



## A Guide To Soliciting and Compiling Letters of Support

**Overview:** Letters of support can be very valuable instrument in supporting your grant request or other donor activities. A well-organized letter of support can 1) verify need, 2) endorse the proposed solution, and 3) document collaborative efforts among service providers. Fortunately, many organizations are willing and supportive of providing letters of support. Unfortunately, requests for letters of support often get moved to the back of the to-do list for most busy non-profit managers. This document provides some helpful tips on how to effectively solicit and compile letters of support for your project.

**Step 1 – Identifying Prospects:** There are typically four categories of support letters that organizations should focus on. These include:

- *Letters from Community Leaders:* These help establish the credibility of the organization and/or its leadership.
- *Letters from Collaborative Partners:* These help demonstrate that the proposed project will be additive and not redundant to the service community.
- *Letters from Contributing Supporters:* These help demonstrate tangible resources that are being dedicated to this project.
- *Letters from Impacted Constituents:* These help provide a benefit of action and a consequence for inaction.

**Step 2 – Making the Ask:** Contact the prospects by phone or e-mail to request a letter of support. Briefly, provide the following information:

- Provide a brief explanation of the project for which a letter of support is being requested
  - Who will it serve
  - What will it produce
  - What are the outcomes expected from implementation
- Make sure the prospect knows the official name of the project/program (include this in an e-mail if at all possible).
- If a prospect has provided resources or will be pledging resources (cash, labor, or in-kind) ask them to include an implicit reference in the letter.
- Tell the prospect you wish to use the letters to support grant applications and other fundraising efforts and ask them if they approve of this use.
- Tell the prospect you will provide a concept template and guidelines if they would like.
- Provide a specific deadline (no more than two weeks out) in which you need the letter back.
- If you haven't received your letter of support by two days before it is due, send a tickler e-mail to the prospect.

### Step 3 - General Guidelines (customize the information below and include in e-mail ):

Thank you for agreeing to provide a letter of support for the **NAME HERE** project. As we discussed previously, we will be using this letter in our grant application packets as well as other outreach efforts. Below are a few tips that may help you when preparing your letter of support. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. We are hoping to receive all signed letters by **DATE AND TIME**.

- Please prepare the letter on your organization's letterhead and limit to a single page if possible.
- Address the letter to **NAME** – do not address it to the funding agency.  
NAME, TITLE  
ORGANIZATION  
STREET ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE, ZIP
- Please do not date the letter.
- Please refer to **NAME OF PROGRAM OR PROJECT** by name when preparing the letter
- If you or your organization has made a donation of cash or in-kind to this program/project in the past or are planning on making a donation in the future, please be specific about the nature of your support in the letter.
- Traditionally, a letter of three paragraphs tends to work best within the spatial limitations. One common format includes:
- Use your title in your salutation.
  - Paragraph 1 – Introduce yourself and your organization
  - Paragraph 2 – State why you or your organization supports the project/program

*and the most appropriate alternative for paragraph 3*

  - Alternative 1 – Provide details of your donation or future donation, supporting the project
  - Alternative 2 – Provide example of how the project furthers collaboration.
  - Alternative 3 – Provide definitive statement of support and impact of the project.
- Please sign letter
- If possible, please provide letter via e-mail in pdf format.

*Revised 11/14*



## Sample Letters of Support

### From a community leader:

Fred Smith, Board President  
Anson Street Theatre Preservation League  
1234 Anson Street  
Watson town, OR 97111

Dear President Smith:

Our community is more than an assortment of buildings and businesses. Our community is the collection of dreams and hopes of its citizens. Therefore, as the Mayor of Watson town, I am honored to provide this letter of support for the Anson Street Theatre Preservation League and your efforts to renovate and restore this landmark of our community.

Since 1914, the Anson Street Theatre has been the social and cultural center of our community. Like many members of Watson town, I remember going to the theatre with my family when I was a child and taking my children to that same theatre years later as an adult. When the owners of the theatre announced they were closing operations last year, I like many Watson town residents were concerned that about the future of this ornate and stately building. That is why I was pleased to see a group of area citizens come together to formulate a strategy of how we could not only save the building but also turn this historic structure into a community celebration venue. The vision of the Anson Street Theatre Preservation League is inspiring and infectious and will lead to a revival in the downtown core of our community. It is for this reason that the Urban Renewal Agency of Watson town, was excited to purchase the building and enter into a 10-year lease agreement with the League to operate and manage the theatre.

After recently reviewing the restoration and renovation plans developed by the Anson Street Theatre Preservation League, I am enthusiastic about your effort to preserve the historic features of the building while undertaking necessary safety and access upgrades. Further, as a demonstration of our commitment to his effort, the Urban Renewal Agency of Watson town has recently agreed to forgive lease payments for the next five years, while the League pursues the resources to execute this plan. I congratulate you on your efforts and stand willing to provide whatever additional support I can.

