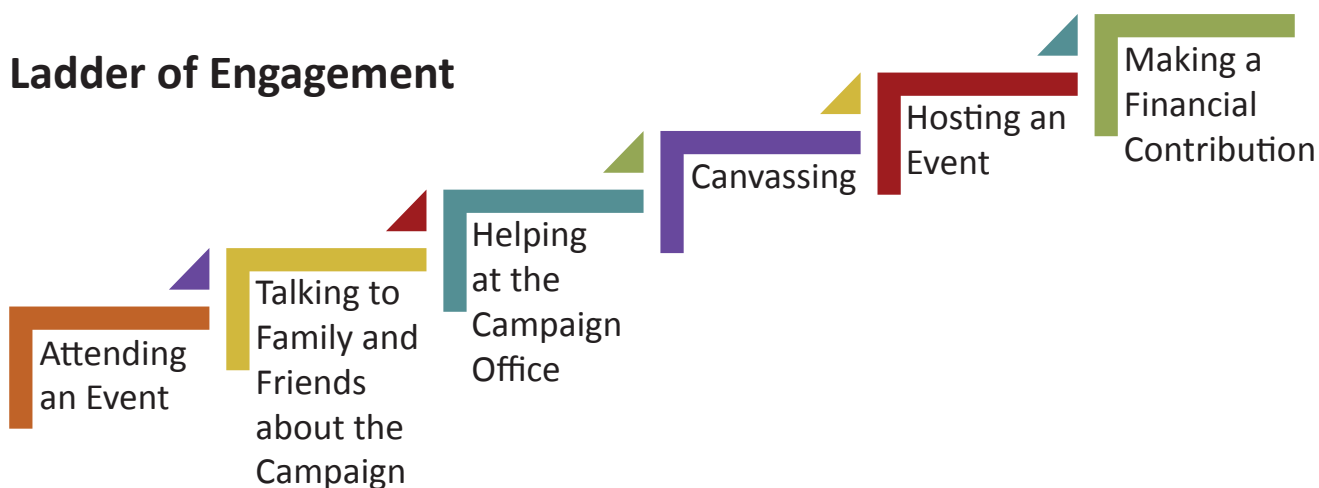
1. The Spectrum of Support
2. Rules for Political Fundraising
3. The Role of the Fundraiser
4. Identifying Potential Donors
5. Fundraising Tools and Techniques
6. Resources vs. Return
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The Spectrum of Support

In democratic systems, the candidates and political parties that win elections are those with the most support from voters in the form of their votes.

However, votes are just one kind of support that campaigns need. What are some ways you can think of that people support campaigns or parties? Write down as many forms of support you can think of:

Building support can start with something that seems very small – often it’s simply attending an event for the party or the candidate – and then grows into something bigger. Consider the progression below:



The supporter in this case got involved with a political party or campaign with the simple act of voting and then became progressively more engaged. This is how many political party and campaign activists begin and expand their commitment to politics.

People give support in any form to political parties, campaigns and candidates for two main reasons:

1. People give support because they want to
2. People give support because someone asked them to

The job of the campaign team is to identify people who support, or will vote for, the candidate—and then to move those people up the ladder of engagement, increasing their level of support and commitment so that the campaign has the volunteer, material and financial resources it needs.

Rules for Political Fundraising

There are several common misunderstandings about how political fundraising works. It is important to dispel these misunderstandings – or “myths of political fundraising” – before we explore how fundraising is actually done.

Below is a puzzle about myths of political fundraising. On the right side of the page are statements about fundraising that are not true. On the left side of the page are pictures that illustrate these statements. Match each picture with the fundraising myth that it represents by drawing a line from the statements on the right to the related picture on the left.



Only people with a lot of money donate to political candidates.



If I ask someone for money, I will make them angry.



Fundraising is only about money.



It doesn't matter what the law says; no one will ever find out.



Fundraising is begging or shameful.



We don't need to go out and find donors; they will find us!

If these myths of political fundraising are not true, then what is? There are some important rules and realities to abide when figuring out how to acquire new resources for your party.

