

Elements to consider including in a solicitation to prospective Neighborshare donors
(not in any particular order)

Vision: We envision a community in which all people live with dignity and have their basic needs met, including access to food, shelter, clothing and transportation.

Mission: Neighborshare is a community partnership created to help low-income people achieve self-determination. We achieve this by providing rent, energy and transportation assistance, information and referral, and food box referrals to families in need. We work cooperatively among congregations and community groups because we believe as unified partners we will better serve our neighbors in need.

Description: Neighborshare was founded more than a decade ago by a coalition of churches who wanted to serve the basic needs of low-income residents in the east and south ends of Washington County. Community Action Organization, a private, non-profit coordinates the program, which uses public and private donations to provide rent, energy and transportation assistance, information and referral, and food box referrals to qualifying, low-income families. The program's primary objectives are to alleviate short-term crisis, stabilize families at risk of homelessness, and link families to additional interventions in order to prevent further crisis and promote long-term self-reliance.

Program accomplishments: Last year Neighborshare assisted more than 600 households (benefiting about 1,900 individuals). At least 86% of families who receive assistance are still housed after six months.

Client story:

Program Needs: This year, public funds will cover 85% of Neighborshare's cost; private contributions totaling nearly \$30,000 must come from private sources in order for the families to obtain the assistance they need. Private funds will be used to provide assistance to families and to support staff that deliver the assistance. Volunteers are needed to help administer funds and screen clients.

Location and contact numbers: 9020 SW Burnham Street, Tigard, Oregon, 97223
Rachael Criswell, (direct line)

Points to consider when writing a solicitation to prospective Neighborshare donors

Know your audience. (1) this is an *appeal* for support – use a good story that pulls heartstrings, and back it up with a few statistics and accomplishments (i.e., use a different piece(s) to advertise the program to clients and providers, to use to recruit volunteers, etc.) (2) if you are soliciting current or past donors, treat them as such. First thank them for their past support and ask them to consider renewing their support.

Most effective appeals are made in person. Showcasing a client telling his/her story of overcoming a personal struggle is great.

Follow up with a letter. A “template” letter can be written and adapted by many authors. Program flyer or brochure can be inserted with the letter.

In addition to a broad solicitation via a letter to the church community, consider personally approaching a handful of members who are capable of and might be interested in making a significant gift (\$500 or more). Start with individuals who are already supporting the program.

Provide a return envelope for gifts. On the envelope and the appeal letter, illustrate how X amount of dollars can make a difference (\$50 provides a food box to feed a family for a week).

Always use the word *consider* when asking for support.