

# Writing a Deputation

Writing a deputation or speech arguing for changes at a political or institutional level around a social justice issue is easy. Just use the following format as a guide for your **5 minute** deputation.

## **Preparation:**

- It is very important to understand who you are presenting to and what their role or function is – Ex. if you are presenting to a City Council Standing Committee, that means you will be deputing to specific committee members and your input will be brought to the executive committee afterwards.
- If you are presenting to the Executive Committee or other committees at council you need to know what the agenda items state – are they making a decision, receiving a report, or putting together a recommendation to Council? In order for your deputation to be considered, it **MUST** be on topic!

Ex. See below

CD6.1	ACTION			Ward:All
<b>Core Service Review</b>				
<b>Origin</b>				
(July 13, 2011) Report from the City Manager				
<b>Recommendations</b>				
The City Manager recommends that:				
1. The Community Development and Recreation Committee consider the List of Opportunities identified in Appendix A, Part 2 of the report, Core Service Review, as part of meeting the 2012 budget reduction targets and make recommendations to the Executive Committee for its September 19, 2011 meeting.				
2. The Community Development and Recreation Committee request the City Manager to review the List of Opportunities to ensure service efficiencies are maximized to meet the 2012 budget targets and multi-year service and financial planning objectives and report directly to Executive Committee for its September 19, 2011 meeting.				

## **Writing: The Introduction**

- Introduce yourself and provide an explanation about who you are relating to why you speaking that day.  
Ex. Front-line worker, parent, or academic researcher
- After, explain why you are qualified to speak to the issue being considered by the committee  
Ex. Parent who works full time, gives back to economy/community and pay taxes therefore engaging in the civic engagement process

## **Writing: The Body**

- Outline the issue by using a true story or incident
- Include statistics about the reality of the issue
- Talk about the impact this issue has on the entire community and its relationship to the particular group who will be affected by the decisions made by the councilors/members you are speaking to.  
Ex. Ward 15, the entire city, parents of children aged 6-12, service providers
- Refer to other work that has been done by others on the issue if possible, so that the committee you are presenting to has some history and context for your recommendations  
Ex. For information on middle childhood research and history go [middlechildhoodmatters.ca](http://middlechildhoodmatters.ca) and see the Service Providers Menu, then click on the resources page for reports, history and facts.

### **Writing: The Conclusion**

- Make a recommendation about what you want the people you are addressing to do about this issue or problem. Make sure that your recommendations are about things that those you are presenting to have authority over.
- Refer to the supports in the community for the recommendations you're making and how they will improve the current situation.  
Ex. 32 children's services groups in Toronto have identified more after school programs as a vital contributor to Toronto's success. Research has concluded that such programs contribute to healthy child development - academically, socially and physically. These programs also assist families to work or study. The City already offers some great after school programs that could be expanded. More funding is needed to support the 174,320 children aged 6-12 and their families who, as of 2009, were not registered in quality after-school programs.
- State what you expect the body you're speaking to, to do about the issue.  
Ex. We are asking you to preserve existing after school programs for school aged children and to annually increase funding until every child in Toronto has access to affordable, quality after school programs. The wealth of a family should not determine whether their children can participate in quality afterschool programs in Toronto. After school programs often determine whether family members are able to contribute economically to their family. We are also asking you to seek additional funding for this program from the other two levels of government.

### **Questions**

- Whomever you are presenting to, may or may not ask you questions after your deputation. It has been known to happen especially if you have never presented or are not in an activist position.
- So...Know your facts about the issue, take resources with you to refer to and if you do not have the information on hand, be sure to tell them that you will send them additional information about the issue.
- Be aware that you can always call upon support from others in the room during the question period if you know who they are and they are more knowledgeable on the topic. If you wish to

have this kind of support for middle childhood matters, please contact [amanda@middlechildhoodmatters.ca](mailto:amanda@middlechildhoodmatters.ca) to discuss support.

- If the councilors or committee ask you where you think the money should come from to support this issue, be aware that it is not your job to find that solution, it is theirs as an elected official or member. Simply state that you are aware that they have a difficult job prioritizing competing interests for the budget but that you are here to speak on behalf of this particular need for families and their children.

### Submitting Your Deputation

- Please note that if you do not feel comfortable presenting your deputation, you can always submit it in writing either to the secretary at the meeting or send it via mail to the given address.

Ex. City of Toronto Process

**Submit Comments**

You can submit your comments in writing by mail, fax or email.

You can find the mailing address, fax number and email address on the appropriate [Council or committee page](#).

When sending comments that are intended for consideration by a committee or Council, please clearly indicate the following details:

- That you are submitting comments for distribution to a committee or to Council.
- The name of the item and the item number (e.g. *Item 2010.HL30.1, Public Forum on the Proposed Metrolinx Service Expansion in the Georgetown South Corridor*).
- The name of the Committee and the date of the meeting.

When we are unsure if comments sent to us were intended for distribution to a committee or Council, we will err on the side of caution and not submit them.

If we receive your comments after a matter has been decided, we will forward your comments to the relevant City officials for their information and they will not form part of the official record on an item.

*TIP: Once a meeting agenda is made available online, a "Submit Comments" button will appear at the top of the page when reviewing each specific agenda item. If you click this button you can easily provide your comments via email. If the meeting has begun and if the matter has already been decided, the "Submit Comments" button will not appear.*

- If you choose to present your deputation, try and bring enough copies to give to each councilor/member. Once you have presented, find the secretary in the room and kindly ask if she can hand out your deputation page to each councilor/member.

### Most Important Tool

- Practice, Practice, Practice!
- Practice saying and reading your deputation out loud. You will be cut off after 5 minutes so you want to make sure to be finished everything you want to say. In some cases you only get 4 minutes so be prepared to cut a little bit out.
- Make sure you time yourself ahead of time.
- In the room, they may have a clock present either on the wall or table with how much time you have left. Use that as a guide.

**Modified from Anna Willats, a professor in George Brown's [Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor / Advocate \(AWCCA\) program](#) from a Commitment to Community workshop on deputations.**