Myth	Truth
Only people with a lot of money donate to political parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not just the wealthy who are willing to be political donors. • In many countries, the people who earn the least amount of money give the largest percentage of their income away. • It is possible to raise large sums of money in small amounts.
If I ask someone for money, I will make them angry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, we are concerned that we will insult someone if we ask them to contribute to our political party or campaign, or we think we will have to offer them something in return for their contribution. • The truth is that when you are asking someone to contribute to your party, you are asking them to take leadership and to support your party's or campaign's vision for the country and the future. People are often honored to be asked to play such a role.
Fundraising is only about money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money is important, but it's not everything. • If a supporter is not able to give money, they might be able to provide office space, office supplies, computers, printing, air conditioning, internet access, transportation, bathroom supplies, food and refreshments, etc., or to host an event for the party or candidates.
It doesn't matter what the law says; no one will ever find out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voters are skeptical about the relationship between money and politics and, frankly, they should be. • Everything that you do as a political fundraiser must be legal, moral and ethical. • Know the law: who can give, how much, when and what has to be publicly declared. If the law does not exist or is unclear, set your own standards, make them honorable and stick by them. • Always ask yourself: how would I feel if this appeared in the newspaper (or if my mother found out)?

<p>Fundraising is begging or shameful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political fundraising is not begging and should not be considered shameful or embarrassing. ● Political fundraising is a form of specialized marketing, connecting the vision of the party to individuals who want to see that vision become a reality. ● Raising money for politics is about getting people involved in political events that affect all of society. Asking people to become more invested in their country's political future should be perceived as an honorable request rather than an embarrassing or awkward one.
<p>We don't need to go out and find donors; they will find us!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Money rarely finds its way to your campaign all by itself. ● This type of specialized marketing requires research and outreach to identify and communicate directly with prospective donors. ● The only way to raise money is to ask for it!

The Role of the Fundraiser

Fundraising is about much more than money. Fundraisers play a key role in helping identify where potential support can be found for a campaign or party, and how to communicate with supporters about how important and valuable their involvement is. This type of outreach helps the campaign or party to grow from the grassroots.

Fundraisers, therefore, do more than find money and in-kind contributions (although this is an important part of their job as well). Fundraisers can help political parties, candidates and their campaigns develop the capacity to ask for support.

Without the capacity to ask, a political party or campaign limits its potential for support. A fundraiser plays a number of important roles in a campaign. A fundraiser is:

- A Broker who connects the interests of donors with the needs of the campaign
- An Ambassador who serves as the public face of the campaign or party
- A Marketer who acts as a salesperson and promotes the benefits to supporting the party or campaign
- An Organizer who finds a way for all levels of supporters to invest in the campaign
- A Researcher who investigates where to find supporters and investors
- A Planner who lays out a detailed plan of how much money the campaign or party can expect to raise, how it should go about raising that money (strategy), how much it's going to cost to raise that money (budget) and when the campaign can expect to have it (timeline)
- A Financial Manager who helps the campaign balance what it wants to do against what it can actually afford

A fundraiser can be a trusted volunteer or helper, or a paid member of staff. Either way, they are a critical part of the campaign team.

While the fundraiser's job is to research and cultivate potential supporters, set up events and other vehicles for mobilizing donations, and follow up with donors, the candidate or party leader is almost always the best person to make the in-person ask for support.

Identifying Potential Donors

Political fundraising is communicating to potential donors in a clear and precise way how they can participate in your campaign's or party's vision and how they can support what you are trying to achieve. When donors share the same vision and want to see the same achievements realized for the country or their community, it is easier for them to connect their own needs to the financial health of the campaign or party. So where do you find such people?

