

# Tips for Approaching Groups/Companies/Individuals for Support

- **Needs.** Identify your needs and the local assets that may be able to help and match them together
- **Close Connections.** Start with asks to the closest connections (ie: friends in business, family members, other community gardeners). These will be the people most likely to support you initially.
- **New Connections.** It's all about personal relationships. Build the relationship (invite to garden, give a gift of flowers/produce...) first before going for the "ask".
- **Expand Your Horizons.** Go beyond the usual cast of characters for community garden donations (ie: hardware stores, garden centers). Consider businesses and organizations already active in the community such as banks, insurance, car dealers, real estate offices and clubs (Rotary, Lions...).
- **Start with the Story.** Have a short, compelling story about someone in the community garden that will be relatable and memorable for the listener. Start with the story, but have facts and your ask in hand, too.
- **Think Outside the Box.** Instead of just asking for money or material donations, think in terms of what the company/group can get out of the ask as well. For example, instead of asking for money for a garden festival, ask a company to sponsor your attempt to break the world record for the longest zucchini bowling game ever (if there is such a record). They get a great PR opportunity (and so do you), while supporting the garden.
- **Think Manpower.** Perhaps a company or organization can't help you with financial or material donations, but they may be able to help with labor. Agencies and companies are always looking for community service projects. This sets the stage for future contributions.
- **PR.** Keep the visibility of your garden program high in the community. Get the local radio station to record PSAs, local paper to write articles, and hold public events/tours/tastings to bring attention to all the good your garden is doing for the community
- **Communication.** It sometimes takes 2 or 3 asks before you have success. Keep on your local businesses and organization's radar and you will eventually get your donation.