



## Overview: Understanding Letters of Support and Professional References for Grant Applications

Nonprofits applying for community grants are often required to include letters of support and professional references as part of their application. While both are crucial for showcasing the organization's credibility and impact, they serve different purposes. This document provides a clear explanation of their distinctions, along with examples to help organizations craft a strong and complete submission.

### Professional References

- **What they are:** These are individuals who can vouch for the applicant organization's qualifications, experience, and professionalism. They usually have a direct working relationship with the organization or key personnel. References typically include a name, title, organization, contact information, and a brief description of how they know the organization.
- **Purpose:** They validate the organization's ability to manage the grant effectively based on past professional interactions.
- **Format:** Typically, just a list of names and contact information. They're not detailed letters.

### Example of Professional References:

1. **Jane Doe**

Title: Program Director

Organization: Community Impact Foundation

Relationship: Partnered with [Your Organization Name] on a neighborhood revitalization project.

Contact: janedoe@communityimpact.org | (555) 123-4567

2. **John Smith**

Title: Executive Director

Organization: Youth Empowerment Alliance

Relationship: Collaborated on youth mentoring programs in 2023.

Contact: john.smith@yea.org | (555) 987-6543

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## Letters of Support

- **What they are:** These are formal letters written by external stakeholders, partners, or beneficiaries expressing their endorsement of the organization's work and the proposed project.
- **Purpose:** They demonstrate community support and alignment with the organization's mission or proposed project.
- **Format:** A formal letter addressed to the grantor, typically 1-2 pages long, outlining why the supporter believes the organization deserves the grant.
- **Content:** Often includes specific examples of the organization's impact, the supporter's relationship with the organization, and how the project aligns with community needs.

### Example of a Letter of Support:

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[Organization's Letterhead or Template]

[Date]

[Grant Committee Name]

[Grant Provider Name]

[Address]

#### **RE: Letter of Support for [Your Organization's Name]**

Dear Members of the Grant Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for [Your Organization Name] and their application for funding from [Grant Provider Name]. [Your Organization Name] has been a vital partner in addressing [specific community issue] in our community.

As the [Position/Title] at [Organization Name], I have had the privilege of collaborating with [Your Organization Name] on [specific project/initiative]. Their commitment to [specific focus, e.g., youth development, community health, housing support] is unparalleled, and their innovative approaches have had measurable impacts. For instance, [include an example, such as "their after-school programs have increased graduation rates by 15% in our community"].

I firmly believe that [Your Organization Name] is uniquely positioned to successfully implement the proposed project, which will [specific impact of the proposed project]. Their track record of fiscal responsibility and programmatic success gives me full confidence in their ability to utilize the grant effectively.

Please feel free to contact me at [your contact information] if you have any questions about my experience with [Your Organization Name].

Sincerely,  
[ Full Name]  
[Title]  
[Organization]  
[Contact Information]

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