

Tips for Recruiting Members and Grassroots Fundraising

The development teams wants to support you in recruiting members. There are a bunch of tips here but feel free to just ping us!

As an organizer you already have the skills to do this! This is just another pathway to engagement with us. Making direct asks, connecting with people around shared values, identifying and sharing resources, and helping them engage are all things you're experts in.

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Who to ask:

- **Everyone!** Some great people to ask are:
 - leaders and people taking action
 - folks who don't have time to be actively involved right now but are excited to support the work
- **Give everyone a chance to become a member/donate.** Don't decide for someone that they don't have the means. Instead, invite everyone to join membership and remind them that a gift AT ANY LEVEL really adds up. Celebrate every gift from a new member – whether it's \$5 or \$500 – and thank them. Just move on if they decline!

When to ask:

- **Having a 1:1 with someone** is often a great time to ask them to become a dues-paying member. You can check NationBuilder ahead of time to see if they're a member. Check for the tag, ex. "CA dues paying". (If they are, you can thank them for being a member!)
- **Add a short membership or donation pitch at the end of your next event/action**, whether it's a phonebank or social gathering. Folks feeling excited and connected from being together is a great time to ask.
 - Ask Shira or the devo team for a donation link and/or recommended pitch language!
 - You can [copy this slide](#) to easily add it to your slidedeck or paraphrase it for an in-person pitch.
- **Have a membership drive event!** You can have a social event that's meant to be a membership drive. You can ask active folks to invite their friends who they think would be interested in joining Mothers Out Front. You can run a membership drive on social

media or using a peer-to-peer fundraising page on our donation platform – Shira can make you a link.

- **When their membership is expiring.** The development team will email everyone with a renewal opportunity a month before their membership expires. We'll also give organizers a list of folks whose memberships are expiring in the next month in the monthly data report, so you can reach out to people personally if you choose. The personal ask is more likely to lead to a renewal.
- **After an email blast:** After your state or local team sends an email blast, you can follow up personally with a few people you know.

Where to ask:

- **Your events:** You can [copy this slide](#) to easily add it to your slidedeck or paraphrase it for an in-person pitch. Ask Shira or the devo team for a donation link and/or recommended pitch language!
- **1:1s:** This is often a great time to ask them to become a dues-paying member. You can check NationBuilder ahead of time to see if they're a member. Check for the tag, ex. "CA dues paying". (If they are, you can thank them for being a member!)
- **State or local social media:** Facebook has CTA buttons. You can add a link in the bio on Instagram and Twitter, you can write posts about membership, you can even run ads if you want to. (See the membership launch [social media toolkit](#) for ideas, and ask Shira for social media donation links.)
- **Personal or blast email:** You can include a membership pitch in your own newsletters. A great time is on the heels of a win or in honor of a particular event like high school graduation week. You can also send personal emails as part of a membership drive or when you're already talking to someone. (If you want to send bulk personal emails, ask devo about setting you up with an **exciting tool to do that!**)
- **By peer-to-peer texting:** you can run a membership texting campaign or add it as a third ask for folks who keep up the conversation with you during another text campaign
- **Personal calls or texts:** This could be part of a membership drive. For example, you could personally call everyone who took a particular action. Or you can include an ask when you're already talking to someone.

Messaging tips:

- **This is the short membership pitch.** We use variations on it in a lot of places. Feel free to use it word for word or paraphrase in a way that feels natural for you. (Thanks to everyone who gave feedback on this!)

Mothers Out Front is a growing national movement of thousands of mothers and allies mobilizing for a sustainable, just future for all children. Together, we

organize, fight for our communities, and win! When we each give what we can, it adds up to a force for change that's impossible to ignore.

By choosing to pay membership dues, at any level, you are powering this movement, YOUR movement.

- **The main points we want to get across are:**
 - When everyone pitches in and gives what they can, it really adds up. That's why everyone's dues/gift of any amount matter.
 - We're more powerful when we're funded the same way we build our movement, with people power.
- **Explain why this is good for the movement they care about:** Mothers Out Front got started and grew quickly because of a smallish handful of wealthy individuals and foundations who have invested generously in our work. Now it's time for grassroots giving to power more of what we do. While we don't want our big donors and foundation partners to go away, we'll have more flexibility, independence, accountability to our communities, and strength when we are powered by the people. That's why we're really excited about this membership program!
- **A good place to start with leaders and people who have been involved:** "Have you heard about our new membership program?" Then explain why grassroots power is so important, using the points that you think will resonate most with that person.

How to ask, and other things to keep in mind:

- **Tell a story about why you personally believe in this movement and your teams.** As you know as an organizer, personal stories and connections are powerful ways to call people to action.
- **Frame your 'ask' in terms of the needs of the mission and work, not the organization.** For example, don't say, "Mothers Out Front needs your donation." Instead say, "This movement relies on all of us pitching in what we can."
- **Be direct and be clear.** Like in organizing asks, we want to make a strong ask. You'll have explained the flexibility of the membership program. The person will know it's optional. Once you get to it, ask without caveats and keep it simple. Like: "Will you become a member today?"
- **Once you've asked, stop talking** and let the person answer. You will have a VERY STRONG urge to make it comfortable for them to say no. But it's okay to have some silence, even if it feels awkward. Pro tip: have a glass of water nearby and take a long sip as soon as you ask them to consider membership.
- **After they become a member/donate, thank the sh&% out of people!** Thank them no matter how much they give. Thank them for what they already do to power this movement. We value all of it, and it's so important that they know that! Pro tips:

- Max and Shira including new and renewed members in the monthly data report. These are excellent people to thank personally.
- You can thank someone via email, mail ([link to comms branded thank you notes](#)), phone or text. For those who donated online, they already got an automated thank you email, so other more personal methods are even better!
- A good thank you is brief, reminds people what their gift is supporting, and does not ask them to do something else. (e.g. thank you so much for your gift; can you give again today/come to an event, etc.)
 - Here's an example: "Hi [name] - I just noticed you became a dues-paying member today - thank you! Your gift powers our fight for a livable climate for all children, like the successful action we had last week at the Governor's mansion! Your support, and the support of thousands of other moms and allies adds up to a force for change that's impossible to ignore. I'll be in touch soon with more updates. With gratitude, [your name]."
- **This may be different from other fundraising asks you've seen.** Because we're an organizing and advocacy organization, the "product" is the work. We can't, and don't want to, commodify our expenses the way a social benefit organization would (e.g. your gift of \$10 provides three meals) because our expenses are mostly people, not commodities.

It takes some getting used to pitching membership as a thing with it's own inherent value (joining a movement, building power, etc.) but it's a more transparent way to frame what we do. Plus it helps break some bad habits in more seasoned philanthropists who may be used to getting a t-shirt, a gala ticket, or knowing their gift "bought" exactly ten bowls of soup. When we give people t-shirts, we'd rather it be to support organizing efforts than in exchange for a donation.

- **People enjoy donating.** There are all kinds of [studies that show giving FEELS good](#) for the donor. Giving to a cause that helps others releases feel-good brain chemicals, helps people feel connected, and may create a sense of agency. Having a choice about how much to give (and whether to give) affects the quality of the giving experience, which is one reason why we've tried to make membership parameters very flexible. We want people to have and feel ownership over this movement, and we want them to feel invested in it. Of course it's not the only way, but donating is one great way to help people feel that.
- **Feel free to get creative!** We're new to this as an organization so we'll learn from each other and share best practices over time.