

How to Manage a Letter Writing Campaign

Purpose: One of the most effective ways to get your message out is through a letter writing campaign. People who you would never otherwise meet will read about your concerns in local papers. This may incite other people to write letters to the editor, and you can begin to understand the full range of opinions in your community.

Letter writing to lawmakers also can get your message out to important officials, even those who you haven't ever met. And these letters count. Few people take the time to write letters to lawmakers, so a handful of letters can sway an important vote or decision.

How to Use: Always encourage people to write their own letters, and not just sign a preprinted letter. Provide a sample that includes key points to mention.

A good, effective letter will consist of three key components:

1. Description of the issue in plain language.
2. A concise, simple background of the problem; put the issue in a context that will be easily understandable to the recipient of your letter.
3. Be clear about what you want the person you are writing to do about the issue. Clarify the actions you want s/he to take on this problem and the steps to get there.

Consider organizing a letter writing party to ensure that people write. Have a table at a public meeting, fair, or festival where people can take a moment to write. In either case, you need to be prepared. Be sure to bring:

- Copies of the sample letter.
- Correct addresses of newspapers.
- Correct addresses and names of lawmakers.
- Envelopes with recipient addresses.
- Pens and stamps.
- Literature about your organization.
- A few volunteers who can talk about the issues with people who drop in.

Urge everyone to write to both their lawmakers and newspapers. Keep a copy for yourselves if possible. Thank people for writing, or for taking supplies home to write letters at another time.