

## Craft YOUR effective advocacy message\* in 5 steps!

\*With minor changes, these tips work for making public comment in person or on-line, giving committee testimony, or sending an email.

**1. Introduce yourself:** Your name, where you're from [neighborhood, city, district], issue you wish to speak to.

**Local (City or County) Example:** Hello Councilmembers. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a [case manager] at [agency or program]. I work with people who are experiencing homelessness. I'm a little nervous because I've never done this before, but because we really can't lose any shelter, I am here to say my piece as you craft the budget for 2024.

**2. Value statement:** Brief value statement to frame your advocacy message.

Example: Everyone should have a home. It's the basic foundation for healthy people and a healthy community that folks have a decent place to live. When thousands of people do not have homes, it tells us something is wrong in a society.

**3. Problem:** What is the problem you would like your lawmaker to address?

Example: Because we don't have enough homes that people with very limited or no incomes can afford yet, people need shelters like the one I work in so they can be safe, get some rest, and do what they need to do. Right now 300 people in our community are in shelters that are at risk of closing at the end of this year because their contracts were funded with one-time funds ~ *for four years*.

**4. Solution:** What solution would address the problem?

Example: We need MORE good shelter that helps youth, families with kids, adults, elders, not LESS. The budget you pass must SUSTAIN current service levels, with realistic increases because of inflation and rising costs, and to pay essential workers equitable wages.

**5. Ask:** What concrete action are you asking your lawmaker(s) to take?

Example: We're here to urge you to include FULL funding for ALL these shelters to continue in the 2024 budget. This includes enough money to keep up with rising costs to agencies that provide the services, including inflation, and wage increases for staff who keep the doors open.

**Note:** This document was prepared by the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness and updated for Fall 2023 budget advocacy in Seattle and King County. The ideas are based on learning, teaching, and materials shared generously over the years by many people and partner organizations. Use it as a guide or basic framework, not a set of rules. Let us know how you use it, please! Send us any examples or suggestions for future versions or variations: [speakup@homelessinfo.org](mailto:speakup@homelessinfo.org).