

# THE Major Gifts REPORT

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MONTHLY IDEAS TO UNLOCK YOUR MAJOR GIFTS POTENTIAL

*A Stevenson, Inc. Publication*

REAL ESTATE GIFTS

## Accepting Gifts of Real Estate in a Down Economy

Determining whether to accept a gift of real estate depends on the type of real estate and the organization's needs, says Elizabeth E. Solender, president, Solender/Hall, Inc. (Dallas, TX), which provides commercial real estate services for nonprofits.

"If the organization can use the gift for their purposes right away, they should accept it," Solender says. "If they do not intend to use it, then they need to sell it as quickly as possible. In this current market, that may mean selling the property at a reduced price."

In both instances, says Solender, do due diligence before accepting the real estate to be sure there are no problems with title, environmental contamination, physical structure, etc.

She answers additional questions on accepting gifts of real estate in a down economy:

### *What types of real estate gifts are particularly good right now? Which should nonprofits avoid?*

"Almost any type of real estate can be a good gift. However, if the organization intends to sell the property, they need to understand the market for that property. For example, a house can be a good gift if it is in a neighborhood that is thriving and there are few, if any, foreclosures. However, if the neighborhood is full of foreclosed or abandoned houses, a quick sale may be remote. The organization could find itself stuck with a property that becomes a liability.

"Land could be an excellent gift if the organization wants to use it. Land sales in most areas have dropped dramatically. If they will not use it, an investigation of the market surrounding the land may reveal it is in an area where land sales are very few. In that case, the organization needs to be prepared to hold the land a long time which means paying property taxes, mowing it and removing trash and debris. Most organizations do not want to assume those costs."

### *What are the advantages of accepting real estate gifts right now?*

"Real estate can be an excellent source of income. Other advantages: In this economy there may be donors who are having a difficult time selling their properties. Rather than continuing to hold a property, the owner may decide to donate it to a nonprofit, thereby getting the tax write-off and eliminating the holding costs. Those nonprofit organizations that have a real estate donation gift policy in place and access to real estate professionals will be in the best position to make savvy decisions about potential real estate donations."

### *What are the disadvantages?*

"Some people might try to unload problem assets on an unsophisticated organization. An organization should never accept a gift of real estate without doing due diligence. Organizations seeking alternative sources of income might publicize their interest in real estate donations. This can be a good idea; however the organization must be careful to not give the impression that it will accept any donation offered. It can be a delicate balancing act maintaining the goodwill of the donor and evaluating the potential gift."

Source: Elizabeth E. Solender, President, Solender/Hall, Inc., Dallas, TX.  
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### When Accepting Real Estate Gifts...

Elizabeth E. Solender, president, Solender/Hall, Inc. (Dallas, TX), which provides commercial real estate services for nonprofits, shares advice for accepting real estate gifts:

- ✓ Have a written real estate gift policy ready to share with potential donors.
- ✓ Establish a real estate committee composed of business people, including a real estate broker and attorney who have access to title company appraisers, inspectors, brokers and bankers that can assist the organization in evaluating potential gifts.
- ✓ Once a policy and committee are in place, the organization should share with potential donors its interest in accepting real estate gifts.
- ✓ Don't expect a lot of interest. Real estate gifts are typically offered to educational institutions, charitable medical centers, community foundations and other large nonprofit organizations. Smaller organizations are more likely to get donations from current supporters, financial advisors and banks.

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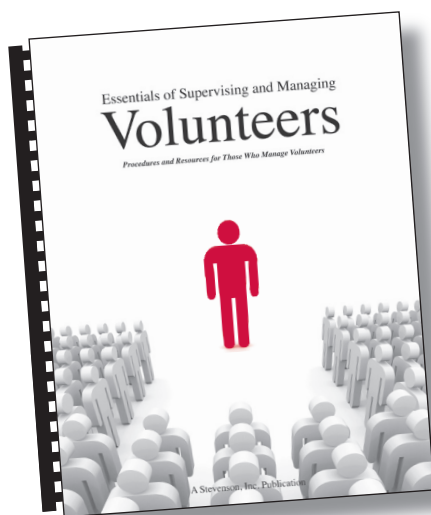


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