Step One: Brainstorm

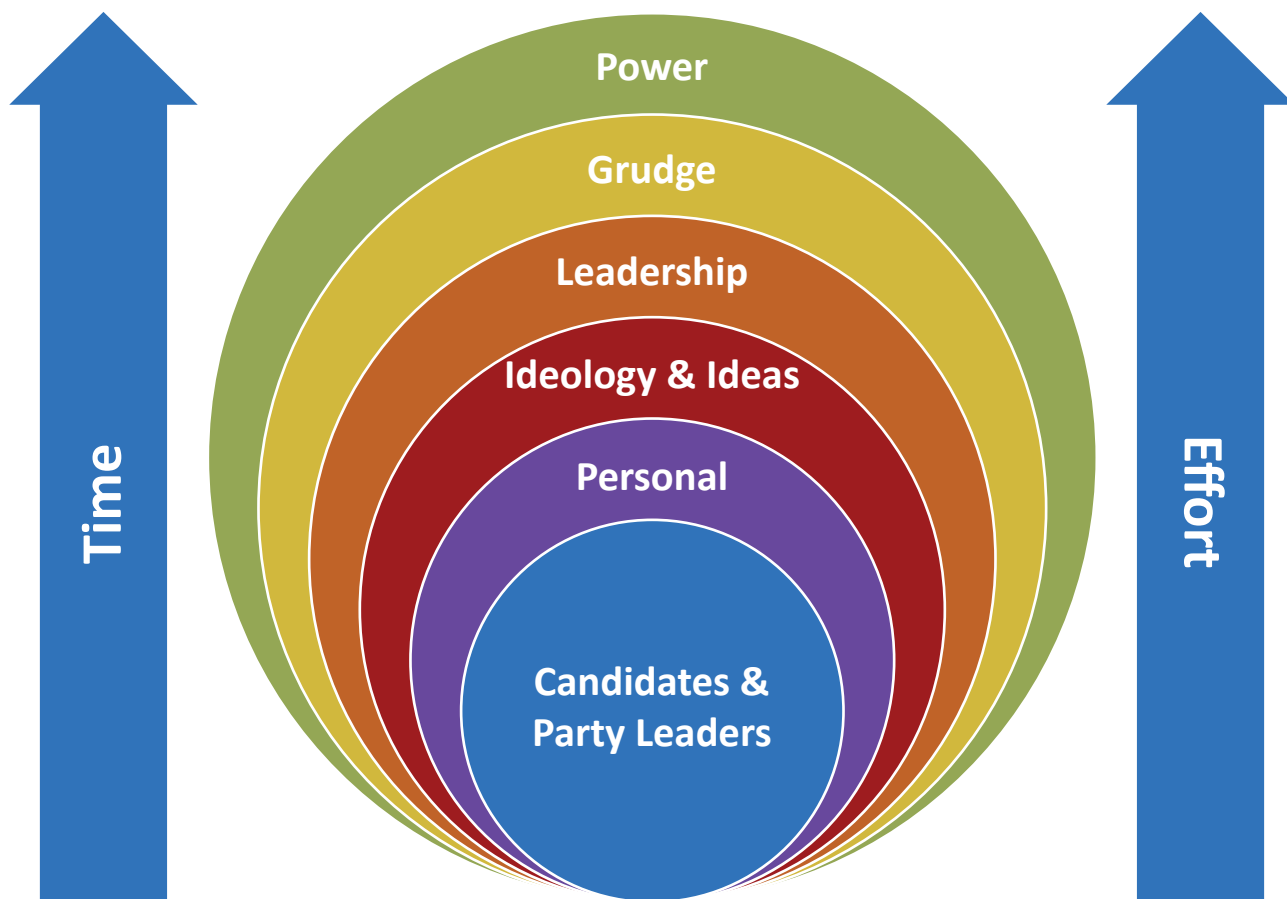
Finding potential donors starts with identifying individuals and organizations with whom the party or its candidates have shared values, ideals, visions or attitudes. It is surprisingly easy to do this, and it all starts with brainstorming – amassing information by thinking through some of the same questions and clues as to who donors might be.

Ask candidates and party officials the questions listed below.

- **Who knows you? Who likes you?**
- **What issues have you championed? Who else thinks these issues are important?**
- **What are your professional achievements that interest or impact others?**
- **What are your personal achievements that interest or impact others?**
- **Who are your political allies?**
- **What organizations do you belong to?**
- **What community leaders support your work?**
- **What family ties will help fundraising?**

Add to these questions the brainstorming tool outlined in the diagram below. This diagram¹ outlines the typical categories into which most donors fall:

¹ Based on the Circles of Benefit developed by Dee Ertukel for EMILY's List.



