Communication Matters.
NEWSLETTER TIP SHEET

You're doing great work and you've got a great story to tell. Make sure your newsletter is helping you! You don't need a big budget or a lot of time to make sure it is easy to read, accessible and engaging.

FORMAT.

Don't have a fancy graphics program or a degree in design? You really don't need one. MS Publisher can help you create a simple, polished publication but be sure to **save it as a PDF** if you're emailing it to your supporters. Emailing a newsletter in a format they can't - or won't - open isn't helping your cause.

Regardless of what program you use, **select a standard paper size** if you are sending via email. Many people like to print a page or two to save as a reminder or to post and an 8 1/2" x 14" format is not standard fare.

CONTENT.

Tell a story. Data is good, but put a face on it. Talk about your impact, a life that has been changed, a project completed. That's what gets your supporters excited!

Avoid clipart. If you have a program where participant confidentiality is important, consider a photo that shows "detail" - hands sorting produce, a stack of donated diapers, a back view of volunteers packing food baskets. If you use clipart decorative elements (borders, wing-dings) make sure they look like they are members of the same "family." Diversity is good, but random graphics do not create a unified publication.

A picture really is worth a thousand words. Use pictures to your advantage. **Write less words, show more pictures**. (And yes, you really can get a usable photo from your phone!) Write your story and then edit it by half. Use action words with impact.

Let your website help you. If you have a lot of truly-important-can't-do-without details in your story, put part of the story in your eNews and include a [read more...] link to the full story on your website. If you use a PDF format, URL links in the document are live and can be clicked on by the reader. And it is a triple bonus - new content for your website, your supporters aren't overwhelmed by long articles and - when they click a web link - you've gotten them to your site where they might learn even more about you!

Never miss an opportunity to **tell your supporters how they can help you!** Always include information about how to make a donation, sign up to volunteer, support a special project, join you on social media, share your stories, etc.

DISTRIBUTION.

Start simple. Use email. No list? Capture your donors, volunteers and create a community leader list. And be sure you're always growing the list. If you're sending out your newsletter via a regular email account, **be sure to put all your recipient addresses in the BCC line.** That way, everyone's address is hidden.

Good news! If want to try one of the **email marketing platforms**, many of them are FREE and incredibly easy to use. They have drag and drop templates (it doesn't get any easier) and easy list upload features. MailChimp www.mailchimp.com is forever free if you have less than 2,000 names on your list. Vertical Response www.verticalresponse.com is free up to 10,000 emails per month.

Stuck on a technical issue? Have an idea you'd like feedback on? Just call or send an email. We're here to help!