



ADVOCACY AGENDA: GUIDE FOR TESTIMONY

As an organization or community member, your voice shapes the policies affecting families and communities. Testifying includes submitting a written statement or verbally sharing a statement on the changes you want to see.

Giving verbal testimony at legislative hearings is a powerful way to share your experiences, perspectives, and expertise with lawmakers. This guide will walk you through preparing and delivering compelling verbal testimony for Family Forward's 2025 Legislative Agenda.

You can use this guide to draft testimony and advocate for Family Forward 2025 Advocacy Agenda.

By following this guide, you'll be well-prepared to deliver effective verbal testimony that showcases your expertise, passion, and commitment to creating positive change for families and communities.

Remember to stay focused, clear, and concise, and don't hesitate to reach out if you need further guidance.

Contact Marchel at marchel@familyforward.org with any questions.

TIPS FOR TESTIMONY

Before You Begin

1. **Familiarize yourself with the agenda:** Review the 2025 Legislative Agenda document (linked above) to understand the key issues and policy priorities.
2. **Identify your connection:** Reflect on how the agenda items relate to your organization, community, or personal experiences.
3. **Determine your focus:** Choose one or two specific agenda items that you want to address in your testimony.

Preparing Your Testimony

1. **Develop a clear and concise message:** Distill your key points into a brief, 2-3 minute statement (approximately 250-375 words).
2. **Use storytelling techniques:** Share personal anecdotes, examples, or experiences that illustrate the impact of the policy issue on your life, community, or organization.
3. **Focus on solutions:** Clearly state your recommendations for how lawmakers can address the policy issue. Be specific about what you want them to do (e.g., pass a bill, allocate funding, etc.).
4. **Practice, practice, practice!** Rehearse your testimony several times to feel comfortable with the material and confident in your delivery.

Logistics

1. **Check the hearing schedule:** Confirm the legislative hearing's date, time, and location. You can find information on when, what time, and what bills will be read on the Oregon Legislative Information System website (or OLIS).
2. **Sign up to testify:** Register to testify in advance through the OLIS website. [Maybe picture guides on how to find where to register for testimony?]
3. **Arrive early (If testifying in person):** Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the hearing to account for traffic, parking, and construction that is .

Structuring Your Testimony

1. **Introduction:** Start with a brief introduction of yourself, your organization (if applicable), and your connection to the issue(s) you're addressing.
2. **Personal story or experience:** Share a personal anecdote or example that illustrates the impact of the policy issue on your life, community, or organization.
3. **Policy analysis:** Provide an analysis of the policy issue, including its effects on families and communities. Use data, research, or expert opinions to support your arguments.
4. **Recommendations:** Clearly state your recommendations for how lawmakers can address the policy issue. Be specific about what you want them to do (e.g., pass a bill, allocate funding, etc.).
5. **Conclusion:** Summarize your key points and reiterate why this issue matters to you and your community.

Tips for Writing an Effective Testimony

1. Use clear and concise language: Avoid jargon and technical terms that might confuse lawmakers or their staff.
2. Be authentic and passionate: Share your genuine concerns, hopes, and fears. Your passion will shine through in your writing.
3. Use storytelling techniques: Use vivid descriptions, anecdotes, and examples to make your testimony more engaging and memorable.
4. Keep it concise: Aim for 1-2 pages (approximately 500-1000 words) at most.
5. Proofread and edit: Ensure your testimony is free of errors and easy to read.

Additional Tips for Organizations

1. Use organizational data and research: Leverage your organization's expertise and data to support your policy recommendations.
2. Highlight member or constituent stories: Share stories from your members, constituents, or clients to illustrate the impact of the policy issue on real people.
3. Emphasize the broader implications: Explain how the policy issue affects not only your organization but also the wider community.

Final Tips

1. **Stay calm and composed:** Take deep breaths and remember that your voice matters.
2. **Show appreciation for lawmakers' time:** Express gratitude for the opportunity to share your perspective and contribute to the legislative process.
3. **Follow up:** After testifying, consider following up with lawmakers or their staff to reiterate your concerns and recommendations.