As the diagram illustrates, there are six major categories of donors:

Candidates and Party Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates and party leaders should make a personal financial contribution to their campaign or party, respectively. • It is difficult to make the case that other people should give if they are not doing so themselves.
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates and party leaders should look at their personal connections, including family members, friends, and close professional colleagues, to identify potential donors. • Because of their personal relationship with the party leader or candidate, these people want to see the candidate succeed. • <i>Fundraising Message:</i> “This is important to me.”

Ideology and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors in this category are those who share the same causes or who advocate for the same ideas as your party or candidates. • People who share the same heritage, background or community group may also fall into this category. • <i>Fundraising Message:</i> “We share the same values and vision.”
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community leaders, even those who are largely non-political, will often take a stand for you if they feel you will do a good job representing the needs of the community. • Think about local leaders in the civic, academic, religious or business communities who may want to support good political leadership for the area as well. • <i>Fundraising Message:</i> “We want the same things for this community.”
Grudge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some donors may not like your party or your candidate very much. But, they dislike the party or the candidate that you are challenging even more and they want to ensure that you are in a position of strength to defeat your opponent. • <i>Fundraising Message:</i> “We are strong; we can challenge them.”
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many donors who like to have a relationship with whoever is going to be in power, largely to protect their own interests. • Connect their interests with the public commitments you are making as a campaign or party. • People or organizations in this circle generally give late in an electoral campaign, because they want to see who is likely to win. • <i>Fundraising Message:</i> “We are going to win and we understand your issues.”



As the blue arrows on the side of the diagram illustrate, as you move from the core to the outside of the circle, it takes more time and more effort to cultivate a relationship with each type of donor.

Step Two: Make Lists

As you are conducting your brainstorming exercises to identify potential donors, begin to create lists by writing down the names and contact information of individuals or organizations that come up as you discuss and answer these questions. It can be extremely helpful to ask party leaders and candidates to come to brainstorming or planning sessions with relevant data files and contact lists, including:

- **Current and past schedules, diaries or day planners**
- **Mobile phone contact lists**
- **Membership lists from professional organizations**
- **Employee or staff lists from work**
- **Rolodex or address books**
- **Club memberships**
- **Email lists**
- **Names of family members**

Compile all of this information as clearly and comprehensively as possible. Get the spelling of names correct; identify the right way to address people and the best way to contact each person on the list.

Step Three: Identify the Right Amount to Ask

Once you have a central list of potential donors, the next question is what (or how much) should you ask each person to contribute and how is the best way to ask them. Donors typically fall into three general categories, based on the general amount you feel you can ask from them:

- Low donors** These are donors you can ask for a small amount of money or material resources.
- Medium donors** These are donors you can ask for a moderate amount of money or material resources.
- High donors** These are donors you can ask for a large amount of money or material resources.

The amount of money you can ask for from each category of donors will depend on the local economic situation, what earnings are like and whether or not there is already a culture of political giving, which can take time to develop. Consider each of these factors and assign a specific figure to each category of donors, or a specific amount that you are going to ask each individual on your list to contribute.

Don't overlook the power of small donations. People who give even a very small amount to your campaign have invested in your success; they will vote for you and are likely to bring others with them. Small donations add up, and they also demonstrate grassroots support in a way that big donations do not. For example, Candidate A raised \$5000 from 2 donors, while Candidate B raised \$3500 from 200 donors. Candidate A may have more money, but Candidate B clearly has more support.

Activity 1: Identifying Potential Donors

Use the information you have been given to create a list of potential donors. Categorize each as low, medium or high based on the information you have.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Likely level of giving</u>

Fundraising Tools and Techniques

Fundraising tools and techniques are the activities, methods and means that political parties and candidates use to raise money. Examples include membership dues, raffles and auctions, awards dinners, conferences, sponsored walks, etc.

There is an endless number of fundraising tools. Some parties and candidates get very creative with their approach to raising money. However, the methods you use should be selected according to efficiency (how much work you are going to have to do versus how much money you are going to raise) and what will work best with your potential donors.

Think about organizations that you know that need to raise money on a regular basis. This might include local NGOs, charitable organizations, religious organizations, schools, other political organizations, etc. How do they go about raising their money? What methods do they use? If you have had to raise money for a specific effort in the past, how have you done this?

