

# How to develop petitions

## Definition of a petition

A petition comprises of a list of names and signatures compiled together to show popular support for a cause. By demonstrating public support, petitions give clout to an issue that could otherwise go overlooked by government.

A petition should be:

- [Short and attention-grabbing headline](#)
- Tells people in the first two sentences [why they should sign](#)
- Explains why you are passionate about the issue
- Makes an emotional connection with the reader

## Traditional petitions involve:

- Walking door-to-door or approaching people on the street to bring awareness to an issue or cause.
- Mailing in signatures and hoping for the best.

# Reasons why we need Petitions

- One person's voice is rarely enough to influence a large government body or company. That's why we need petitions:
- A petition allows many with the same voice to be amplified and heard in unison.
- A petition offers a central point of contact between the public and those who shape policy.
- A petition can unite individuals from all around the globe towards a common goal or cause.

## **3 basic steps for every petition:**

- Identify the Issue (What is it you'd like to change? What is the current reality?)
- Gather signatures by sharing electronically as well as in person. Encourage folks to not only sign the petition, but to share with others they know will support the cause.
- Deliver the petition! Present your idea, along with the supporting names and signatures, to someone who can do something about it!

## How to start developing a petition

1. Is your goal measurable, actionable, easily communicated and actually possible? Give examples here
2. What do you need to know to make sure your petition will be effective?
3. Are there groups, businesses and influential individuals that support your cause?
4. Does your petition have a clear target?
5. Can this petition open a dialogue between the target for the petition and the supporters?

## How to Write a Petition:

Craft a compelling message by focusing on the following:

- Write a short headline that grabs attention and creates an immediate connection.
- Write a summary that either demands or requests change and tells people why they should sign.
- Keep your petition short (150–200 words) and include paragraph breaks and bulleted lists to make it easy to read.

# How to make a successful petition/petition strategy

## 1. Identifying the Petition Target

- Look for individuals that have the power to listen and make decisions. Research would be useful at this stage
- Remember that if your issue covers multiple departments, districts or ministries, online petitions are easy to replicate with unique targets for each group.
- Government officials are prime targets for petitions. When dealing with government, think big and start small. Start by targeting sub county, municipal, town council, city before national representatives or agencies.

## 2. Finding a Petition's Audience

- Share your personal story or that of the affected to motivate others to join in support, or at least begin to learn more.
- Spreading the word through neighborhood, community radios and events and social media groups can easily drum up support in your area.
- Gather contacts before launching your petition and do some traditional public relations outreach. Create a plan for distribution before you publish your petition.
- **Go old school! Create a rally in front of district or government headquarters. This draws press attention and interviews, raises awareness of your issue, and creates a visual image**

# **How to Get Your Petition Noticed (and Meet Your Signatures Goal)**

- Share your petition with your circle of influence
- Attract signers to your petition
- Encourage the signers of your petition to share it forward

## **Sharing petition the traditional style**

- Bombarding the offices of the individual or department or ministry with the petition
- Using mass media e.g. TV, Radio and print

# Attracting Signatures to Your Petition

- Use local media
- Hit the ground running
- “Gathering dedicated supporters at a public event shows your future supporters and your target that you’re serious about your effort.”
- Be open to questions or concerns
- Encourage the first wave of signers to recruit the second and third wave among their workmates, family and friends
- Pay it Forward: Encourage your new supporters to become owners of the cause.
- Provide Updates
- Promote again and again!