



Tips for Successful Public Testimony

All Planning Council and Committee meetings are open to the public. Any member of the public may attend meetings to share their perspectives and experiences.

- **Public testimony is limited to items on the current meeting agenda.** Review the agenda prior to the meeting. Be prepared to speak to specific agenda item(s).
- **Public testimony is not a dialogue.** Make your presentation but do not expect a discussion session or follow up questions during the meeting.
- **Keep it simple.** Present key information. Give clear examples and provide data when possible. Remember the 3-minute time limit for individuals or 5-minute limit for groups.
- **Speak of service categories, not specific providers.** The Council allocates funds to service categories. It is the grantee's role to issue contracts to providers.
- **Think about what you want to say before the meeting.** Think about the issues you would like to raise. Write down your thoughts, using words that are "natural" for you. Practice speaking in front of a mirror.
- **Visualize yourself speaking to the group.** Imagine yourself speaking; your voice is loud, clear, and confident. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
- **Realize that people want to hear what you have to say.** You bring a unique perspective to the discussion. People want to hear about your experiences.
- **Focus on your message – not your nervousness.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties. Instead focus on your message and the people you are talking to.
- **Use notes.** If you have important points you want to be sure to cover, jot them down on an index card or notepad. They will help you stay focused on your message.
- **Do not apologize.** It is okay if you are a little nervous, but you do not need to share that with the group.
- **Relax.** Take a deep breath to ease your tension. Remember, you have important information and insights to share. Just be yourself.