

## Effective Letter Writing

When advocating for yourself or for others, letter writing can be an effective tool in communicating your ideas and concerns. Letter writing can help you by:

- Providing a chance to organize what you want to say in a clear manner.
- Allowing you the opportunity to review what you have written prior to sending.
- Having a receipt to document your action.
- Describing other resources and laws relevant to the issue.

### Tips for Writing and Effective Letter:

- Remember why you are writing. What is the point that you want to say or convey?
- Be organized. Before you start writing, make an outline of the important points you want to put in the letter.
- Write a first draft. This will allow you to review and revise the letter for anything you may want to add or delete. You may wish to have a trusted friend or colleague review it for their input.
- Try to keep your letter brief. If a letter is several pages, the intended reader may pass over some important points or may not even read it!
- Use full names of relevant people and agencies. You may know who Dr. Tom is, but others may not.
- Stay professional. If possible, try to use typed letters or neat handwriting on clean paper.
- Stay calm. Even if you are passionate about the issue, try to avoid using personal attacks, curse words, or a harsh tone in your letter. This only makes your letter lose credibility.
- Review your letter one last time prior to sending. This will allow you to find any last typos or mistakes.
- Keep a copy for your records. A letter is a great way to document what you have tried to communicate with your intended reader.
- Consider sending your letter by certified return receipt mail. If you are not hand-delivering your letter to its intended reader, you may wish to send the letter return receipt if affordable for you. This is not a necessary step, but it will ensure that you receive documentation your letter has been received by the intended reader.

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