

# Approaching Potential Donors

These guidelines aim to assist clients/families when approaching potential donors for help to purchase equipment items for individual ownership.

Check the website before applying to any organisation as they each have their own application process requirements. For example some use application forms, others ask for letters of support from health professionals, some require quotes.

It is wise to try to find out as much as you can about the person or organisation you are seeking funds from so you can link your request with their ideals and goals. For example, the Variety Club slogan reads 'transforming the lives of Australia's sick, disadvantaged and special needs children'. You can show in your application how they can help to fulfil that aim.

## *Letters of Request*

The main points to include in a letter of request are:

1. Explain your circumstances
2. Show the need
3. Describe the benefit
4. Explain the consequences
5. Detail the costs
6. Thank them in advance

### ***Explain your circumstances***

Every potential donor wants to know his/her money is going to benefit the recipient. Therefore, when you apply to a trust or foundation for equipment items, this is the most important message to get across. Start your letter by explaining who you are and your living arrangements. When applying to local service clubs, this is especially important, as the members prefer to help individuals living in the geographical area they support. Briefly describe your marital status, how many dependents you have, whether you are on a disability support pension or a single wage earner, etc. Briefly describe your disability or your child's disability and how it affects your/his/her daily life.

### ***Show the need***

State your request, and describe why the equipment is needed. How will it help you/your child? Talk about benefits in terms of health, community access or personal development (physical, social, educational). You might stress the importance of the equipment item needing to be customised to suit your individual needs.

If you have purchased any other equipment items in the recent past, this may be a good place to explain this. It will show you have extra expenses as a result of your disability, and it will also hint that you will need ongoing assistance to fund your equipment needs.

Medical or disability jargon may confuse people not familiar with the terms, so write this information as if the reader knows nothing about disability or cerebral palsy.

### ***Explain the consequences***

It is important to let your reader know what will happen if you aren't able to purchase the equipment. Again, your health could be affected, school achievement could be compromised, it could lead to isolation, or a dream might not be fulfilled.

### ***Detail the costs***

If this is a request to cover the gap between Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme and the actual costs, explain this in the budget section. You might have received some money from a

relative or other organisation which should be outlined here. If the donor sees you have been making an effort to fund the equipment, it could prompt them to be more generous. Be sure to check whether or not the potential donor requires quotes. Usually one is sufficient, but occasionally a provider may request three. With specialised equipment, this is not always possible, so this should be explained in the letter if this is your case.

### ***Thank them in advance***

It is important to thank potential donors in advance for helping. It shows you are positive about the results, that you believe it is a valuable investment for them to make, and shows your appreciation.

### ***Successful Funding***

Once you receive funding from a donor, write a letter of appreciation. It is not always a requirement, but the organisation and those who support it will appreciate your acknowledgement. It will also increase your chances of a positive result if you need to ask for further assistance. You may even 'warn' them that you may approach them in future, as your equipment needs are a permanent part of your independence and quality of life.

A follow-up letter a few months later will keep you in their thoughts. In this letter, describe the benefits you are experiencing as a result of their help. Include a photo if possible.

### ***Other Circumstances***

Occasionally a press report will inspire a person to help with a donation but they would prefer to know where the money is to be spent, such as buying equipment, etc. When this happens CPLQ's Community Liaison Officer will contact the therapy team in the donor's area to identify a client in need of equipment. Various community groups raise money and when they have reached their goal they advise the Community Liaison Officer and the same process is used to find a recipient.

### ***Unsuccessful Requests***

Should your request not be successful, please inform CPLQ's Community Liaison Officer before reapplying to the same service club or organisation.

### ***Large Requests***

If the equipment item you need costs several thousand dollars, you might ask a service club to manage an appeal on your behalf. The club could offer receipts to individual donors which would be eligible for a tax deduction. Once the funding target is met, a cheque could be forwarded to the supplier on your behalf.

### ***Summary***

1. Do your homework regarding your potential donor. What is the aim and philosophy of the foundation, club or organisation? What type of donations have they approved in the past?
2. Give a clear and concise description of what you need.
3. Outline why it is needed and if there is a specific date it is needed by.
4. State the benefits the equipment will make to the person receiving it.
5. Thank the donor for helping.

**[www.cplqld.org.au](http://www.cplqld.org.au)**

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