

A Simple Template for Your Next Appeal

Ready to put it all together? Now that you have your sights set on a fabulous appeal that shares your story, focuses on the donor, and is ready for inbox stardom, use this template to jot down the key parts of your appeal letter.

From

Your appeal should come from a real person, or at least use the full name of your organization. Acronyms, technical jargon or a “do not reply” style email address will make your message more likely to be deleted.

Subject Line

The subject line is the most important part of your email appeal. Its purpose is to make your message stand out in a reader’s inbox and entice them to open your message. Keep your subject line short, relevant and compelling. Front load your subject line with key terms in the first 50 characters, to account for the way different email programs might display your message.

Salutation

If possible, use the recipient's name, spelled correctly

The emotional, interesting opening

Don't start with the typical "we need your help". Open your appeal with a vivid, emotional image that illustrates the need or the impact a gift could have. Or show supporters the difference they are making. Try to focus on an individual story rather than overwhelming the reader with mind-numbing statistics or massive scale.

1st call to action

Include a short call to action that allows readers to quickly click to make a donation. Vague calls to action like "support us" are more likely to confuse than to motivate.

Example: "Please make a year-end gift so more children like John can graduate this year" with a big donate button next to that call to action.

How to help

Provide detail about what the donor gift will make possible. Clarity and specificity are vital. This is where you can suggest a gift amount and a designation.

Example: "Your gift of \$100 will mean one student like John will be tutored every day until graduation this school year," or "Your donation will help us buy a sonogram machine and vitamins to ensure every mom and baby is healthy." Include information on the specific impact a donation will have, but be sure not to mislead your reader if donations will go into a general fund instead of being earmarked for a specific individual.

2nd call to action

Provide a clear call to action that tells the donor exactly what you want them to do and how they can do it.

Example: "Click here to make your tax-deductible donation now."

Closing

Thank the reader for their attention and sign a real person's name, along with several ways for your donors to contact you: ie., email, phone, and physical address.

P.S.

In the P.S. reinforce the sense of urgency.

Example: "Remember, you are our best partner in advocating for abducted children. Please give now so we can train 600 police this year." Or "We are nearly to our goal. Your gift will help put us over the top. Thanks for your support."