

Fundraising Tips for Tough Times: How to Write a Successful Fundraising Letter

Pull the reader in: make it passionate, personable and interesting. Use “I” and “you.” Share your endurance effort and NF connection. We can also provide a “NF Hero” story. Appeal to your donors' hearts with descriptions and anecdotes and then share facts and figures. See the “Team Fundraising Dollars at Work” section on our Web site for current NF research progress. Highlighting research progress and funding results instills ownership and integrity in the cause.

Be specific when asking for money: mention a specific amount(s) and set a goal. Communicate exactly what is needed. You should clearly identify a critical need and then explain how our organization can effectively address that need.

Examples:

- "Our CTF NF science and research programs fund approximately \$3 million each year; our team is seeking to fund \$1.5 million of research this year."
- "Think about contributing an amount per mile (\$10 for each mile I run for a total of \$260.00)."
- "My money run goal this year is \$3,000."

Appeal to the readers' sense of urgency by giving a deadline.

Example: "We would like to receive all the donations in by January 1 in order to publicize the team's event total amount."

Include a “P.S.” at the bottom: A postscript is a final effort to summarize your letter and convince your readers to act on your request. Did you know that the most read part of the letter is the P.S.?

Formatting: Make your letter easy to read. Some readers will read the whole letter, and others will skim, so make it easy to understand the core of your message without reading the entire letter. The eye needs to rest, so leave plenty of white space around your copy by:

- Avoiding paragraphs that are more than seven lines long. But do vary the length of your paragraphs.
- Using bullets rather than listing items within sentences.
- Using subheads. If the letter is long, try centering and underlining the subheads.
- Underlining sparingly but consistently to call attention to key words and phrases.
- And, try to keep to one page.

Thank you: a statement of gratitude is polite and subtly assumes that a contribution will be made. Express gratitude for the reader's generosity and for taking the time to read about your cause.

Conclusion: wish the reader well and leave a positive feeling in their mind regarding your cause.

For the maximum reply, include a return envelope. Make it easy for people to donate by telling them *how*. People respond to clear instructions.

Example: "Just check the box on the reply card and mail it with your check in the enclosed, postage paid reply envelope."