

PLANNING A SOLICITATION VISIT

Consider the following questions:

- Do you know the donor prospect (e.g., areas of interest, family members, etc.)?
- What is the best possible outcome, and what is the minimum expected outcome?
- Who should be involved in the meeting? What is the best location for the meeting?
- How will you handle any objections/concerns?
- Have you thought about your Y story?
 - Did you learn how to swim at the Y?
 - Did your child have his or her first camping experience at the Y?
 - Did the Y offer your family financial assistance at a critical time in your life?

By telling your Y story, you allow others to **see the power of the Y in action**. You become living proof that the Y is making a difference every day.

Keys to Success

Make your own pledge first. This is a first step toward success. Once you have made your own commitment, you can proudly ask others to join you in financially supporting the annual campaign.

Share your story about the Y. Have face-to-face conversations with your friends, family, and colleagues about the ways the Y has impacted you and others in the community. Share with them your own personal commitment to the Y. Telling the Y story face-to-face gives you credibility when asking for a donation and helps build a wider base of support for the future.

Ask your best prospects first. Practice by asking those prospective donors you feel most comfortable with or who have the greatest likelihood to give first. By going to the people who are most likely to say yes, you will gain the confidence and skills you need when approaching more challenging solicitations. Success breeds success!

Solicit only if you have the pledge form. There are 100 volunteers & staff working on this year's annual campaign from many YMCA branches. We issue pledge forms to organize the campaign so that no single volunteer campaigner is overwhelmed and no donor is asked twice. Please talk with everyone about the good things the Y does, but only ask for a gift if you have the pledge form.

Aim high. When asking for a specific dollar amount, aim high. Talk about the good things those dollars will do. Then **be quiet** and let the prospective donor respond. Don't hear no unless he or she says no.

Make friends for the Y. Not everyone chooses to donate to the campaign; however, try and make a friend for the Y. Even if a prospective donor decides not to make a contribution now, you have told the Y story and brought him or her closer to the organization. Celebrate your success!

Respect donors' concerns and complaints. If someone has a complaint about the Y, listen to it and record it, but try not to comment on the specific issue. Assure the person that you will follow up with YMCA staff and that someone will get in touch. Let the person know that the Y responds to every concern. Once people feel that their concerns have been heard, they will be more ready to listen to your request for their support in the campaign.

Encourage pledging. Most of us can give more when we make small payments over a period of time as opposed to giving one larger gift. Encouraging people to make a pledge they can pay over the course of the year helps them give more. Consider asking prospects to contribute \$10, \$25, or \$50 a month instead of asking for one lump sum.

Report results regularly. Progress reports are sent weekly during the campaign. Please turn in your pledge forms promptly and check in with the volunteer leader who recruited you regularly to communicate your progress.