Very truly yours,

Jan Smith-Farmer, Mayor  
Watson town, Oregon



**From a collaborative partner:**

Martha Jones, Executive Director  
Watson town Senior Center  
2471 Anson Street  
Watson town, OR 97111

Dear Martha:

For more than 25 years the Stuben County Senior and Disabled Services Association has worked to improve the lives of senior citizens within our county. Our work is challenging but rewarding and is greatly assisted by the passion and energy of collaborative partners such as the Watson town Senior Center. That is why I am excited to provide this letter of support for your *Senior Center Computer Lab* project.

The development of a computer lab at the Senior Center is much needed. By providing the tools and training, this lab will greatly impact the quality of life of the seniors of our community. A recent report published by the Oregon State Commission on Senior Citizens, noted that social isolation is one of the most pressing issues facing elderly citizens. Further, the study went on to explain that rural communities, such as Watson town, are disproportionately impacted. Our organization recognizes the capacity that the new *Senior Center Computer Lab* could have on combating this issue by providing lifelong learning opportunities as well as helping area seniors develop skills with modern communication tools that can keep them engaged with friends and family throughout the country. Clearly, the proposed *Senior Center Computer Lab* dovetails nicely with our own *E-aging Initiative*, which is designed to ensure all seniors have access to internet and e-mail.

As evidence of our commitment to your organization and the new *Senior Center Computer Lab*, the Stuben County Senior and Disabled Services Association is prepared to provide up to 240 hours of instruction and coaching at the new Senior Center over the next two years. In addition, we will provide outreach and marketing for the program to ensure that all area seniors are aware of the program and the exciting new amenities at the Senior Center. We know that working together we can make sure that all Watson town area seniors have the information and access they need to incorporate the capacity of the computer into their daily life..

Very truly yours,

Roger K Rossborn, Executive Director  
Stuben County Senior and Disabled Services Association



**From a contributing supporter:**

C.E. Rathboan, Executive Director  
Watson Art Association  
3636 Anson Street  
Watson, OR 97111

Dear Ms. Rathboan:

In 1971, I moved to Watson to raise my family. Later that year, I converted the garage of our new home into a small art studio where I could pursue my passion of oil painting. Over the next two decades, my studio on Miller Street replaced my garage-studio, and I was fortunate enough to become a working-artist. For the last two-decades, teaching art has been a major part of my business and my life. As I teacher, I have been able to witness first-hand the impact that art can have on the lives of people. It is with this understanding, that I am thrilled to support your *Healing through Art Initiative*.

As I understand it, *Healing through Art* is designed to provide victims of domestic violence with tools and coaching to allow them begin the healing process. I have witnessed the capacity of art, to facilitate healing and have been honored to participate in the pilot project undertaken last year by Randa Jones and her team. Through this experience, I know the *Healing through Art Initiative* will be a great success and an important addition to the services and programs available in our community.

In addition to providing this letter of support, I have also provided a donation of \$2,500 as well as three paintings to be used in your annual fundraising auction. I hope these donations will help you secure the start-up funding needed to ensure the *Healing through Art Initiative* becomes a permanent fixture within our community.

Sincerely,

Mary Masterson, Owner  
Masterson Studio



**From an impacted constituent:**

Randy Wasserman, Executive Director  
Stuben County Head Start  
4242 Anson Street  
Watson town, OR 97111

Dear Randy,

I first moved to Watson town as a single parent of a four year old. I had come to town looking to start a new life for my family. Upon my arrival in town, one of my first actions was to sign my child up for Head Start. Little did I know that this single act would change the lives of both me and my son.

Prior to Alan starting Head Start, I met with Shelly Dulimer. Shelly explained that in addition to nutrition and education services, the Stuben County Head Start offered parenting classes. As a young mother I knew that I could use this help and signed up immediately. Soon I discovered that Head Start also worked with the local Community College to provide GED completion courses. Through the encouragement of the Head Start staff, I signed up and went back to school.

Over the next six years, my goal of starting a new life for me and my son has been largely fulfilled. Not only did I complete my GED, I went on to receive my Nurses Aid certification and am now working at the Stuben County Hospital. Alan recently completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Wilson Elementary School and received the highest marks on his report card in seven of the eight categories.

When I read in the paper today about your new *Early Child Learning Center project*, I wanted to take a moment and write this letter. Just as you supported Alan and me when we first came to town, we want to support you and your project. While we don't have a lot of money, we are willing to volunteer wherever we can. Please know that the Stuben County Head Start does make a difference and that difference is real. We see it daily as we get ready for school and work in our small home on Pancel Street. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Brenda Smilkins

*Revised 11/14*

