



Writing Letters to Lawmakers: Quick Tips

Follow this guide to write effective letters to local, state, and federal elected officials.

Overview

Formal letters to elected officials, regardless of the level of government, are an effective tool to communicate your organization's position and share information on a particular issue. They also serve as valuable internal tools, showcasing your advocacy efforts and serving as evidence of historical work on an issue. Use the tips below to maximize the impact of your formal letters to lawmakers.

General Process and Best Practices

- **Be strict on formatting.** Appropriately address the letter to the elected official and their office. It's often best to send the letter digitally, but still maintain formatting requirements as if the letter was sent by post. It can also be helpful to copy other elected officials on the same committee, from the same state, or who have a similar focus on the issue, and be sure to follow formatting protocols when doing so.
- **Consider length and audience.** Keep the letter to one or two pages, avoiding unnecessary length. Focus on clearly conveying your message and any requested actions, and keep in mind that staff members are likely to read it, not the intended recipient. Introduce your organization and state the issue and requested actions in the opening paragraphs, then use the rest of the letter to provide supporting evidence, detail the issue's impact, and reinforce your argument.
- **Be comfortable sharing evidence.** Elected officials and their staff work on countless issues and are often expected to be experts on a wide variety of areas. While maintaining brevity, do not hesitate to include graphs and visual data, helpful websites, and other evidence that might be helpful in conveying your message and advancing the argument. If the letter is being sent digitally, take advantage of the ability to hyperlink additional sources.
- **Build a coalition.** It's important that the letter leaves an impact on the reader. Beyond conveying a clear message, it can be helpful to invite other organizations to sign the letter. When including additional signers, consider their organization's past work on the issue, reputation, and sometimes even geographic location. Think of ways to convey that the letter's message is supported by a meaningful coalition of organizations.
- **Find ways to elevate the letter.** Sending formal letters can be helpful in informing elected officials on an issue, but they also serve as a physical tool to highlight your organization's past advocacy work and policy positions. When appropriate, share the letters on social media, with external stakeholders and coalition members, and keep a database of past letters to demonstrate your work on issues over time.
- Click [here](#) for a letter CNA joined last year, which highlights these tips!

Questions?