

Guide to Giving Testimony to the D.C. City Council

Speaking up about community issues is powerful—your voice can influence government decisions. Whether you’ve experienced homelessness, food insecurity, job struggles, or want to improve D.C. programs, your testimony matters.

You can testify in two ways:

- **Oral:** Speak at a hearing in person or virtually (usually limited to three minutes). Bring printed copies of your statement.
- **Written:** Submit your statement by following the hearing notice instructions (typically two pages or less).



Preparing Your Testimony



1. Introduce Yourself

Introduce yourself. Share your name and a little about yourself, like:

- "I live in Ward 7."
- "I work with [organization name]."
- "I have personal experience with [issue you're testifying about]."



2. Speak from the Heart

Speak from the heart. Your story is powerful. Explain how the issue affects you or people you know. Personal stories help decision-makers understand why change is needed.



3. Be Clear About What You Want

Tell the Council exactly what action you want them to take. Examples:

- "I urge you to support [bill name] because it will help families find housing."
- "Please improve [program name] by increasing funding so more people can access services."



4. Keep it Focused

Keep it focused. Share your main points and why they matter. If you're speaking in person, stick to the most important part of your testimony.



5. Speak Up

If something is working, say so. If a program or policy has helped you or your community, let them know. It helps show what's making a difference. Be direct, and confident.



6. Thank Them for Listening

Thank them for listening. At the end of your testimony, thank the Council for their time.

Email advocacy@some.org for additional information!

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