

Recruiting a sponsor, much like any other supporter, centers on relationship building.

STEP ONE:

What kind of support do you need? A sponsor may be an individual or a company. A sponsor's support may include a donation, in-kind goods or services, or volunteers. Most often, you would seek sponsorship support surrounding a particular event, activity, or project.

STEP TWO:

Build your master list. Include vendors, leaders, and companies with whom you already have a connection. These existing relationships could make all the difference! You should also research potential sponsors outside of your network.

STEP THREE:

Look for companies or community leaders with interests and business activity that aligns with your endeavor or the community you are serving. Sponsor lists are posted on event web pages and in event programs. Find events/projects similar to yours and check out their sponsor lists.

STEP FOUR:

In your sponsorship letter and package, your goal is to compel the potential sponsor to participate in your endeavor. Remember, yes it is a solicitation, but it's also a marketing "sales" document. Think creatively about what type of support you need, what the sponsor will receive, and how you can make that request in a persuasive way. Be sure to consider what the value will be for the sponsor in this partnership. You may have to craft different messages for different potential sponsors.

STEP FIVE:

Prepare your sponsorship letter on your group's letterhead and be sure to include all of your contact information. The first paragraph should provide brief context about the organization, what the organization does, and what your request is. The second paragraph should describe the need being met or the problem being addressed. The third paragraph should further highlight the benefits for the sponsor, ranging from public recognition to tangible reward.

STEP SIX:

To complete your sponsorship package, design an “at-a-glance,” one-page document that outlines the sponsor giving options and associated benefits. If you design this document strategically, you can have it simultaneously serve as a response form for the sponsor as well!

Step Seven: Review sponsor recognition and benefits for detail and creativity. Will the benefits appeal to the funder? How do you know? For instance, volunteer support may warrant a listing of the sponsor and volunteers by name in your program. However, a \$5,000 gift may come with a program and website listing, verbal acknowledgment in a speech at the event, and inclusion of the sponsor logo on all communication materials surrounding your project for the year.

STEP SEVEN:

Send out sponsorship packets to all potential funders. Use e-mail and postal mail to reach as many potential sponsors as possible. Keep track of what is sent out.

STEP EIGHT:

Follow up the letters to sponsors with a phone call. Double-check that they received the letter and offer to answer any questions about the program/project/event they might have.

STEP NINE:

Record what works for future use. Track the sponsors that responded and what appealed to them.

STEP EIGHT:

After the program/project/event, be sure to appropriately thank your funders and supporters.