

How Volunteers of America reached new donors on FreeWill to raise **\$4.2M+** in primary bequest commitments



THE OPPORTUNITY

Founded in 1896, Volunteers of America (VOA), is a human services organization committed to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. VOA operates under a federated model; VOA chapters across the country manage their own fundraising efforts and the national office raises funds on behalf of affiliates. With this structure in mind, Director of Development, Rachel Quesnel, wanted to find a streamlined way to effectively raise planned gifts at scale.

The VOA team first learned about FreeWill through another nonprofit's website, and decided to make the case for investing in this partnership to their leadership. VOA decided to pair their existing planned giving marketing vendor with FreeWill's Planned Giving Suite to offer a branded will-making tool to their supporters at no cost, making estate planning and legacy giving easier. After experiencing success with the Planned Giving Suite, VOA also purchased the National Featureship and Smart Giving Suite.



The value of the National Featureship is that we're bringing in people that we likely were not reaching previously. It's like having another person on staff—marketing for planned giving and bequests to people I don't have access to.

Rachel Quesnel
Director of Development

THE SOLUTION

FreeWill's National Featureship presents VOA as a featured beneficiary nonprofit to will-makers nationwide as they are making decisions about their legacy. By highlighting the organization to thousands of will-makers, VOA has acquired nearly 70 new bequest donors in the process.

While the Planned Giving Suite helps VOA promote legacy giving to their existing donor base, the National Featureship allows them to introduce high-affinity supporters to their nonprofit and raise more planned gifts.

This strategy has been especially exciting for the VOA team, whose donor base historically leans older. With the Featureship, they have begun to attract a swath of younger donors. They now have the opportunity to steward these new supporters, encouraging them to stay engaged and give to VOA for years to come.

While the Featureship focuses on expanding the reach of VOA to new supporters, the Planned Giving Suite focuses on engaging with current supporters to promote legacy giving. The VOA team has also seen great success participating in key campaigns, such as National Make-A-Will Month and using FreeWill's content to send consistent outreach to their audience. Rather than sending frequent planned giving outreach to a smaller list, they have opted to send fewer messages to a wider segment, engaging with as many people as possible.

Their team has also effectively leveraged other resources included in their FreeWill partnership. With the custom AI tool, William, they craft thoughtful Planned Giving donor correspondence and use the Marketing Library to create customized outreach including brochures and postcards for their affiliates to share with their audience.

Through these strategies, VOA has raised over \$4.2 million in primary bequest commitments, and topped \$14M in total bequest commitments, including secondary and tertiary gifts.



Big kudos to William, your AI tool. Our team has taken inspiration from FreeWill's Marketing Library, and we've started using Canva for our year-end templates. Access to these resources has really made working with FreeWill easier.

Tish Mokrzycki
Director of Digital Marketing & Fundraising

RESULTS

\$4.2M+

in primary bequest commitments

\$14M+

secured in total bequest commitments within 2.5 years of partnership

100

new primary bequest commitments