

Writing to Request a Meeting

A letter can be education on its own or support a larger effort. It can start a conversation and serve as a document to capture the timeline of your work. To use a letter to leverage your goals, first you need to identify the issue you wish to raise and the change you want to see. What are the logical steps to change?



Once you have identified the issue and what change you want to see, identify your partners: who has the authority to power change? Is it a person with lived experience, a community leader, a politician, a business person, a media personality? Identify who your allies may be too- is there someone doing similar work on your issue who might be a good partner to move your goals forward? If more voices will add to your cause, discussions with potential allies can be a good idea to see if you have similar goals.

Once you have you've identified your issue, who can address it, and what you want them to do, you have the foundation pieces of your letter. In general, an advocacy letter contains the following pieces:

Introduce the reason you are writing (state the issue briefly)

Why *you* are writing - who you represent and why this issue is important to you.

- A request for connection - a meeting, a seat at a meeting table, a letter of response.
- A request for action on your issue – This is where you can provide more detail about how the issue needs to change and why. Identify what you see as positive action, whether it's a policy change, a review of a bylaw, a change in how a service is (or isn't) provided, etc. There are many forms of change, and knowing what you want specifically provides your recipient with material for response.
- Process for follow-up – repeat your request for connection, with thanks for your recipient's attention and time.

A sample letter follows on page 2



Find these resources at hreptoolkit.ca

Foundation Tools

[Guiding Principles – Human Rights and Health Equity.](#)
[Guiding Principles – Drug Use as a Health and Rights Issue.](#)
[Surveying Conditions in BC](#)

Tools for Action

[How to Engage People with Lived Experience](#)
[Beyond Stigma-Reduction – Putting Rights First.](#)
[Community Action Teams: Templates for Change](#)

Sample

Date

Address of recipient

Dear [Mayor name],

We write on behalf of the Community Action Team for [city/municipality] to request [an in-person meeting] so we may brief you on [ISSUE. For example, how bylaws [number(s)] are interpreted and enforced].

We respect the work of your office and that of Council, and offer our expertise as a community resource tasked with reversing the impact of the overdose emergency. Our community-based team has information regarding [bylaws x and y] that we believe will support your work on behalf of the citizens in [city/municipality].

[If the City Council is not represented on the CAT, background information on the CAT will help provide context.] To provide you some background, Community Action Teams are funded through the Overdose Emergency Response Centre and carry out the BC government's mandate to address the ongoing public health emergency of the overdose crisis. The Overdose Emergency Response Centre includes in its Terms of Reference that it "Support a human rights approach to overdose prevention in BC." A core part of our mandate is to support communities at a local level with interventions tailored to local community needs.

The Community Action Teams across BC are multi-sectoral, made up of frontline service providers, business owners, civic leaders, law enforcement, Indigenous leaders, and people with lived experience of drug use, either directly or family members. Our Community Action Team includes [community representatives].

Our CAT is concerned about the impact that [by-law x] is having on people at risk of overdose in our community and has some information and suggestions that council might benefit from.

We propose a meeting with yourself and the person responsible for x in your office on x date at x time. If this time is not convenient for you, please suggest ...

We look forward to speaking with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



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