

# How to Ask for Planned Gifts to Support the Endowment Fund

## Step 1: PHONE CALL

Before meeting with a planned giving prospect, you must first make a phone call to introduce yourself and schedule a visit. Remember, prospects should have received a "personal visit letter" prior to your initial phone call. This letter paves the way for you to schedule a visit.

### Talking points

- Introduction/thank you
- Mention pre-visit letter
- Reiterate main points of the letter
  - o We have established <<Fund>> as a permanent source of funding for our mission
  - o To increase the endowment fund, we have established a Planned Giving and Endowment Building Team
  - o Team members are reaching out to our most dedicated supporters to discuss this step in securing our organization's future
- Express desire to visit on behalf of the Planned Giving and Endowment Building Team
- Explain purpose of the visit
  - o Learn how prospect is engaged in the ministries and programs of the organization
  - o Educate prospect about <<Organization's>> endowment fund(s)
- Schedule the visit
  - o Suggest meeting in the prospect's home; the parish is another option if preferred
  - o Suggest two or three specific dates/times
- Handling a NO response
  - o Gently inquire about the reason
  - o Suggest you can call back in 6 months if now is not a good time to discuss

## Step 2: PERSONAL VISIT

### Agenda/Talking Points

- **Introduction** (5-10 mins)  
*Goal: Establish rapport*
  - o Greet the prospect and thank them for allowing time for you to visit. Start with a prayer.
  - o If you don't know the prospect, find something in common to begin the conversation. At minimum, you can acknowledge you are both supporters of <<Organization>>.
- **Discovery** (10-15 mins)  
*Goal: Learn about prospect's desires with regard to their stewardship with the Church*
  - o Engage prospect in conversation about their lives and the role of their Catholic faith and <<Organization>>; how are they involved in ministries?
  - o Discuss how prospect would like to be remembered and the difference they would like to

make for future generations.

- Ask open-ended questions that will help prospect share their values and what is important to them when it comes to their engagement with their faith, <<Organization>> and their Christian stewardship. See samples below:
  - You've long been involved with <<Organization>>; what attracted you to get involved? Why have you stayed?
  - Is there a ministry or program at <<Organization>> that has been important to you over the years?
- Listen closely for values that align with the endowment fund(s). For example, if the prospect mentions they value the school and the endowment fund supports school scholarships, make this connection in the next phase of the visit.
- Ask the final discovery question, which sets up the last portion of the visit:
  - Have you thought about how you would like to be remembered with regard to your Catholic faith and support of the Church?

- **Advocacy and the "Ask" (5 mins)**

*Goal: Educate prospect about the endowment fund(s)*

- Bring out literature that promotes the endowment fund; point out how the fund aligns with the prospect's needs and wants for supporting the Church.
- Share your story about why you made a planned gift in support of <<Fund>>.
- Ask, on behalf of <<Organization>>, if prospect would consider leaving a planned gift in support of <<Fund>> to sustain the mission of <<Organization>> long into the future.
- Hand prospect the folder/packet (includes appeal letter for top donors, customizable endowment fund brochure, Ways to Give Summary and Planned Gift Intention Form).  
NOW STOP TALKING AND LISTEN!

- **Handling the Response (10 minutes)**

*Goal: Listen to prospect's thoughts and take appropriate action*

- Resist the urge to speak after making the ask. Prospects need time to absorb the request and tell you what is on their mind.
- Potential Responses:
  - "We've already included <<Organization>> in our will or estate plan."
    - Thank the donor!
      - Be sure they understand the difference between leaving a gift directly to <<Organization>> (short-term funding) and leaving a gift to <<Fund>> (long-term funding).
      - Ask if they will complete the intent for planned gift form so <<Organization>> can have accurate record of their gift intentions.

- "We're not ready to make a decision right now; we're in the process of

planning/revising our estate plan.”

- Thank the prospect for their time. Ask when might be a good time to follow up. Make a note in your calendar to call again.
- “We’d like to leave some money to the Church but are worried about outliving our financial resources or being a financial burden to our children.”
- Inform prospect that there are giving options that allow donors to leave substantial gifts after their lifetime *and* receive reliable income during their lifetime. Ask if you may pass their contact information on to the Roman Catholic Foundation, who can assist them in planning such gifts.
- “We appreciate the information you’ve shared with us but are not interested in adding the Church to our will at this time.”
- Thank the donor for their time. Let them know that they can contact you at any time with any questions about the Planned Giving and Endowment Building Program.

### Step 3: FOLLOW-UP

- Record information about your visit and share with Planned Giving and Endowment Building Team. (Maintaining a master spreadsheet is suggested.)
- Send prospect a follow-up note thanking them for the visit and summarizing any agreements reached (e.g., “Per our visit I will check back with you in 6 months after you’ve revised your estate plan to see if we can assist in planning your gift”).
- Maintain a positive outlook.
  - o Building a successful Planned Giving and Endowment Building Program is a marathon, not a sprint. It will take time to educate prospects on the value of endowment funds and planned gifts for the future.