

Patient Advocate Letter of Support

OVERVIEW

A letter of support is often required as a part of the researcher's grant application. Your letter of support should demonstrate your enthusiasm and support for the proposed research project. Your letter can help strengthen the application by providing the advocate perspective on why the research is important to patients. It is an important piece of the application package that researcher and advocate peer reviewers find very helpful.

Below are some ideas and suggestions to consider as you write your letter of support. Be sure that the content of your letter is tailored to the project. It is not necessary to include every item below, just the items that are relevant to the project you are supporting.

NOTE: You can ask the researcher to provide a draft letter for you to edit and fill in your personal information.

FORMAT

- Use personal letterhead if you have it. If not, include your name, address, phone # and email address at the top right or bottom (under your signature) of your letter.
- Ask if there is a page limit. If there is no page limit, stay within 1-2 pages, include page number if it is more than one page.
- Date the letter
- Address the letter to the funder or to the researcher (depends on application instructions), but either is usually OK.
- Sign the letter.
 - Insert a 'picture' of your signature. (sign a piece of paper, take a photo of it with your smartphone, insert the photo (.jpg) as your signature. Send your signed letter back to the researcher (.doc or .pdf)
 - Print, sign and scan to send pdf back to the researcher

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

- Include the name of the researcher and the title of the application.
- Indicate your commitment to serving as an advocate on the research project.

BODY OF LETTER (2-4 paragraphs)

Talk about your Advocacy Experience

- Experience with cancer
- Advocate involvement (organization, your title if you have one, areas of focus)
- Involvement with community organizations and outreach events
- Reasons why you are interested in supporting breast cancer research
- Experience that you have in collaborating with researchers
- Other advocacy experiences

Talk about the Research

- Give a short one- or two-sentence summary of the research
- Describe why you believe the research is important to patients
- Researcher can help with this section by providing a first draft for you to edit.

Your interaction with the Researcher

- Describe how you have worked with the researcher to-date on this project
- If you have worked with the researcher before, briefly describe your experience
- Comment on the strengths of the applicant that you have observed, and indicate confidence in their ability to conduct the research

Your Role if Project is Funded

- How will you continue to provide input on patient perspective throughout the project, and in what way(s)
- Note if you will attend and/or co-present with the researcher at any meetings/seminars where research results will be shared. Include comments regarding where the presentations or meetings would occur, and how often they might happen.
- Discuss how you will keep current on progress of the research, including how often you will meet with the researcher and their team.
- Discuss how you will assist the researcher in connecting with the cancer community.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Discuss your perception of the impact the research will have on patients, short- and long-term
- Describe why you believe that the research should be conducted and why it should be funded
- Restate your commitment to support and collaborate with the researcher on the project
- Thank the funder for their consideration of the application