

Case for Support

A guide to help you create a compelling case to inspire giving to your campaign

**THE
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Strengthening Nonprofits

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A Case for Support is the rationale for why a donor might support your campaign.

You are seeking to answer the key points:








- 1 —————
What is problem(s) we are trying to solve/ challenges we are trying to overcome?
- 2 —————
How do we plan to defeat/solve these problems and challenges?
- 3 —————
Why is this important to solve right now?
- 4 —————
What difference will solving this problem make for the community?
- 5 —————
How can donors make a difference and get involved?

[Campbell & Company](#) created a set of helpful tables and tips for The Center to Champion Nursing in America that are full of useful advice and examples to inspire you.

As they point out, it is important that you ground your case for support—and all of the messages and materials that flow from it—in an understanding of your audience and who it is designed for.. At a basic level, your audience is your current donors and funders as well as those individuals and institutions you believe may have an interest in supporting your campaign.

Different supporters will be motivated by different aspects of your case.

The table below they created shows some of the common motivations that inspire donors and funders to give.

Core Motivation	Example
 Vision	<i>Being part of an exciting idea or initiative</i> <i>“Investing” in social change or defined outcomes</i>
 Loyalty	<i>Supporting a respected leader or friend</i> <i>Supporting a respected institution or group</i>
 Identity	<i>Connecting to or supporting like-minded people</i> <i>Being part of a community or movement</i>
 Issue	<i>Advancing a cause, mission or passion</i> <i>Making the world a better place</i>
 Gratitude	<i>“Giving back” as thanks for own success</i> <i>Giving others “like me” the same opportunities</i>
 Self-Interest	<i>Supporting a cause that helps self/friends/family</i> <i>Advancing own profession or industry</i>
 Social or Personal Gain	<i>Receiving public recognition for philanthropy</i> <i>Gaining access to a socially desirable group</i> <i>Receiving financial benefit for gift (i.e. taxes)</i>

It is worth noting that the motivations listed above do not include a number of items that organizations commonly believe are a core part of their case.

In general, donors are not motivated by the following:



Your Age

You will be assigned a project lead who will be your main point of contact for interacting with The Varga Group.

We ask that you assign one person as our main point of contact when interacting with your team. The project leads will coordinate schedules and communications with others who need to be kept up today and involved.

Your Accolades

Most donors are not motivated by awards or recognition you have received. Again, these can be noted as a way of legitimizing or credentialing your work and impact, but they are not the heart of your case.

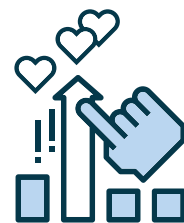


Your Needs

Donors give both to fulfill their own philanthropic needs and to meet the needs of the people and communities you serve. Rarely are they inspired by cases that focus on an organization's internal needs (such as a staff position, technology or a facility); rather, they are motivated by what that investment allows your organization to achieve in meeting the needs of others.

Your Advancement

Few donors give to an organization purely to make it a leader in the field or more visible in the state. Instead, they are motivated by how your own advancement as an organization will better position you to fulfill your mission.



Your Internal Goals

Your strategic plan, internal priorities and the dollar amount you attach to your fundraising goal are not why your donors give. They give because of how you will enact your plan and priorities to serve your mission, and how you will use philanthropy to help achieve that.

Crafting Compelling Messaging

Creating simple-donor centered language for your case is often different from our normal style of writing. [Campbell & Company](#) put together a wonderful chart that illustrates how to shift language we typically use into a more impactful, donor-centered voice.

