

Fill-in-the-Blank Fundraising Appeal Template

This is probably the most important letter I'll write this year. And I'm sending it to you and other caring neighbors in our greater Atlanta area who I'm hoping will help.
Donna

{Address Block}

What does music mean to you?

Dear {First Name} (never "Dear Friend"),

You may want to consider a bold over-sized headline.

Include at least one ask on the first page.

1. Your lead/opening sentence/headline/paragraph

Why are you writing? Engage your reader from the start. Lisa Sargent suggests a "visual of inviting donors down a path..."

Example: "Close your eyes for a moment. Think back to that moment when you became a first-time parent.¹"

Ask early, ask often!

2. Your Story

Remember, your story should focus on **ONE individual** and should convey emotion. *How are you bringing your donor into the picture?*

3. Your Offer

Here's where you'll share your donor's impact.

What is their gift making possible? Be succinct. Remember, **statistics don't sell!**

Example transition sentences: "Today, more than ever."²

"It's only possible with the help of support like yours..."³

4. The Ask

Convey a sense of urgency. Why do you need the donor's help NOW?

5. Reinforce the ask and wind down

Samples: "A child's future is in your hands."

"To make it easier for you, visit our website..."

"Thank you for being the power behind this work."

6. Reinforce your mission in your Close,

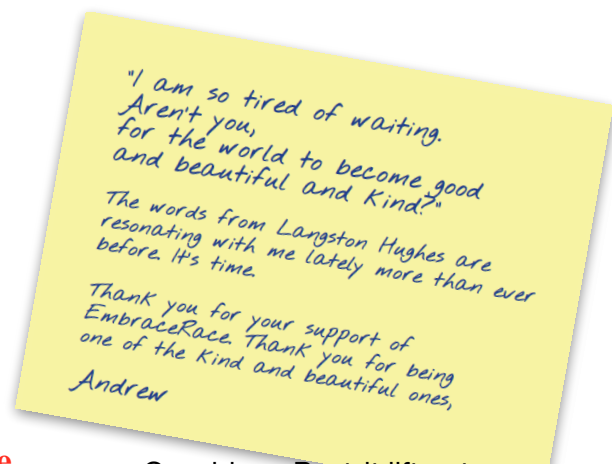
"Yours for the children,"

"With deepest gratitude,"

(live signature in blue ink)

7. PS: Reinforce your call to action. Add a deadline.

"Your gift of \$___ makes ___ possible."



Consider a Post-it lift note or handwritten note in the margin.

¹ Pamela Grow. Easter Seals Acquisition Letter. 2021

² [How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters](#). Mal Warwick.

³ Merchants Quay Ireland. July 2014.
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1. Use a Serif font, 13 pt and higher for greater readability for older eyes (Times New Roman is good).
2. Indent your paragraphs and include plenty of white space for greater readability.
3. Keep it conversational. Imagine you're writing a letter to a dear friend (you are!). Reading your letter out loud can catch awkward phrasing.
4. What's the most important word in your letter? **You.**

As in "Because, thanks to your support, the goal of that little girl dreamer doesn't seem quite so out of reach these days."

As in "Your generous support will help to reverse this destructive spiral in our state."

As in "Thank you for being one of the kind and beautiful ones."

5. Graphic enhancements work! Bullets, underlining, boldfaced text, handwriting in the margin, highlighting. Ugly is good.
6. Don't forget the Hemingway app. Run your letter through. Aim for a 5th grade or below reading level.