

WRITE A FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING APPEAL

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: _____

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)

Dear _____ *(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.

For example, consider this opening from Take Root, an agency founded by former abducted children to help victims of child abduction after they have been found: *“When I was three and a half years old, two men in black coats and hats lifted me up by the arms off the front lawn of our home on Long Island, New York. My legs kicked wildly into the air between us - I was thrown into a waiting car and driven away. . .”* This is the story of Scattergood Moore, who is one of the survivors who put their hard-won wisdom into Take Root’s work to improve America’s support to formerly missing children.

Or this, for an after school program: *“I am writing with amazing news: Thanks to you, John Jameson graduated from high school and is headed to Georgetown University this fall. And he is not alone. Your support has made possible a **100% graduation rate** for our 12 seniors. That’s right - your support resulted in success **for every single student we sought to help**. Imagine what we can do together for the class of 2013.”*

Maison de Naissance in Haiti also has a powerful opening story: *“When Dr. Stan Shaffer visited Haiti from his native Kansas City, he never expected to deliver a baby in a hospital parking lot. But that is exactly what happened. The mom had been turned away from the delivery room because she was penniless. Since we built Maison de Naissance in response to that need, no one has been turned away – and we’ve never lost a mom to childbirth.”*

(1st call to action)

Include a short call to action that allows readers to quickly click 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’s gift could make possible. Clarity and specificity are vital. Example: *“Your gift of \$100 will mean one student like John will be tutored every day till graduation this school year,”* or *“Your donation will help us buy sonogram machines 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. For 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: i.e., by replying to your email, your phone number as well as listing your physical address.

(PS)

In the PS, reinforce the sense of urgency. For example, *“Remember, you are our best partner in advocating for kids who were abducted. Please give now so we can train 1,000 police this year”* or *“We are nearly to our goal. Your gift will help put us over the top. Thanks for your support.”*

(Sharing)

Encourage supporters to forward your appeal to family and friends to help spread the message. If you have social sharing options, it's a good idea to include them here as well. People are more likely to give if they hear about your organization from someone they trust, such as their social connections.