



# FUNDAMENTALS OF FUNDRAISING LETTERS

FROM THE FAITH INITIATIVE OF THE POINTS OF LIGHT FOUNDATION  
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*Writing a good fundraising letter is not a magical process. You can improve your fundraising letters dramatically with a little practice, but writing a fundraising letter is a process that requires a little planning before actually putting words to paper. The following are some quick tips on the vital elements of a fundraising letter.*

## FUNDRAISING LETTERS

- A fundraising letter campaign requires knowledge of the organization for which it is being written. Writing a fundraising letter also requires some understanding of the letter's target audience. These areas of consideration represent the start point and the end point of the process of a fundraising letter campaign. What goes in between is the message—the letter itself.
- What, specifically, will any funds raised through the letter accomplish for the public good? A fundraising letter should directly answer what human need will be fulfilled due to the generosity of the donor. For example, you don't simply build a hospital, you establish a healthcare facility that will provide relief of human suffering and improve and extend the lives of people in the community. It will create jobs, be a focus of community pride, and stimulate economic growth in the community.
- You should ask for a specific amount in your fundraising letter, or at least a range. Why try to sell somebody on the value of the work of your nonprofit but not give them the price? Ask for an amount in your fundraising letter and you shall receive.
- The fundraising letter should also provide a timeline for a response. In order to motivate the donor to respond quickly, you might add, "Now is the time to make your decision to help, before your opportunity to positively change a life is lost." You can also ask for a response "this week" or by a specific date.
- Make sure there is a way for the donor to easily make a gift. Include a pledge card and a return envelope with your fundraising letter. Some organizations use a postage-paid envelope, while others imprint "thank you for your additional gift of a stamp" in the corner. It is best to make it as easy as possible and to use postage-paid envelopes in fundraising letters. When they do respond, treat all donors as if they are the most important partner you have and thank them in a meaningful way for their gift. Hand-sign the thank you letter.
- The best fundraising letter campaigns are targeted to smaller groups of people who have some sort of interest or affiliation with your organization or the types of charitable services you provide. A fundraising letter sent to a general category of people will fail to yield meaningful results.
- The most successful fundraising letters are generally no longer than a single sheet of paper. At most, stretch the letter to the back page to include relevant data. People are either hooked in the first paragraph or not at all. Think of 500 to 750 words as a good target number before a fundraising letter reader will lose interest. Include your web address in your fundraising letter so that the reader can learn even more about your organization if they so desire.

Adapted, with thanks, from [www.hopeco.com/fundraising\\_letter.htm](http://www.hopeco.com/fundraising_letter.htm).  
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