

## ***OBTAINING LETTERS of SUPPORT and COMMITMENT***

It is important to distinguish between "Letters of Support" and "Letters of Commitment."

**Letters of Support:** A letter of support proclaims that an interested party believes a project is worthwhile. Letters of support may be solicited from community organizations, businesses, other academic institutions, or anyone else who is part of the service population. These letters do not commit to any financial or in-kind support. They are merely to indicate to funding agencies that Normandale has established connections with businesses and people who are familiar with our mission, share our values, and are interested in the success of our proposal.

When soliciting a letters of support, explain to writers that you are asking for a letter because the College knows they have an interest in the proposed project or could potentially benefit from its activities.

**Letters of Commitment:** A letter of commitment shows that an organization believes a project is so worthwhile it is willing to commit personnel or resources to it. Letters of commitment from partners and collaborators demonstrate that the funding agency is not the only source of financial support for a project.

Some examples of commitment are:

- cash donations
- donation of supplies, equipment, or other goods
- use of facilities or services (such as office space or computer service)
- staff time devoted to a project

Letters of commitment should be obtained from project partners and collaborators only after data generation, discussion about the merits of the proposal, and development of a work plan and timeline. Because commitment implies financial support in one form or another, writers must be fully informed of project expectations and the extent of their commitment.

**The Letters:** Send the writers a project summary or an abstract of the project and encourage them to call you with questions or feedback. Also provide them with a draft letter, using the sample letters of Support or Commitment as your guide for creating one. If the letter is from a student or parent, it may be handwritten. Formal letters should be printed on company or agency letterhead. Ideally, a president, director, or other ranking official should sign a typed letter. Suggest that they sign in blue ink so the original will be easily identifiable. If the project involves parents or children, handwritten letters from them are acceptable.

Give the writer or contact a deadline by which to return the letter. Letters should be addressed to Normandale's president, but they should be mailed or delivered – unfolded – to the Grant Development Office. Originals will be kept on file to submit with the proposal. Copies will be made for project team members as needed.

**Always review the letters!** If there are serious errors (misspelled names, inaccurate references to the project), don't hesitate to ask the contributor to correct them and provide a new letter. For this reason, begin the process of obtaining the letters as soon as practical. Some corporations require a legal review of the letter, so allow ample time for reviews and corrections.

## **LETTER of SUPPORT**

*The following is suggested wording for a letter of support. If appropriate, produce a draft letter for the signer, customizing this sample to your project and the organization. The letter doesn't need to be long – one page is preferred – but it is more important for the letter to be complete about the organization's or person's relationship to Normandale.*

I am writing to express support of Normandale Community College's [name of project] proposal. The project you propose to establish will [State how the project will address community, industry, or educational challenges. Express your or your company's interest in the proposed project – how do its goals or objectives match your vision or mission?]

*[If you have partnered with Normandale Community College in the past, briefly describe the association and benefits received. If a student or a parent, give examples of how your association with Normandale has affected your life.]*

Our [company or organization] is or [We are, I am] pleased to continue a relationship that is beneficial to us [me] and to the Normandale Community College.

## **LETTER of COMMITMENT**

*The following is suggested wording for a letter of commitment. If appropriate, produce a draft letter for the signer, customizing this sample to your project and the organization. Although one page is preferred, it is more important for the letter to be complete in its description of financial or in-kind support. In some circumstances, this letter may be accompanied by a more formal agreement or contract that will specify financial or equipment obligations. The agreement will be kept on file, but will not become part of the proposal unless required by the funding source.*

The [organization] is pleased to continue/ to initiate a relationship with Normandale Community College under the [project and grant name.] This grant is very valuable to the continuing efforts that [organization] is making to -----

(If there is an existing relationship): Over the past several years, [organization] has enthusiastically participated in xxx program to create conditions necessary for etc. [detail past commitments and involvement.]

[Organization] will commit to [project/grant name] by the involvement of our personnel, financial resources, and in-kind contributions [Be specific if possible – office space, three word processors, training facilities, etc.] It is clearly a priority for us, and our students/workers/community will be well served.

In closing, I would like to say that I'm proud that [organization] and Normandale Community College have embraced this project.