



Presenting to a Service Organization

Technical Assistance from Reading Is Fundamental

- ◆ **Introduce RIF to the group.**

"RIF develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read regularly. In the year 2000, through a national network of over 310,000 community volunteers, RIF programs provided over 14 million books and other essential literacy resources to over 4 million children, at no cost to them or their families."

- ◆ **Share how your local RIF program addresses an important need and benefits the children in your community.**

"Did you know that 75 percent of what a child learns in school comes from reading?"

"For children to become readers, they need easy access to books and to adults who care about them and encourage their reading. With the help of caring adults, each year our program provides ___ # of children with ___ # of free books that they can take home and keep."

- ◆ **Tailor your presentation to the specific group and its concerns.**

"If current trends continue, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, American businesses will have to hire a million workers a year who can't read. The lost productivity will cost American businesses \$25 billion a year."

- ◆ **Point out the partnership between civic groups and RIF.**

"It is a privilege to speak to you about our Reading Is Fundamental program. Did you know that service groups like yours have played a key role in bringing RIF books to children across the nation?"

- ◆ **Point out that your project is run entirely by volunteers.**

"Our local RIF is a program run entirely by volunteers. Parents, educators and other community members provide funds, time and services to help make our RIF program a success."

- ◆ **Demonstrate that your program has received backing from the schools and from businesses.**

"The principal of our school has been a strong supporter of RIF, along with teachers and parents. Funding and in-kind donations for the program are provided by....."

- ◆ **Ask for a specific sum. Tell how many children will be served by that amount.**

"You can give 100 children an opportunity to discover the joys of reading by contributing just \$.... It will be a gift those children will never forget."

- ◆ **Extend an invitation to members to participate in a distribution or motivational activity.**

"I'd like to invite you to take part in a RIF activity, in which you will have the chance to see first-hand the changes that take place in children motivated to read."

- ◆ **End with a good anecdote about the results of RIF or some comments about RIF by kids or their parents.**

"In closing, I want to share with you these comments from a parent whose child is served by our local program..."

- ◆ **Finally, always leave behind a fact sheet about your local program and a RIF brochure.**

The fact sheet should include: the number of children you serve, the number of books distributed each year, the number of volunteers involved in your program and the number of sites at which you operate.

- ◆ **Always be prompt and keep your presentation brief!**

For more information, see page 2.3 of the Fundraising section of your RIF Handbook.

PREPARING TO PRESENT CHECKLIST

- ❑ Identify possible civic groups. Consider local chapters of national organizations, clubs, and auxiliaries, etc. Often these groups' activities are featured in the local newspaper. The *Encyclopedia of Associations* will list the addresses of the national or regional headquarters of these organizations.
- ❑ Obtain a list of the group's officers and a list of current projects that are being funded. Your local librarian, phone book or Chamber of Commerce can help you find these groups in your community.
- ❑ Be familiar with the membership. Are they educators, businesspeople or retirees?
- ❑ Research each organization's priorities and goals to identify opportunities for a partnership with your local RIF program. Many national organizations have websites or central headquarters for general inquiries.
- ❑ Call your RIF program specialist to learn about partnerships that may currently exist with your targeted organizations. (The national RIF office may be able to provide brochures or other information.)
- ❑ Contact one of the officers and ask about procedures for submitting a proposal or making a presentation about RIF at the group's weekly or monthly meeting.
- ❑ Know your time constraints and stay within the time allowed for the presentation.
- ❑ Offer a variety of opportunities for the group to assist your program (i.e. monetary contributions, volunteer hours, in-kind services, etc.).
- ❑ Be certain the service group knows the full name of your RIF program so checks can be filled out correctly.
- ❑ Be sure to say that contributions to your program will be tax deductible if your project has obtained tax-exempt status from the IRS. *Please note that for legal reasons, the 501 (c) (3) tax status of Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) does not carry over to local RIF projects.*
- ❑ Relax! Your commitment to the children you serve is your greatest asset.