



# Writing Solicitation Letters

Technical Assistance from Reading Is Fundamental

Here are some things to keep in mind as you prepare your letter to potential donors.

- ◆ As an approved RIF program, you may use the Reading Is Fundamental logo. The RIF logo and school letterhead immediately identifies your project as a charitable one.
- ◆ Be brief. Present your program and the needs your efforts address in 4-5 paragraphs, of no more than 4-5 short sentences each. Emphasize the results of your program.
- ◆ Concentrate on raising funds for books rather than operating expenses.
- ◆ Give some perspective of the tangible impact of each individual donation. "Every six dollars will provide a child with three books."
- ◆ You may want to suggest how much the person might consider giving (\$6, \$12, \$60, etc.). Express this in terms of the impact on your program: "A donation of \$60 will serve 10 children in our RIF program for a year."
- ◆ Mention your target date for raising the needed funds: "Sending your donation by (target date) will help us purchase new books in time for our first book distribution in October."
- ◆ Emphasize that all money given will be used locally to directly benefit children.
- ◆ With their permission, mention other groups or individuals supporting your project.
- ◆ Be open to other forms of assistance. Time and talents can be as important as money.
- ◆ Invite anyone interested in more information to contact you directly.
- ◆ Extend an invitation to attend an upcoming book distribution.
- ◆ Make sure each letter contains original signatures. Two signatures are more authoritative than one!
- ◆ Look into the possibility of "distributing" your letter at meetings and events rather than mailing it. Personal contact makes a difference!

The following are sample solicitation letters you may adapt for your program. For more information, please see the Fundraising Section of the *RIF Handbook*.

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. ■ 1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW ■ Suite 400 ■ Washington, DC 20009  
Toll-free: 1-877-RIF-READ ■ Fax: 202-536-3515 ■ Internet: [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)



# Sample Solicitation Letter

## For Specific Age/Grade Levels

*Technical Assistance From Reading Is Fundamental*

Dear (name of prospective contributor):

For the (# years of RIF), our (grade #) graders have been involved in a wonderful initiative called Reading Is Fundamental (RIF). RIF is the best way we have found of encouraging children to make reading a lifelong habit, one that they will enjoy for years to come and one that will give them the important skills they need to make their way in the world.

Many children who have mastered basic reading skills by fourth grade begin to lose interest and momentum as they grow older. Moreover, there are children (in your community) who do not have books at home that they can call their own. Without books and without motivation, many children grow up unable to read a newspaper or simple instructions on a job application.

(Grade #) grade is the perfect time to set our children on the right track. By enabling each (grade #) grader to select his or her very own book three times a year, and by planning activities that celebrate books and reading, our RIF program emphasizes the fun and importance of reading at a time when our children need it most.

We need your help! Last year, we provided (# of books) books to more than (# of children). We could not purchase these books without the generous support of community members, service clubs and local businesses. Each contribution of (\$ amount) enables our volunteers to bring ten new, attractive children's books to (grade #) graders. Please consider giving that amount or whatever you can share. Because (corporate sponsor), a corporate partner in the initiative, will provide a matching grant for funds we can raise locally, whatever you give is multiplied.

There is no better way to see the effect of your donation than to attend one of our book distributions. Please feel free to contact us should you wish to attend or if you would like more information on our RIF program.

On behalf of the (grade #) graders at (your organization's name) and of all our volunteers, thank you for your support!

Please send your contributions with checks payable to:

**(Your local RIF address)**

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,

Your Name(s)  
Title  
RIF Project Name



# Sample Solicitation Letter

## Appeal To Community Members and Businesses

*Technical Assistance From Reading Is Fundamental*

Dear Citizen:

Today, one in five American adults cannot read well enough to understand a want ad or a road sign, much less a newspaper or simple instructions.

So, what can (your town) do about it? One concrete solution is to encourage reading at a young age. Reading Is Fundamental(RIF) motivates youngsters to want to read by letting them choose and keep books they like and by showing children that reading is fun and important.

The (your town) RIF Program is going into its (# of years) year. Volunteers raise funds, order books, provide activities, and distribute free books to children in grades (grade #s). Last year we distributed (# books) books to (# children) children in three distributions!

You, as a business we patronize, as employer of a parent, a local club, or a parent yourself, realize the importance of reading. We are asking you to contribute (\$ amount), which will buy enough books for (# of kids) children. Of course, any amount you donate to RIF would be greatly appreciated. In order to have the funds to order our books for the (month) distribution, all donations must be received by (date). I will be in touch with you in next week to discuss our RIF program in more detail. If you have questions before then, please contact me at (phone number and email).

Please send your contributions with checks payable to:

**(Your local RIF address)**

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,

Your Name(s)  
Title  
RIF Project Name



# Sample Solicitation Letter

## For Programs Completing Their First Year

*Technical Assistance From Reading Is Fundamental*

Dear Friend:

We are about to complete our first and very successful year of Reading Is Fundamental at (your school). Many children who have never received a brand new book of their choice were given this opportunity. Others, who are fortunate to have books of their own, were excited and grateful about choosing a new book. The volunteers for this program have done an outstanding job in motivating these young readers. They are very excited about beginning a new year with RIF.

As we begin our second year, we are in need of funds for purchasing books. The RIF program is expected to cost (\$ amount) per year. The books cost an average of (\$ amount) each. We will be providing (# of kids in grade #s) three books each--totaling (\$ amount). The printing, copying, postage, and supply costs are estimated at (\$ amount). The printed bookplates will be used for the child to write their name in their book. As done this year, the bookplates will also have the contributors' names printed on them. We would appreciate your support in bringing RIF to (school name).

Please look over the enclosed information about RIF and the bookplate that we used this past school year. I will be contacting you to see if you will be able to help us with this endeavor. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (your telephone number).

Please send your contributions with checks payable to:

**(Your local RIF address)**

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,

Your Name(s)  
Title  
RIF Project Name