

Think Ahead Alexandria

2026 Nonprofit Toolkit

Thank you for joining Think Ahead, a community-wide legacy giving initiative from ACT for Alexandria, benefiting all Alexandria nonprofits. This campaign invites our neighbors to formalize their charitable giving intentions through wills, beneficiary designations, trusts, and other planned gifts, investing in a thriving future for Alexandria. In 2026, the City of Alexandria officially declared September as Legacy Month to raise awareness and educate our community about the power of legacy giving.

Learn more about the importance of legacy giving by [visiting this link](#).

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is organized into three levels, ranging from a simple declaration of participation in Think Ahead Alexandria and our annual Legacy Month celebrations all the way to a fully featured donor story. Start wherever fits your organization's capacity right now, you don't need a donor story or formal portrait to join Legacy Month, and you can move up a level whenever you're ready.

Customizable templates are available on [Canva here](#) (with detailed instructions below). Feel free to save a copy, add your photos, organizational name, logo, mission, and voice to contribute to the community-wide legacy giving campaign.

Tip: use #ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX to join the campaign on social media!

For questions or troubleshooting templates, reach out to development@actforalexandria.org.

Canva Template Instructions

1. Create a free Canva account.
2. Access the Think Ahead template by [visiting this link](#).
3. In the top left corner, click "File" scroll down to find "Make a copy" this will create a new version of the template saved in your Canva workspace, and retain the template for other's to use. ***Please avoid working directly inside the template so other's may share this resource*** You know you're working in your specific copy if the title of the document, visible on the tab of your workspace, starts with "Copy of..."
4. To edit a text box, simply click inside the box and type away.

5. To add a photo: identify the photo you'd like to use from your computer. Click "uploads" from the left side menu, and either drag and drop your photo into this pane, or use the purple "upload files" button to add the photo to your Canva library. Once the photo has been uploaded, click it to add it to your design. If you right click and hold you can drag and drop the photo directly into the photo frame of the design (the photo frame is the image in the template containing fields and cloud).

Level 1: Join the Campaign

Signal that you're part of the campaign.

Think Ahead Participation Statement & Logo for your Website

[Organization Name] is proud to be part of Think Ahead Alexandria, a legacy giving initiative helping Alexandrians plan gifts today that shape our community for generations to come.



Social Media Post

[Organization Name] is celebrating Alexandria's first-ever Legacy Month this September as a partner of Think Ahead Alexandria, an initiative of ACT for Alexandria. Legacy gifts help sustain the work we do every day. Learn more about planning your legacy:

[<https://www.actforalexandria.org/thinkahead> – this link can be customized to the nonprofit educational brochure hosted on your own webpage]

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Newsletter Blurb

Headline: Think Ahead Alexandria.

September is Alexandria's first-ever Legacy Month. [Organization Name] is proud to be part of Think Ahead Alexandria, an initiative helping Alexandrians build a legacy that lasts. A gift today shapes tomorrow, no matter the size. [Learn more →

<https://www.actforalexandria.org/what-is-a-legacy-gift/> – this link can be customized to the donor educational brochure hosted on your own webpage]

Small graphic copy: "I am an Alexandrian. I am planning my legacy."

Level 2: Add Your Organization's Impact

Connect the impact potential of a legacy gift to your own mission and impact, and reshare stories from Alexandria's story bank to help spread the word.

Social Post - Impact

Did you know a legacy gift can [specific impact, e.g., "fund a full year of programming" or "cover critical operating costs when we need it most"]? [Organization Name] is a proud partner of Think Ahead Alexandria. Learn how you can build a legacy of giving: [link]

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Social Post - Call-to-Action

Your support of [Organization Name] has infinite potential. A legacy gift ensures [core mission] continues well into the future. Ready to think ahead? Reach out to [Organization contact/email] to learn more.

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Social Post - Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has chosen to include [Organization Name] in their legacy plans. Your generosity ensures we can [core mission] for years to come. Interested in joining them? Contact [contact info].

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Social Post – Reshare

Donor Stories Carousel (one per portrait, or one graphic featuring all photos)

Meet the Alexandrians who are thinking ahead by planning gifts today that will shape our community for generations to come:

Laura Noble, Book Buddies Tutor, Alexandria Tutoring Consortium: "I hope my gift helps ATC serve all kids who need help in years to come."

Rev. Ken Hawes, Board Member, Just Neighbors: "I wanted to leave a legacy gift, which will allow Just Neighbors to continue alleviating the injustice of our current immigration system and make a difference in the lives of our neighbors for years to come."

