The Impact-First Newsletter Outline

A free template from NVS | Make It Work Monday

An impact-first newsletter shows readers what their support changed, and it doesn't ask for anything. Every issue answers the question donors carry around: “Did my gift do anything?” Leaving the ask out is the point. Readers learn that your emails bring good news, and that trust is what makes your next appeal work.

Use it as a starting point, not a rulebook. It pairs with the Gift-First and Community-Building outlines, and a solicitation outline is coming later in the series. Save your appeals for that one.

Before you write

Answer these five questions first. They take ten minutes and decide what goes in every section.

1. **What changed since last issue?** One concrete result: a family housed, a program finished, a number that moved.
2. **Who made it happen?** Donors, volunteers, partners. Name the group you will thank.
3. **What did it cost?** Tie the result to a real amount, like $50 or $500, so readers can picture their share.
4. **What's next?** One thing readers can look forward to hearing about next issue. This becomes your teaser.
5. **What proof do you have?** A photo, a quote, a short video, a before-and-after. Get permission now.

The outline

Seven sections, in reading order. The whole issue should take three to four minutes to read.

#	Section	What it does	Length	Tips
1	Headline result	Opens with the biggest change since last issue	1 sentence + photo	Put the number or the person first. “14 families moved in this month.”
2	Thank-you	Credits readers for that result	2–3 sentences	Say “you,” not “we.” Sign with a real name.
3	Impact story	Shows one person or place the result reached	150–250 words + photo	One story beats five statistics. Let them speak in their own words, with permission.
4	What your gift did	Ties dollar amounts to real outcomes	3 short lines	“$50 bought a week of groceries.” Use real costs from your budget.
5	Progress tracker	Shows how far you've come together	1 bar or 1 sentence	Celebrate the progress. Don't turn the gap into an appeal.
6	Sign-off and teaser	Promises what readers will see next	1–2 sentences	“Next month: how the new kitchen is working out.” Then deliver it.