Make a list below of all the fundraising techniques you can think of:

Fundraising Techniques

Common fundraising techniques include:

Auctions At auctions, organizers get a number of nice items donated, such as pieces of art, clothing, dinner at a nice restaurant, hotel stays, etc., and invite potential donors to bid on these items at a reception or dinner.

Raffles or tombola For a raffle or tombola, get items of any value donated to the party or campaign and sell tickets to as many people as possible. Draw tickets to determine who wins the prizes. This can be done as part of another event or as a stand-alone fundraiser.

Membership dues and fees	Collect fees from party members at regular intervals (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually). Offer different levels of membership depending on income and ability to pay. If your party is going to charge membership fees, it must collect these on a regular basis.
Grassroots fundraising	Grassroots fundraising is when you raise large to moderate sums of money in small amounts. This can include selling campaign or party merchandise such as shirts, bags, posters and buttons; selling food at a community event; or organizing a coffee or tea gathering. The internet is now being actively used in many countries (where the necessary infrastructure exists) as a highly successful medium for grassroots fundraising.
Coffees or house parties	Coffees or house parties are informal events in which party members or supporters host small gatherings of their friends, family, neighbors and/or colleagues either at their home or another comfortable venue. The host uses the event to introduce a candidate or party to their guests.
Potluck dinner or picnic	At a potluck event, the campaign or candidate sells tickets to raise money and everyone attending brings a dish or something to eat so that the costs of the food are covered.
Awards event	Awards events are typically more expensive gatherings in which the party sells tickets or tables of tickets to high donors. The party uses the event to deliver an award or to acknowledge some member of the community whose work or values matches the party's vision.
Concert or dance	Concerts, dances or any form of social event can be fun ways to raise moderate amounts of money and reach out to new or young donors.
Community festival	Some political parties host community festivals to mark a special occasion or anniversary and make money by renting out booths or tables to businesses and organizations, selling food and merchandise, recruiting new members and perhaps including other forms of fundraising such as a raffle.
Personal solicitation	Personal solicitation is simply asking someone for money in a face-to-face meeting.

Re-solicitation	Re-solicitation is asking someone who has given money to the party or to a candidate in the past to give again.
Call time/ Phones	Many candidates and party leaders set aside a specific amount of time every week to make phone calls to prospective donors to ask for contributions. This time can also be used to build relationships with individuals who may contribute over time, but not at the first point of contact.
Letters	In countries with reliable postal and banking systems, candidates or parties can send out letters either requesting donations or inviting prospective donors to attend a fundraising event.
Email and the Internet	Email and the internet are being used more and more as a successful form of grassroots fundraising in countries where the necessary infrastructure exists to support online donations.
Finance Committee	Finance committees are made up of individuals who commit to both donating and raising a specific amount of money each year for the party or specific candidates. Committee members are typically well-connected or high-profile supporters who receive special recognition for their work.
Conferences and Forums	Many parties organize conferences or forums of speakers in which prominent party officials and supporters speak on issues of public interest. There can be a ticket price or registration fee for these events, and parties can add additional fundraising events onto the conference, such as a networking coffee, higher-priced dinner or a raffle.
Selling Advertisements	Some parties sell ads on promotional items such as an annual calendar. The calendar, for example, gives the party the opportunity to sell at least 12 advertisements. Selling ads is a way of offering donors something tangible in return for their support.

Activity 2: Resources vs. Return

Review the list above and the list of fundraising techniques you made in the previous section.

Of these, which do you think typically yield the highest return (generate the most money)?

Of these, which do you think typically require the greatest number of resources (take the most work to organize)?

Resources vs. Return

Just because you can put on a massive concert with the greatest pop stars in the country and lots of flashy stage lights and a giant sound system does not mean you should. Fundraising is about exactly that – raising funds. If an event that you are planning is going to take a lot of work and probably not make a whole lot of money, should you actually do it?

This is an important question. All good political fundraisers need to continually compare the resources that each fundraising effort requires (e.g., the time, people, money, etc.) to the return that it will generate (e.g., the actual money or net income coming to the party).

Below is a comparison of the resources versus return ratio from some common fundraising techniques. How does this compare with the analysis you made on resources and return in the previous section?

Does this match the situation in your country?

What other kinds of fundraising techniques are possible?