Description	Goal	Typical Language	Messaging
Simple	Be direct, make every word count and avoid jargon.	As a nonprofit organization, we rely on the philanthropic support of our donors to advance our work.	<i>Only you can make our work possible.</i>
Assertive	Take a position or state a belief.	Our Action Coalition helps nurses build the skills they need to become leaders in a changing health care environment.	<i>We believe nurses have the power to transform health care.</i>
Singular	One idea, not a full explanation	We are advancing projects that address the most critical needs in the nursing field, that have an impact on the largest scale, and that have the potential to be replicated in other states.	<i>We are focusing on the work with the greatest power to change the future of healthcare.</i>
Essential	Focus on what really matters—the details will come later	Healthcare reform is bringing a new focus on prevention, community health and access to care. These issues are at the core of our work and our mission.	<i>The future of American health care depends on the future of nursing.</i>

Build Your Case Content

Use this guide to develop an outline for the case for support for your campaign. Fill out each section as briefly and simply as possible. We suggest using bullet points or an outline format before writing a prose draft.

Use this set of questions and prompts to help you create the content of your campaign case for support.

1

Introduction: Why does the campaign matter?

- What is the problem you are trying to solve?
- How will the community benefit from this problem being solved?

2

The Need: What is driving this campaign?

- What challenges/barriers are you facing in solving this problem?
- What will the impact be for the community of having this problem solved?
- How will this campaign further your organization's mission?
- Whose lives will be touched/impacted/changed by solving this problem?

3

The Plan: What will be accomplished?

- What are your plans for solving this problem?
- What specific project(s) will your campaign fund?
- How is this project/campaign being funded?
- What part of the funding do you need help with from foundations, individuals and corporations?

4

Organizational Background: Why your organization?

- How is your organization uniquely qualified to undertake this challenge?
- What is your organization's track record?

5

Timing: Why now?

- Why are you undertaking this project now?
- What are the driving forces that make this urgent and compelling?

6

Theme for Your Case: What would be a good title for this campaign?

Suggest three short titles or themes that emerged as you wrote the answers to the first five questions.

Title 1:

Title 2:

Title 3:

Create a Simple Messaging Platform for Your Campaign

A straightforward messaging platform only needs 4 to 6 strong statements. The details to fill out those statements will come as you develop your fundraising communications. Use the construct below to develop a first draft of a messaging platform for your campaign.

What you want to convey	Your message
There's a problem in our state.	
This is why we are the right organization to address it.	
Here's how we plan to address it.	
Here's how that will change things.	
But it depends on your support.	

Next Steps

Share and discuss the outline you've prepared with some of your key stakeholders. Share it with your Core Committee, a group of board members, staff members and others.

Go through each topic, one section after another and ask for people's ideas. Use a brainstorming approach in which there are no bad ideas. Simply capture people's reactions and suggestions. You can make sense of them later. The outline format will help people focus on the ideas rather than wordsmithing or editing.

After these discussions you will find that you have a strong outline for your case for support. You will then be ready to ask a writer to develop a prose draft of your case using the outline you've come up with.

Draft your Case for Support

Your Case for Support should include these elements:

- ✓ Letter/note from Chief Executive
- ✓ Letter/note from Board chair
- ✓ Letter/note from Campaign chair(s)
- ✓ Quotes/images from 2 - 3 donors about why they are giving to the campaign
- ✓ Quotes/images from 2 - 3 program participants about why the campaign matters to them
- ✓ Background and details you outlined from above
- ✓ FAQs about the project and your work if appropriate/needed
- ✓ Giving opportunities
- ✓ Gift range chart
- ✓ Naming opportunities list
- ✓ Options for payment plans on multi-year pledges
- ✓ Information about securities + non-cash/asset-based giving
- ✓ List of Board members and Campaign leaders
- ✓ Intent to Give/Pledge form

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The Varga Group is a management consulting firm specializing in capital campaigns, fundraising training, retreat facilitation, board development and leadership coaching. Since 2013, we've worked with over 100 higher education institutions, independent schools and nonprofits to grow their fundraising, train their board, coach their leaders and successfully navigate their capital and comprehensive campaigns.

We have helped our clients raise more than \$100M. Our team is based in Portland, Oregon and we work with clients nationwide.

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