

Writing a Case for Support

WHAT IS A CASE FOR SUPPORT?

A case for support clearly states your organisation's vision, and as it is written with passion, it compels potential donors and funders to support you. It's essentially the story of your organisation and should underpin your fundraising efforts.

Your case for support should:

- Share your vision and mission (what your organisation wants to achieve and how you will achieve it)
- Make it very clear why someone should fund you/why they should care – demonstrate that you are a good cause, doing good (and needed) work
- Tell donors/funders what projects your organisation is currently seeking funding for
- Be written for your donors (i.e. contain nothing your organisation wouldn't share publicly, avoid using abbreviations that won't be understood outside of your organisation, etc.)

Sometimes organisations have 2 versions – a long and a short version and only share the short version directly with donors. This probably depends on the size of your organisation. The document should not be too short – probably at least 4 pages, even for a small charity. It doesn't really matter how long the long version of the document is so long as it's useful to you.

HELPFUL HEADINGS WHEN WRITING A CASE FOR SUPPORT

1. An opening case study/example of your work

Depending on the nature of your organisation and who your beneficiaries are, you may be able to write an emotive opening statement which illustrates the difference you make. So talk about a case study (with permission or by making it anonymous, of course). Paint a picture of the circumstances someone/an animal/depends was in and the difference your organisation has made. This is important because people you send your case for support to, including funders, will decide whether to read the rest of the document based on this.

2. About your organisation

Resources:

How to Write a Case for Support for Your Non-Profit by Joe Garecht (parts 1 and 2)
(<http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/strategy-and-planning/nonprofit-case-for-support/>)

Who you are, your vision and mission, what you have accomplished in the past, what you do.

3. Projects in Need of Funding

What are the current projects for which you require funding? They should all fit with your vision and mission. Here you'd include all the summary info (about each one) you're likely to need for a funding application, including a budget. This can be thought of as a 'shopping list'. Make the case for why you need to do it now. You may only have one project at times or you may always have lots, it depends on the nature of your work. If you also need to raise a certain amount for core running costs each year and these cannot be attributed to projects, include that sum here and what it covers.

4. Outcomes and statistics

Proof that what you do is needed and makes a difference. You could have some more case studies here, but also some statistics. These may come from your own monitoring and evaluation and from, for example, the local authority to paint a picture of the level of deprivation in the area where you operate (for example).

5. Ways to Help

If your case for support (or one version of it) is to be given straight to prospective donors and funders, you should end the document with ways they can support you (through your website if you have a function for accepting donations, by making a donation to you by cheque etc.)

KEEP IT UP TO DATE!

Your case for support will need to be regularly updated. Aside from funding applications, it can be used (in part) when writing newsletters, updating your website, on social media, marketing materials and more. You should use your case for support in this way so that no matter who is doing what (from your organisation), you are using the same language and information about your organisation as a starting point.

It's best if one person, ideally a confident writer, takes responsibility for writing the case for support. However, they should be supported by others, ideally trustees or senior staff members, who have input into the document (providing information and ideas).

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Your board of trustees should see your draft(s) before a final version is approved. This document is most effective if it has the backing of all your trustees and management (at least) so it's a good idea to have it approved (and revised) at a trustees' meeting.

Although every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of items in CAVA resources, users are urged to check independently on matters of specific interest.

For details of your local office see www.wcava.org.uk

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