

Creating a Case for Support

Erynn McInnis, CFRE

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. What is a case for support?
3. Case resources (internal)
4. Case statements (external)
5. Q&A



Introduction

Erynn McInnis, CFRE

Foundation Relations

Bellarmine University

$30+ million raised (2015-2026)

Fundraising background in higher education, healthcare, and the arts.

The case for support is the justification for fundraising.

(Seiler, 2022).

What is a case for support?

Essential prerequisite for nonprofits

The case for support extends beyond the organization itself to the broader cause and community it serves.

The rationale underlying fundraising

The case for support brings together the information and evidence used to demonstrate why an organization merits philanthropic investment in its mission and work.

Establishes the right to seek support

An organization earns the right to seek philanthropic support through its ability to address unmet social needs and effectively advance the cause it serves.

(Seiler, 2022).



Case resources (internal)

Mission statement, values

Goals, desired outcomes

Objectives, measurable results

Programs, client stories

Finances, budget(s), IRS forms

Governance, volunteers

Staffing, partnerships

Facilities, service delivery

Strategic planning, evaluation

History

(Seiler, 2022).

Case statements (external)

The case takes many forms

Use case resources to inform communications, public relations, and fundraising efforts (e.g. brochures, media, proposals, direct mail, and face-to-face solicitations).

Adapt the case to donor interests

Tailor case statements to reflect donor interests and convey excitement, a sense of the future, meaning, and relevance.

Connect with donor values

Create case statements that ensure your message is accessible, understandable, and aligned with the values and interests of prospective donors and funders.

(Seiler, 2022).

The case for support articulates the urgency of addressing a problem or unmet need and demonstrates the nonprofit's capacity to deliver solutions.

(Seiler, 2022).



Q&A

Grant opportunities

Duke University

Funding database that allows search by keyword and filters results by discipline, eligibility, topic area, funding type, agency, and deadlines.

The University of Chicago

List of open funding opportunities sponsored by private organizations, including foundations and corporations.

Grant Ready Kentucky

A curated list of funding opportunities and programs relevant to Kentucky-based nonprofit organizations.



Sample proposals

Open Grants

An open repository of funding proposals, primarily focused on research.

National Endowment for the Humanities

Samples of successful grant narratives.



Grant-writing tips

Read and follow instructions; understand the grantor’s aims.

Write to the evaluation criteria and address all requirements.

Be kind to the reader (design, style).

Be accurate, engaging, persuasive, and make the value clear.

Maintain narrative flow and ensure all sections advance the case.

The basic parts of a proposal

- Cover letter or a letter of institutional support.
- Executive summary, with request ($), goals, and outcomes.
- Background information: organization, program, and/or project.
- Statement of the problem or a statement of need.
- Description of activities (who, why, how, where, when, & what).
- Expected outputs, impacts, and/or results and an evaluation plan.
- Case for the sustainability of the program and/or project.
- Timeline, budget, and budget narrative for the scope of work.



Thank you!

Image source and citation

Image source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. All images are public domain artworks accessed through The Met's Open Access (OA) program.

www.metmuseum.org

Fig. 1. John Frederick Kensett. *Salt Meadow in October*, 1872.

Fig. 2. Thomas Cole. *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm—The Oxbow*, 1836.

Fig. 3. Margareta Haverman. *A Vase of Flowers*, 1716.

Fig. 4. John Frederick Kensett. *Sunset Sky*, 1872.

Fig. 5. Thomas Cole. *Clouds*, ca. 1838.

Fig. 6. Théodore Géricault. *Horsewoman*, ca. 1820.

Fig. 7. Sakai Hōitsu. *Blossoming Cherry Trees*, ca. 1805.

Seiler, T.L. (2022). Articulating a case for support. G.G. Shaker, E.R. Tempel, S.K. Nathan & B. Stanczykiewicz (Eds.), *Achieving excellence in fundraising*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394329199.ch13