What’s the difference between a donation receipt and a thank you letter? One is transactional and one is relational, yet many organizations use them interchangeably. They are, indeed, two separate pieces of donor communication. A receipt provides the transaction elements – gift date, gift amount, and the tax-status information for the organization. The thank you letter’s purpose is to express gratitude and strengthen the relationship between the donor and the organization.

We’ve deconstructed a donor thank you letter to highlight the elements of a great donor thank you letter.
Organization Letterhead Here

(Date)

(First Name)(Last Name)
(Address 1)
(Address 2)
(City), (State), (Zip Code)

Dear (First Name),

You stepped up to be a vital partner in bringing hope and new beginnings to the streets. Thank you for your contribution. Because of your support, (Organization) meets these urgent needs and provides connections to the additional resources that lead to life transformation.

Week after week, more than 600 people look to (Organization) for a warm meal and connection to life-changing resources. When you give to (Organization), you ensure they find what they need.

Thank you for coming alongside (Organization) and the mission to battle poverty, isolation, and hunger.

Sincerely,

(Name, Title)
(Organization)

Want to stand out to your donor? Be sure to mail a thank you letter or handwritten note for gifts no matter the amount.

Personalize! You must use a professional salutation. It can be either formal — Dear (Title Last Name) or casual Dear (First Name). Never open your letter with "Dear Friend," or "Dear Donor."

Include a bit about your mission, or the "why" of what you do.

As you close your letter, express your gratitude one more time.

Ensure that your letter is signed by a staff member or volunteer. You may choose to include an email address or phone number to encourage further conversation.

Keys to a great donor

Thank You letter

It's best to be prompt, try to send thank you letters within 48 hours of receiving the gift.

Use an attention getter for your first sentence that puts the donor in the spotlight and uses visual language. Try not to start your letter with "Thank you for your generous donation."

Next, genuinely say "thank you."

Use your second paragraph to share more about the impact or reach of your organization's programs.

The closing of your letter should remain professional. Refrain from using anything too personal.

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As you close your letter, express your gratitude one more time.

Ensure that your letter is signed by a staff member or volunteer. You may choose to include an email address or phone number to encourage further conversation.
Dear ___________________ ,

Start with an attention getter that uses visual language to demonstrate your organization’s mission. You can use a description of something made possible by the donor’s gift.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Next, genuinely say thank you and briefly mention how support will further the organization’s mission.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Then, use a specific program or impact metric to demonstrate what donations help accomplish.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Express your gratitude one more time.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Include a professional closing and signature of a staff member or volunteer.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________