

## How to Write an Effective Letter of Support

The goals of a letter of support are to:

- Specify what the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) will contribute to the research
- Convince the reviewer that the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) will fulfill the request
- Convey enthusiasm for the work
- Lend credibility to your proposal

As long as your letter demonstrates specifically what your collaborator(s) will be contributing to the project, there is no right or wrong way to draft a strong letter of support. Below is one format that you might consider following.

### Example Letter of Support Format:

Letters of support should be:

- Unique and written from the point of view of your collaborator(s) or consultant(s)
- Printed on institutional letterhead and signed by the appropriate party (*someone authorized to make the commitment of support*)
- Addressed either to the PI of the proposal or to the granting agency – check the guidelines of the specific grant
- Address any specific guidelines (*e.g., particular assurances*) required by the funding agency or the university, as outlined in the request for applications (RFA) or as requested by your research administrator
- Follow any other guidelines (*e.g., page limits*) required by the funding agency

### First Paragraph (1-3 sentences)

- Statement of support for the project/research – use words that convey enthusiasm (*example: “I am pleased to support your research proposal titled xxx.”*)
- Identify the research project by name/title

### Body Paragraphs (1-3 paragraphs, or more as necessary)

- If applicable, state how the goals/research of the collaborator(s)/consultant(s) are well-aligned with the goals of the proposed research. What is the collaborator’s motivation to work with you?
- State as specifically as possible the role of the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) in the project
- State why this collaborator/consultant is the appropriate person/organization/lab to perform the work

- What is their relevant experience/expertise? Have they previously worked on a similar project? Do they have a successful track record?
- Do they have specialized equipment or reagents? Other resources?

\*If you have worked with this collaborator before, be sure to say so! It demonstrates that a productive relationship has already been established.

**Last Paragraph** (1-3 sentences)

- Include a cordial closing. The level of formality should be determined by the level of personal relationship between the PI and the collaborator/consultant. If you know each other very well, it can be less formal.

## **Letters of Support**

When requested, letters of support can be very influential in determining whether or not your project/program is worthy of funding. Most letters have three parts: an opening statement that identifies the project/program where funds are being sought, one or two middle paragraphs that indicate the relationship of the writer to the effort seeking funding, and a closing statement.

Be sure all your supporters address the same person at the same address. Additionally, all supporters must have the correct proposal details such as title of grant program, title of your project, etc. Lastly, be sure all letters are completed in the proper style with the proper, original signature.

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### *Example Letter of Support:*

February 1, 2006

Ms. Mary E. Wilfert  
NCAA CHOICES Program  
P.O. Box 6222  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Dear Ms. Wilfert:

It is my pleasure write a letter in support of the proposal (name) being submitted to the CHOICES Program by our (name dept) at Albion College.

Something here about writer's relationship/knowledge of situation and how project/program will impact it.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the (Dept) as they seek external funding to support a program designed to (whatever you are targeting). EX "Any programs that can help our students make better decisions about drinking and its consequences will benefit our students, campus, and the community at large." In other words, you need a very concise and strong closing summary statement.

Sincerely,

(original signature "John Doe" here)

John Doe  
Vice President for Student Affairs