Tips on Successful Individual Solicitation

* ***Recruit someone to chair a finance committee*** This person should be a well known, influential individual who has experience raising money through individual solicitations and is able to make the time commitment necessary for fundraising.
* ***Establish a small committee*** of volunteers who are willing to serve on the finance committee and make individual solicitations. Local elected officials could be asked to help in this effort. Not all committees are large enough to set up a finance committee, but there should be one or two people on your committee that meet these qualities and feel comfortable personally soliciting donations from local democrats.
* ***Set an overall goal*** with the committee. Have each committee member commit to raising a set portion of that goal.
* ***Determine a time frame*** for your solicitation drive. It is important to have a beginning and ending date. Perhaps the same month each year will be designated for individual solicitations.
* ***Develop a prospect list*** with the committee. Review lists of former Party donors and contributors to groups with related causes. Include former elected officials. Have each committee member suggest potential donors that he/she knows. Divide the prospect list among committee members. Committee members should solicit those individuals that he/she knows.
* ***Potential donors should be asked to give at an appropriate level.*** Someone who is capable of contributing $1,000 should not be asked for $50. And, someone capable of giving $25 should not be asked for $500. It is important to know enough about your potential donor to determine the level of contribution to solicit. You may want to establish categories of donations and different levels of your giving program. If you are unsure how much a person is able to donate, you can look up their political giving history to Virginia candidates on this website, [www.vpap.org](http://www.vpap.org). Go to the website and search the person’s first and last name in the search bar in the top right corner. This way you can be confident you are not over asking or under asking when soliciting contributions.
* ***Prepare the committee members to make the individual solicitations.*** Supply the committee with promotional material, background information or whatever training necessary to prepare the committee for the solicitation drive. It is helpful to have a written script for committee members to rehearse with if they are unfamiliar with soliciting contributions.
* ***Have each committee member make their solicitations.*** This may vary with individuals, but basically the committee member will be responsible for contacting each potential donor on his/her list. The committee member may take the potential donor to lunch, may write the person a letter, may call him/her or may set up an appointment to visit with that person.
* ***Assist the committee member when possible.*** You may offer to set appointments or accompany committee members to meetings with potential donors. Follow up with each member to provide support and guidance along the way.
* ***Properly organize all donors.*** As contributions are received, promptly send a thank you letter. It is very important to properly acknowledge all gifts and find opportunities to continue to recognize donors. Invite these donors to Party events. Make sure they are on your mailing/emailing lists for newsletters, invitations, etc. List them on programs when appropriate.
* ***Thank and recognize the committee’s chair and its members.*** You will want to enlist their assistance again next year for your next annual event!
* ***Maintain records*** on donors so that you can call on them annually. The first gift is the most difficult to receive. Renewals, second time donations, are much easier to obtain. It is important to build your base and maintain information for continuity from year to year. It is imperative to keep these records to have a successful finance operation for the committee.