



Testify at DC Council with Under 3 DC!

Thanks for being part of Under 3 DC's budget advocacy efforts to win crucial resources for the District's infants, toddlers, parents, and caregivers. Sharing your expertise and experiences during the DC Council's annual oversight hearings is a key piece of our coalition's advocacy work, as well as an important tool for government accountability.

Key 2020 **BUDGET** hearings include:

DATE	Agency/Purpose	RSVP to:
June 4	OSSE: Childcare subsidies/division of early learning + home visiting	<i>Invite Only</i>
June 10	Dept of Behavioral Health: Healthy Futures	mcameron@dccouncil.us
June 10	Dept of Health: Healthy Steps, Help Me Grow, home visiting, etc	mcameron@dccouncil.us
June 17-18	Committee of the Whole: all topics	cw@dccouncil.us

In this document you will find important information related to preparing to testify, testimony formatting, sample messaging, and other tips and tricks to make your testimony experience a success. A separate document is being circulated with supplemental talking points that go a bit deeper on various programs and funding asks related to the Birth-to-Three For All DC Act.

PREPARING TO TESTIFY

Step 1: RSVP!

- See RSVP instructions in chart above ^^ and more details below on page 4
- *RSVP example email 1:* “Hi, my name is Joanna Blotner and I am the Campaigns Manager at Jews United for Justice. I would like to testify by video via Zoom at the hearing on June 10. My comments will focus on Healthy Futures administered by the Dept. of Behavioral Health.”
- *RSVP example email 2:* “Hi, my name is Taneshia Jimenez and I am a resident of Ward 4. I would like to testify at the Committee of the Whole hearing on June 17. I plan to join by phone. My phone number is 202-222-5555. Thank you for adding me to the witness list.”

Step 2: Draft Testimony

- This year, **oral testimonies for live COW and Health hearings are being limited to 2 minutes**. It is ideal to keep the testimony you read to this time limit too, but you can submit a separate, longer written testimony if you prefer.
- *For individuals:* Focus your testimony around a personal story of your experience with child care or early childhood health needs and/or concerns about child care as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and then narrow your funding ask to one related topic. The personal story should be the star of the testimony.
- *For organizations:* Sticking to one to three key data or organizational experience points will help your testimony stay within the oral time limits. Better to go deep and specific on a few funding asks rather than trying to cover too many issue areas. Include personal stories too to the extent you are able.
 - It is fine to submit longer *written* testimony and/or submit addendums after hearings. Oral testimony should still be kept short so make notes from your written statement of what you will selectively lift up to keep you on track during live testimony presentation.
- Include a clear ask:
 - We need to hold child care harmless in FY2021 budget by ensuring there is \$90 million set aside for the subsidy program to enable facilities to reopen with new health and safety protocols and ensuring our child care business community; the child care sector also needs emergency stabilization funding.
 - We cannot cut funding for health and child development programs that serve infants and toddlers or their caregivers.

Step 3: Practice (live, voicemail, and video testimonies)

- Rehearse your oral statement aloud with a timer repeatedly to become comfortable, and not rushed; this will help manage any day-of nerves.

Step 4: Submit (written testimonies)

