



Sample Testimony Outline

Good [morning/afternoon], my name is [Your Name], and I am the [Your Title] at [Nonprofit Name], an organization that supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in [Location]. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Today, I'm here to discuss the urgent need for increased funding for I/DD services in our community. Currently, there are over [X number] of individuals with I/DD in [Location], many of whom face long wait times for essential services like healthcare, job training, and housing support. These delays prevent individuals from accessing the care and resources they need to live independently and participate fully in our community.

I'd like to share the story of [Name], who has been on a waiting list for residential care for over a year. Without the necessary support, their family has struggled to meet their needs, and their quality of life has suffered. [Name's] situation is not unique, and many families are facing similar challenges.

I am here today to ask the council to allocate an additional [\$X] in funding for I/DD services in the upcoming budget. This funding will allow nonprofits like ours to expand our programs, reduce wait times, and ensure individuals like [Name] have the support they need to thrive.

In closing, I urge the council to act and prioritize the needs of individuals with I/DD. Thank you for your time and for considering this important issue.



Guide on Preparing Public Testimony for Local Council or Committee Meetings on I/DD Nonprofit

Public testimony at a local council or committee meeting is a powerful way to advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to highlight the work of your nonprofit. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you craft and deliver an effective testimony that captures attention and drives action.

1. Understand the Meeting Format and Procedures

- **Check Meeting Agendas:** Review the agenda to know when and where your issue will be discussed. Understand how much time you'll have for your testimony (usually 2-3 minutes).
 - **Know the Process:** Some councils may require you to sign up in advance to speak. Research how to submit your testimony and whether written materials are allowed for submission.
 - **Audience:** Know who the decision-makers are (council members, committee members) and their role in shaping policy or decisions relevant to I/DD.
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2. Set Clear Objectives for Your Testimony

- **Focus on 1-2 Key Points:** Since time is limited, narrow your message to the most important issues. Ask yourself: What action do I want the council to take? What key message do I want them to remember?
 - **Define Your Goal:** Your goal might be to advocate for more funding, support for a new program, or policy changes related to the I/DD community. Be specific about what you're asking for.
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3. Structure Your Testimony

A well-structured testimony helps you stay clear, concise, and focused. Here's a typical format:

A. Introduction (30 seconds)

- a. **State Your Name and Affiliation:** Begin by introducing yourself and your role within the nonprofit. For example:
"Good [morning/afternoon], my name is [Your Name], and I am the [Your Title] at [Nonprofit Name], which serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in [Location]."
- b. **Personal Connection (if applicable):** Briefly mention any personal experience with I/DD if it enhances your credibility and message (e.g., as a family member, caregiver, or advocate).

B. State the Problem (30 seconds)

- a. **Summarize the Issue:** Clearly define the problem related to I/DD services or policies that the council is discussing. For example:
"I'm here to address the critical need for increased funding for services that support individuals with I/DD in our community. Currently, many face long waitlists for essential services like job training and healthcare."
- b. **Use Data:** Include a compelling statistic or piece of data to back up your statement. For example:



“According to [source], over 500 individuals in [Location] are on waiting lists for essential services.”

C. Share Personal Stories (1 minute)

- a. Tell a Brief, Compelling Story: Humanize the issue by sharing a real-life example of how your nonprofit’s work has helped an individual with I/DD or how someone is currently affected by the lack of services.
- b. For example: “I’d like to tell you about [Name], a young adult with developmental disabilities who, after years of support from our nonprofit, was able to secure meaningful employment and live independently. But there are hundreds like [Name] still waiting for similar opportunities due to funding gaps.”
- c. Highlight Positive Outcomes: Showcase how your organization’s services have made a difference and how further support could improve the lives of others.

D. Propose a Solution (30 seconds)

- a. Offer a Clear Ask: Be specific about the action you want the council to take. Examples: “I urge the council to support a budget increase of [\$X] for I/DD services in the upcoming fiscal year.” “I’m asking the council to prioritize inclusive housing policies for individuals with disabilities as part of the upcoming development plan.”
- b. Be Solution-Oriented: Focus on constructive solutions rather than only presenting problems. Position your nonprofit as part of the solution: “Our nonprofit is ready to collaborate with the council on expanding services and ensuring equitable access to resources for individuals with I/DD.”

E. Conclusion and Gratitude (30 seconds)

- a. Restate Your Main Points: Briefly summarize your request: “In summary, I ask that the council increase funding for I/DD services to address the urgent needs in our community and ensure individuals with disabilities have the support they need.”
- b. Thank the Council: End by thanking the council for their time and consideration: “Thank you for your time and for your commitment to making our community inclusive for everyone.”

4. Tips for Delivering Your Testimony

- Practice: Rehearse your testimony several times to ensure it fits within the time limit and sounds natural. Practice in front of others to get feedback on clarity and tone.
- Keep It Conversational: While your testimony should be well-prepared, aim for a conversational tone. Avoid reading word-for-word; speak naturally as if telling a story.
- Stay Focused and Calm: Stick to your key points, and avoid getting sidetracked. If you become nervous, take a deep breath and focus on delivering your message clearly.
- Make Eye Contact: Engage with council members by making eye contact during your testimony. This helps build a connection and shows confidence.
- Avoid Jargon: Speak in clear, simple language that’s easy to understand, avoiding nonprofit or medical jargon that might confuse the audience.

5. Supplement Your Testimony with Written Materials



- **Written Testimony:** Bring a written version of your testimony to submit to the council for the official record. Include additional data, stories, or reports if relevant.
 - **Handouts:** Provide council members with concise handouts or fact sheets summarizing key points and requests, along with any supporting data. Make it easy for them to reference your materials later.
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6. Follow Up After the Meeting

- **Send a Thank-You Note:** After the meeting, send a thank-you email to the council members, reiterating your appreciation and summarizing your key request.
 - **Continue the Conversation:** Offer to provide additional information or schedule follow-up meetings to further discuss the issue.
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