

Donation Request Letter Workbook

Everything a donation request letter needs, in one fill-in workbook - the six required elements, a full letter template, a short email version, a customization guide by recipient type, and a one-page worksheet.

Templates & Letters · ultimatedonations.org/resources/donation-request-letter-workbook

A donation request letter has one job: make it easy for the person reading it to say yes. This workbook gives you the six elements that job requires, a full letter you can copy, a shorter email version for programs that take requests by inbox, a guide to adjusting the ask for four common recipients, and a worksheet you can fill in before you write a single sentence.

Work through it in order. The worksheet at the end is deliberately last - once those answers exist, the letter writes itself in about the time it takes to make coffee. Use it alongside our guide to [what a donation request letter should include](#) and the wider [how to ask a company for a donation](#) walkthrough, and browse the rest of the library at [free fundraising resources](#).

The six elements every request needs

Everything else in a request letter is optional. These six are not.

- **Who you are.** Your organization's name, a one-sentence description of what it does and who it serves, and your role in it.
- **What the event is and when.** The event's name, date, and purpose. A reader who skims should still catch the date.
- **The specific ask.** Name one thing: a gift certificate, a pair of tickets, a gift basket. A named item is easy to say yes to; an open-ended ask is easy to defer.
- **The deadline.** The date you need an answer or the item in hand. Without a deadline, your letter has no urgency and no follow-up hook.
- **Your tax status.** Your 501(c)(3) status and EIN if you have them, or an honest description of your group if you do not. Many programs have historically asked for documentation, so put it in the letter rather than waiting to be asked.
- **The thank-you and acknowledgment plan.** How the donor will be recognized: a written thank-you, a mention in the event program, a receipt for their records. Only promise what you will actually do.

Keep the whole letter to one page. A short, specific letter is quicker to read and quicker to act on, and it leaves the reader with a decision rather than a summary to make sense of first.

The full letter template

Copy the letter below, replace every [bracketed placeholder] with your details, and delete anything that does not apply to your group. Resist the urge to pad it.

[Date]

[Contact Name] [Company Name] [Street Address] [City, State ZIP]

Dear [Contact Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am [your role] with [Organization Name], a [one-line description of your organization and who it serves] in [City, State].

On [Event Date], we are holding [Event Name], a [type of event - dinner, auction, fun run] to raise funds for [specific purpose the money supports]. We expect around [number] guests from [your school, league, or community].

We would be grateful if [Company Name] would consider donating [one specific item - a gift certificate, tickets, a gift basket] for our [raffle, silent auction, or prize table]. To include it in our event materials, we would need to receive it by [Deadline Date].

[Organization Name] is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, EIN [number], and we are happy to provide a donation receipt and any documentation you need. [If your group is not a 501(c)(3), replace this sentence with an honest description of its status.]

Every donor is thanked in writing and acknowledged in our event program. [Add any other recognition you actually plan to provide.]

Thank you for considering our request. I will follow up by [date], and you can reach me anytime at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely, [Your Name] [Your Role], [Organization Name] [Phone] and [Email]

The short email version

When a company takes requests by email, compress the same six elements into a message that fits on one phone screen. Put the event name and date in the subject line so it survives a crowded inbox.

Subject: Donation request - [Event Name], [Event Date]

Hi [Contact Name],

I'm [Your Name] with [Organization Name], a [one-line description] in [City, State]. On [Event Date] we're holding [Event Name] to raise funds for [purpose].

Would [Company Name] consider donating [one specific item] for our [raffle or auction]? We would need it by [Deadline Date]. We are a 501(c)(3) (EIN [number]), and every donor is thanked in writing and acknowledged in our event program.

Happy to send any paperwork you need. Thank you for considering it!

[Your Name] - [Phone] - [Email]

Customize the ask by recipient type

The template works for any company, but the item you name and the tone you use should change with who is reading. Four common recipients:

Recipient	Ask for	Adjust the letter by	Send it to
Locally owned company	One specific product or a gift certificate	Leading with the neighborhood connection - the families, teams, or classrooms nearby that your event serves	The owner or manager, by name where you can find it
National chain	A gift card, product sample, or in-kind item the local store stocks	Naming the store location nearest your event, and keeping the letter short enough to attach to the company's own request form	Whatever the program's page says, which is often a corporate form rather than a person
Restaurant	A gift certificate, catering tray, or dessert for a prize table	Mentioning how close your group is to that location, since neighborhood ties carry weight	The general manager, ideally in person outside a meal rush
Hotel or resort	A one-night stay certificate or a room-and-amenity package	Adding your event's audience and your paperwork up front, because higher-value asks pass through more approvals	The general manager or the community relations contact listed on the program page

Whatever the recipient, look the company up in the [donor directory](#) before you write - we track 4,000+ companies, and each donor page describes what that program has historically offered and where to check its

current status. Matching your ask to what a program actually gives costs a few minutes and spares the reader from having to decline something the program never offered.

One-page worksheet

Fill this in first. Every blank below maps to a bracketed placeholder in the template, so once the column on the right is complete you are transcribing, not composing.

Fill this in	Your answer
Organization name	
One-line description of who you serve	
Your name and role	
Event name	
Event date	
What the money supports	
Expected guests	
The one item you are asking for	
Deadline to receive it	
Tax status and EIN, or an honest description	
How you will thank the donor	
Your phone and email	
Follow-up date	

Track what you send

A letter you cannot find again is a letter you cannot follow up on. Keep one row per request - company, date sent, contact, what you asked for, and the answer when it comes - and check it once a week. One polite follow-up after a couple of weeks of silence reads as organized; more than that reads as pressure.

When the answers start arriving, thank every donor in writing, whether or not they said yes. The list you build this year is the warm list you start from next year, and a company that passed this time is one you can approach again without starting the introduction over.

Common questions

Should a donation request letter be mailed or emailed?

Email is the practical default, and many companies route requests through their own online process anyway. A mailed letter still works for local, in-person relationships. Check the company's donor page for how its program has historically accepted requests.

How long should a donation request letter be?

One page or less. Five short paragraphs - who you are, the event, the specific ask, the deadline, and your tax status plus thank-you plan - is enough. Longer letters bury the ask.

Do you need to include your tax ID in a donation request letter?

Include your EIN if you have one, because many programs have historically requested tax-exempt documentation. If your group does not hold one, describe its status honestly instead. This is informational, not legal advice.