Gene [Last Name], Economist, ACT for Alexandria Co-Founder: "When people look at their wealth, not just their income, they begin to envision much greater possibilities."

Edith Hawkins, President & CEO, Campagna Center: "We are honored to carry forward her legacy as we continue to serve children and families throughout Alexandria."

Every legacy starts with a decision to think ahead. Whether it's a will, a beneficiary designation, or a gift of stock, a legacy gift costs nothing today and shapes Alexandria's tomorrow.

Ready to plan your legacy? Learn more [\[Think Ahead Home Page\]](#)

Think Ahead: I am an Alexandrian. I am planning my legacy.

Level 3: Feature a Donor Story

Requires an identified donor willing to be named and quoted (with consent).

Donor Story Kickoff Social Post

This September, [Organization Name] is proud to celebrate Alexandria's first-ever Legacy Month as a partner of Think Ahead Alexandria! Legacy gifts help ensure [Organization Name] can keep [core mission] for generations to come. Learn more: [\[link\]](#)

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #AlexandriaLegacyMonth

Donor Story Social Post — Announcing a Donor

Meet [Name], a [role: donor / volunteer / board member] who's supported [Organization Name] for [length of time]. They recently chose to [type of gift: include us in their will / name us as a beneficiary / establish a fund] because [short reason, in their words if available]. Want to learn more about legacy giving? Reach out to [\[contact\]](#).

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Donor Story Social Post — ATC Example

Meet Laura Noble, a longtime Book Buddies tutor who chose to name Alexandria Tutoring Consortium as a beneficiary of her IRA. "I hope my gift helps ATC serve all kids who need help in years to come." Learn how you can build a legacy of giving: [\[link\]](#)

#ThinkAheadAlexandria #LegacyMonthALX

Donor Story Feature (newsletter or blog post)

[ORG] is proud to be part of Think Ahead Alexandria, a legacy giving initiative helping Alexandrians plan gifts today that shape our community for generations to come.

[Donor Name]

[Donor's role/relationship to org]

"[Short donor or staff quote about the gift and its impact]"

Every legacy starts with a decision to think ahead. Whether it's a will, a beneficiary designation, or a gift of stock, a legacy gift costs nothing today and shapes Alexandria's tomorrow.

Ready to plan your legacy?

Contact [Organization Contact Name/Email] to learn more.

Be Featured in Think Ahead Alexandria's Legacy Story Portraits

Each year, ACT for Alexandria collects new legacy gift stories to add five more features to the Think Ahead Alexandria legacy donor portrait collection.

Learn more about the next story drive by emailing development@actforalexandria.org.

Think Ahead Alexandria Legacy Story Portrait Bank

Use these real Alexandria stories as inspiration for your own donor outreach, as proof points in your materials, or as shareable content while you develop a story of your own.

Story #1: Alexandria Tutoring Consortium

Think Ahead. I am a tutor. I am an Alexandria, and I am planning my legacy.

Donor: Laura Noble, ATC Tutor

Method: IRA beneficiary designation

Nonprofit Leaders: Lisa Jacobs, Executive Director; Anna Davis, Chair of the ATC Board of Directors (featured)

The Gift: Laura Noble has volunteered as a Book Buddies tutor with the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium (ATC) for five years. With no children of her own, she chose to name ATC as a direct beneficiary of her IRA, a legacy investment in an organization whose impact she's witnessed firsthand. Her gift will benefit future schoolchildren in Alexandria City Public Schools.

The Impact: ATC provides one-on-one reading support to K-2nd grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. Third grade marks the shift from learning to read to reading to learn, and students who fall behind by then are four times more likely to drop out. Laura's gift ensures future students will have a tutor when they need one most.

In Their Words:

"I know the impact that learning to read has on a child. I see it every year when my student starts being able to read the posters and signs around the school as we go back and forth from the library. It makes my heart sing! One little girl would always read the daily message on the library's chalkboard, and if a few letters were smudged, she would be crushed because she couldn't decipher the entire message. Watching kids blossom as they start reading in real life is what motivates me. I hope my gift helps ATC serve all kids who need help in years to come." — Laura Noble

"I know the impact that learning to read has on a child. Watching kids blossom as they start reading in real life is what motivates me. I hope my gift helps ATC serve all kids who need help in years to come." — Laura Noble

"This gift gives us peace of mind, knowing ATC will be able to serve future generations.

