



IN-KIND DONATIONS

What are 'in-kind' donations?

One way to engage partners is to ask for support in the form of in-kind donations: products or services donated without receiving payment in return. These can be event spaces, gift cards, coffee and sandwiches from your local cafe, an hour of photography, workshop supplies and many other types of contributions. We've put together a few tips on how to find and approach businesses with confidence.

Know what you're asking for and why

After you create a firm plan for your event, make a wish list of the in-kind products and services needed. This will help focus your donation outreach and make each request intentional and specific.

Identify businesses and organizations

Focus your search on businesses that might want to connect with engineering and technology students, professionals or are interested in ethics, equity, diversity and inclusion or life-long learning. Local businesses may be interested in supporting your event because it connects with their brand and builds loyalty. At a larger organization try to find the person in charge of corporate social responsibility or community development, or at a smaller business, the manager or owner.

Be clear about what you can offer in return

Emphasize how support for the event will help the company achieve their goals.

For example:

- # of social media mentions they will receive and on what platforms
- how their name/logo will be branded on any marketing materials at event
- if they can include a speaker on your panel
- how you will include them in a blog post

Ask for donations

It's helpful to document who you are reaching out to and when, to ensure you aren't duplicating your efforts or approaching anyone twice. Be aware that some larger companies may have an in-kind donation submission form on their website - always look there first. There are two main methods to asking for a donation:

Email

Be brief and informative:

- Tailor the letter to each company and explain the connection with your event.
- Include the purpose of the event and how their donation will make an impact.
- Describe how their support will benefit them.
- Include links to the event's website and relevant social media accounts.

In-person

In-person asks should be thoughtful and authentic. Let the business know the details of the event and inform them about your need for in-kind donations. Have all marketing materials related to the event and a donation request form (if needed) with you. Share the details of the event with enthusiasm!

Document donations

Keep a record of donated items/services, including:

- A description of the gift.
- Date the gift was received.
- Contact information of the donor.
- Estimated value of the gift.

Thank donors

This is an important part of the in-kind donation process. Whoever secured the donation should send a thank you note to the business including a description of how they contributed/ impacted the success of the event.

