

Representing Your Beneficiaries Well

Writing A Good Request

- We owe it to our applicants to tell a good story, to tell **their** story.
- Please don't take it for granted that our donors will give, we need to appeal to them for their help.
- It's not a competition, but our donors can only give to so many requests- so make yours stand out!
- Ask for a realistic amount.
- Be aware of specific limits.

How to Improve a Request

So what makes a good request?

- Details, details, details! **Who** they are, **what** they need, **why** are they in this position? Feel free to use **where** and **when** too!
- Use full and clear sentences- take the time to write it out fully, and ensure it reads clearly and easily. Read it back to yourself and make sure it makes sense.
- The title is set to begin with “£100 needed for...” so please make sure your title naturally follows on from that.

How to Improve a Request

Some key things to avoid:

- Abbreviations. Our donors might not necessarily know what the abbreviations stand for, so spell it out.
- First person narrative. While not “against the rules”, it’s not best practice. Our donors want to hear from you, the advocate.
- Language that suggests you are applying to a fund or for a grant.
- Vague requests. Be specific- Acts 435 is about meeting small, specific needs.

How to Avoid An Email!

Where possible, we will edit requests to make them “passable”, but on occasion we do have to email Advocates about their requests:

- Where it appears that the request is a contribution towards a larger need.
- There’s too little information, even if I have tried to pad it out!
- Where names have been used (even pseudonyms).

Good Requests Speak Volumes

“Following a relationship breakdown, Miss E has been putting herself through University so she can become a nurse. She is in her last year and has a job lined up to start in September. However, with limited income at the moment and a young daughter to look after, she has fallen into arrears with the housing association to the tune of £311. If we could reduce the arrears by £150 that would enable her to arrange to pay the remaining debt off in manageable monthly installments.”

Writing a Good Thank You Message

- One of the key aspects of the way we work is to give our donors direct feedback.
- Some donors give to multiple requests, so please do link the thank you message back to the original request.
- Some donors give locally, and may give to one Advocate's requests frequently, so try to make your messages distinct.
- Donors connect with the Applicant's story, and are hoping for (and deserve) more than just a generic thank you.

How to Improve a Thank You Message

Please avoid messages that are:

- Poorly written- “Client is very appreciative with the donation.”
- Generic- “This lady was very grateful for the donation and said a big thank you.”
- Overly brief- “Thank you” “This will make a difference.”
- Impersonal- “Thank you to all the donors who helped with this application.”

Simple, but Effective

Some Advocates find a formula that works for them, then tweak it for each message:

- "Thank you for your help, your generosity made it possible for SB to buy a hob and cook meals- he was really looking forward to warming some soup and having it with crusty bread!"
- "Thank you for your help, your generosity made it possible for PR to get a fridge. She will now be able to buy some fresh fruit and veg. She is looking forward to buying fresh milk too as she has been using UHT and doesn't like the taste!"

Put A Smile on Donors' Faces!

"I just try and remember what the client says when I tell them that we have the requested money, and most are just so happy that people have donated that they speak easily about the difference the money from Acts 435 will make to them. It puts a smile on my face and is one of the pleasures of my job!"

“The lady was so overwhelmed when given this money. She cried so much. The relief that she could now get away [from domestic violence] was enormous. She asked me to say:

"Whoever gave this money has saved me from more pain, now that I can leave. My prayers have been answered and I cannot thank you enough. Whoever you are thank you, thank you, thank you."

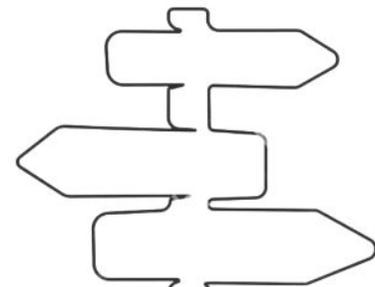
From me too - thank you! What a joy it was to be able to pass this gift on."

“I'm not sure if this is possible but, if you can, please send a message back to this lady for us?”

We wish you every happiness in your new home but, above all, that you will feel safe from the first night, and that you will soon regain confidence and hope in the life ahead of you. If this marks a new page in your story, then that's all the thanks we need. God bless.”

ACTS
435

'... giving to anyone who has need'



Advocate Gathering 2021