*Legacy gifts like Laura's provide an immediate psychological boost for ATC – we know community members believe in us enough to invest in the long haul – while simultaneously **securing long term, lasting financial stability.** They ensure that when future early readers need a Book Buddy tutor, ATC will be there to provide one. **It's pretty amazing to think an action taken now will have a ripple effect for decades ahead.**"*

— Lisa Jacobs, ED

Story #2: Campagna Center

Think Ahead. I was an artist. I was an Alexandrian, and I am a part of our Community's Future.

Donor: Marian Van Landingham, Artist, Volunteer, Elected Representative, and Board Member

Method: Bequest through her estate

Nonprofit Leader: Edith Hawkins, President and CEO

The Gift: Marian Van Landingham, an artist and arts patron, elected representative, and longtime champion of Alexandria's children and families, left a generous legacy gift to Campagna Center when she passed away in April 2026. Her commitment to Campagna's mission spanned decades, including service as a board member and volunteer, alongside philanthropic support like this gift.

The Impact: Marian was passionate about ensuring every Alexandrian had access to opportunities to thrive. Her legacy gift supports Campagna's programming for under-resourced children, families, and adults, including early childhood education, literacy

support, and English language learning, helping ensure residents facing barriers can access the resources they need to fully participate in community life.

In Their Words:

"Marian believed that all the children of Alexandria are indeed our children, and we have a responsibility to ensure they have what they need to reach their full potential." — reflection shared by Carter Flemming, former Campagna Center Board Chair

"We are deeply humbled by and grateful for this generous legacy gift. It reflects not only the impact of Campagna Center's work, but also the meaning that Ms. Van Landingham found in our mission, which she helped bring to life through her service and volunteerism. We are honored to carry forward her legacy and will be thoughtful stewards of her generosity as we continue to serve children and families throughout Alexandria." — Edith Hawkins, President and CEO

Story #3: Just Neighbors

Think Ahead. I am a pastor and I am planning my legacy.

Donor: Rev. Ken Hawes, Board Member

Method: Endowment gift

Nonprofit Leader: submitted by Kathy Harget, Director of Development; Erin McKenney, Executive Director ; (pictured)

The Gift: As Just Neighbors celebrates its 30th anniversary, Board Member Rev. Ken Hawes made a legacy gift to the organization's new Endowment - the first Endowment gift of their 30th Anniversary Neighbor-to-Neighbor campaign to expand operations and long-term giving. His gift is intended to launch the campaign and inspire other board members and supporters to follow.

The Impact: The Endowment will support legal representation for low-income immigrants, asylees, and refugees across Alexandria and the greater DC, Maryland, and Virginia region, providing Just Neighbors with dependable, year-over-year resources to sustain its work regardless of shifts in funding or political climate.

In Their Words: *"Amid the frustration and heartbreak of watching our neighbors literally being rounded up to be deported, I wanted to leave a legacy gift, which will allow Just Neighbors to continue alleviating the injustice of our current immigration system and make a difference in the lives of our neighbors for years to come." — Rev. Ken Hawes*

"The endowment secures our commitment to our clients for the long haul, and provides the stability and flexibility the organization needs to respond to changes in funding, new opportunities, and long-term security." — Erin McKenney, Executive Director

Story #4: ACT for Alexandria

Think Ahead. I am an economist. I am an Alexandrian, and I am inspiring a legacy of giving.

Donor: Gene Steuerle, Economist

Method: Fund and Estate Beneficiary Designations

Nonprofit Leader: Heather Peeler, President and CEO

The Gift: When tragedy brought an unexpected compensation payment, Gene Steuerle and his daughters chose to give much of it away, part of it helping to launch what would become ACT for Alexandria. Since then, Gene has established donor advised funds for children, stepchildren, nieces, nephews, and others, and continues working past retirement age in part to keep funding his giving. He is now working to leave most of his estate to charity.

The Impact: Gene's giving helped seed the community foundation that would become ACT for Alexandria, and his ongoing gifts to family members through donor advised funds are designed to pass down a habit of giving to the next generation, not just a one-time gift.

In Their Words:

"When people look at their wealth, not just their income, they begin to envision much greater possibilities. For me, one of the great rewards of that shift has been the generous people I've gotten to know, they inspire me and give me hope." -- Gene Steuerle

"Giving is habit-forming; it becomes part of one's identity." -- Gene Steuerle