



Provide Testimony Before an Agency and Best Practices

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Background: Provide impactful testimony to support your position can increase the likelihood of your desired outcome. Relevant data, impactful stories, and a communication plan can reflect positively on your position, self, and organization.

SNA Pulse Survey Themes:

-  Process overview.
-  Focus on advocacy and policy impact.
-  Best practices: Promote SNC leadership development.

Objectives:

Educate SNC leaders on how to:

- Create, draft, present, and document effective testimony to a body or agency.
- Organize multiple presenters to strengthen your position and promote collaboration.
- Present electronic and hard copy materials as takeaways that provide relevant information and evoke compelling stories





Why Present to a Governmental Body?

Which occasions would you do this?

- **To convey your position** on an item under consideration by a governmental body. This can include funding for a project or modifications to a policy or ordinance or law.

Which agencies?

- Houston Mayor and City Council meetings including Council Committees.
- Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation Policy Council (H-GAC TPC)
- Texas Legislature or Texas Transportation Commission

Prepare To Provide Testimony

- **Identify the main point, your position and your ask.**
- **Compile data** to support your position.
- **Create story** to demonstrate and align story, data and position.
- **Coordinate with Super Neighborhood Alliance (SNA)** to identify and partner with other Super Neighborhood Councils (SNCs).
- **Ensure all speakers register** to present testimony before the deadline.



Prepare To Provide Testimony

- Identify and coordinate who will testify.
- **Plan who says what.** If there is more than one person presenting on the topic from your team to an organization, 1) identify your talking points that you wish to present in advance and 2) divide those talking points amongst the team members.
- **Use your time wisely.** Most organizations limit speaking time to 3 minutes maximum. If you are presenting on the same topic previously presented, you may be limited to 2 or 1 minutes.
- **Anticipate questions** that you might be asked. Document your answer.
- If possible, discuss your presentation in advance with a member of the audience of the organization that you will be addressing to gather feedback gain support or at least a friendly face in the audience.



Prepare To Provide Testimony

- **Practice, practice, practice** your presentation as it will be presented so that you are familiar with the equipment, any space restrictions and that you complete your testimony within your allotted time.
 - **Rehearse your replies** to potential questions.
 - If presentation is virtual, practice on equipment you will use during the event.
 - **Print your talking points on paper** and use a font large enough so that you can easily read them. Avoid bullet points as even the best public speaker gets nervous and without the meat on the bones you may forget what you wanted to say.
 - **Create and review testimony** you will submit to the governmental body.
- Practice making eye contact.** Staring only at your notes may lose your audience's attention. If using a laptop, look at the laptop camera.



What To Do On Day of Testimony

- **Show up early** to the meeting.
 - Speak into the microphone.
 - Provide only new points that have not been made by speakers who presented ahead of you.
 - Give only information that you know to be accurate.
 - **Listen** to the complete question or comments by the committee member before responding to a question or comment.
- Be respectful of others' viewpoints.**



Provide Testimony

- If you have handouts for your presentation, provide them to the appropriate organization member for distribution or have another member of your team distribute them while you begin your presentation.
- **Deliver your presentation as you have practiced.**
- The clock starts when you are recognized so don't waste you allotted time.



Provide Testimony

- Provide your name and organization.
- **State your position** for the item under consideration.
- **Be specific with your ask.** Clearly state what you want to achieve.
- **Thank your audience** for their attention and their time regardless of how well or not your presentation was received.
- **Submit electronic copies** into official record of the hearing.



Answer Follow Up Questions

- Be prepared for questions.
- This can be an opportunity to work in your talking points that you may not have had time to voice in your initial time allotted.
- **Ensure to answer the question being asked.**
- Tie your response to your position and include the “why.”