High Resources / High Return	Low Resources / High Return
Auction	Personal solicitation
Awards dinner	Re-solicitation
Membership: monthly direct fees or high dues	Hosted event (all costs covered by hosts)
Higher-priced events	Call time
Finance committee	Email and internet (situational)
Low Resources / Low Return	High Resources / Low Return
Coffees or House Parties	Potluck dinner
Letters	Concert or dance
	Membership with small dues
	Merchandise – shirts, bags, buttons, books, etc.

The Art of the Ask

Being able to ask for things is a negotiation skill. In politics, asking for support – whether it is financial, material or political – is an important proficiency to develop. Remember that engaging supporters can start with something very small, and then grow into larger commitments. Being able to ask a supporter to take that slight step up from voter to volunteer is just as important as being able to ask a major donor for large amounts of money.

When it comes to asking for things, your specific approach will depend on the nature of your relationship with the person you are asking and the types of language and communication styles with which you are comfortable. However, the process generally requires the following steps:

- 1. Prepare.** Know in advance how much you are going to ask and think through why this individual would be motivated to support the party or campaign. In order to explore where there might be personal connections with the candidate, gather as much information as possible on the person’s professional background and connections, family relationships, schooling, and interests. If you are asking for financial support, consider what ring of the fundraising diagram this person might be on.
- 2. Establish Rapport.** Use language, gestures and an appropriate setting to make a connection so that both you and the person with whom you are meeting feel at ease. Make it clear from your body language and approach that this is a two-way communication; you are not just going to blurt out the request for money or other forms of support.
- 3. Connect.** Clearly connect what is important to the donor with what you are trying to achieve as a party or a candidate, and explain how you can make a difference. Keep your message compelling but concise; do not talk for too long.
- 4. Be Specific.** Ask for something specific. If you are asking for money, tell the potential donor exactly how much you would like them to contribute. It is not sufficient to ask for “something” or “anything.” This is a negotiation – you have to give them something to work with.
- 5. Stop Talking.** Once you’ve asked for something specific, stop talking and wait for the supporter or donor to consider the request and listen for the response. Do not worry if there is a moment or two of silence; that is perfectly normal. If you try to fill the silence with words, you may find you are talking yourself down from

what you have just asked for and undermining your own ask. If it is difficult to be quiet, reach for your glass of water or tea and take a long sip!

- 6. Listen and Respond.** There are four potential answers from the donor or supporter and four potential replies from you.

If the donor says:

You say:

Yes	→	Great! Thank you!
Maybe	→	Do you need more information?
No	→	Is there another amount you would be comfortable giving? Or, is there another way of supporting the party that you would feel more comfortable with?
Yes, but less	→	Would a contribution of (slightly lower figure) be more appropriate?

- 7. Take Care of Details.** If the person has made a financial commitment, make arrangements to collect it including where and when. If they need to consider the proposal further, determine how you will get them the information they need and make a date for a follow-up meeting. If the supporter has agreed to get more involved in the campaign, make arrangements for when and how this can happen.
- 8. Show Appreciation.** Regardless of the response, make sure you thank them for their time and consideration. Be sure to send a formal and appropriate thank you to all supporters, no matter what they have contributed.
- 9. Ask Again.** Once you have shown appreciation for your donors, do not be afraid to ask them for an additional contribution. Donors who have already invested are highly likely to contribute again. If a supporter has agreed to volunteer at campaign headquarters or to canvass, ask if they would be interested in getting more involved by hosting an event for the campaign for example.
- 10. Stay in touch.** Keep good relations with donors, potential donors and supporters who are making a real contribution to the campaign. Do not call only when you want to ask for something, but also during special occasions, holidays or to communicate about significant political events or happenings within the political party.

Activity 3: The Art of the Ask

1. Review the list of potential donors you made in Activity 1. Choose someone on your list who you think would respond well to being asked in person to contribute. Prepare to ask them for a contribution by constructing a message and identifying a specific amount of money or resources for which to ask. Write down any key points you would like to make below.

2. Think about someone who is a supporter of the party or candidate who has the potential to get more involved in the campaign's work. Prepare to ask them to make a bigger investment in terms of time, commitment or support. Write down any key points you would like to make below.

Appendix 1

Answers to Rules for Political Fundraising puzzle.