- See *submission instructions below per committee (pages 4-5)*

TESTIMONY FORMAT

- **Introduction:** Start by thanking the chair and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify, stating your name/location/affiliations, and indicating what you'll be testifying about.
 - “Thank you, Councilmember (last name). My name is (your name). I am the/a (title) of/at (organization/affiliation) which is a member of the Under 3 DC Coalition. I am here today testifying on the District’s [[Healthy Futures/child care subsidy program]] to request [[emergency funding for childcare/stable funding for health programs that serve young families/the District ensure a \$90 million commitment to the child care subsidy program for FY21 to ensure these essential businesses are able to continue serving the educational needs of our littlest residents and to get DC parents back to work]].”
 - “Thank you, Councilmember (last name). My name is (your name). I am a resident of (your neighborhood or Ward). I am here today testifying in support of funding for early childhood health and education.”
 - *Keep intros short this year - time limits are tighter so jump right into the heart of your testimony: stories + ask!*
- **Body:** Describe the importance of the issue or program, tell your personal story, share your perspective/experience with the program, provide pertinent facts, make your case, etc. Make a clear ask for funding. **Use Under 3 DC talking points/messages [LINKED HERE](#)**
 - Use talking points and personalize them with specific anecdotes, experiences, and details relevant to your family, business, community, etc.
 - Stories make for the most memorable testimonies (see storytelling chart at end)
 - Keep testimony narrowly focused on one key story and related ask(s)
 - Cuts to programs that serve DC residents are not acceptable (#PutPeopleFirst! #JustRecoveryDC!), make an ask for the Council to use new revenue streams to meet budget shortfalls -- see final page of talking points for guidance.
- **Closing:** Re-state your position; respectfully urge legislators to adopt your position. Say thank you.
 - “I respectfully urge the Council to find the funding for (XYZ ask) to protect our early childhood health and education system and ensure DC’s littlest residents have every opportunity to succeed. Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.”

TESTIMONY LOGISTICS FROM COUNCIL

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW) -- UNDER 3 DC TOP PRIORITY

DAY 1 -- WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17: NOON–6:00 P.M.

DAY 2 -- THURSDAY, JUNE 18: 9:00 A.M.–6:00 P.M.

TESTIFYING LIVE:

- To RSVP, EMAIL: COW@DCCOUNCIL.US AND INCLUDE YOUR PREFERRED CALL-IN DAY, NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER, ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION AND TITLE (IF APPLICABLE) BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020.
- THE COMMITTEE WILL PROVIDE EACH WITNESS A PHONE NUMBER, ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS, AND TIME TO CALL IN TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY
- WITNESSES WILL BE LIMITED TO 2 MINUTES
- ONLY ONE MEMBER FROM EACH ORGANIZATION MAY PROVIDE LIVE TESTIMONY
- THE WITNESS LIST DETAILING THE PANELS WILL BE CIRCULATED BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020.

SUBMITTING TESTIMONY FOR OFFICIAL HEARING RECORD:

- WRITTEN TESTIMONY SHOULD BE SENT BY EMAIL: COW@DCCOUNCIL.US (ATTACHMENT OR IN BODY OF EMAIL IS FINE)
- VOICEMAIL TESTIMONY: (202) 430-6948
- TESTIMONY RECEIVED BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2020 WILL BE POSTED PUBLICLY TO [HTTP://WWW.CHAIRMANMENDELSON.COM/FY2021](http://WWW.CHAIRMANMENDELSON.COM/FY2021) PRIOR TO THE HEARING
- ALL TESTIMONY RECEIVED WILL BE MADE PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD; THE HEARING RECORD WILL CLOSE AT 5:00 P.M. ON JUNE 26, 2020

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4: NOON–6:00 P.M.

TESTIFYING LIVE:

- To RSVP, EMAIL MALCOLM CAMERON AT MCAMERON@DCCOUNCIL.US OR CALL 202-341-4425 ASAP AND PROVIDE YOUR NAME, ORGANIZATION AND TITLE (IF APPLICABLE), EMAIL ADDRESS, DEVICE NAME (ZOOM OR WEBEX), PHONE NUMBER, AND THE AGENCY OR AGENCIES YOU WISH TO DISCUSS.
- CONFIRMATION WILL BE SENT OUT BY EMAIL BY 5:00P.M. ON MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020
- INDIVIDUALS WILL BE LISTED IN THE ORDER THEY SIGNED UP AND GROUPED IN PANELS OF FOUR BY THE AGENCY THEY ARE TESTIFYING ABOUT

➤ WITNESSES WILL BE LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES

➤ DUE TO TECHNOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS, ONLY THE FIRST SIX HOURS OF THE HEARING WILL BE BROADCAST, HOWEVER, THE COUNCILMEMBER WILL REMAIN VIA THE VIRTUAL PLATFORM TO HEAR ALL WITNESSES WHO HAVE SIGNED UP TO TESTIFY.

SUBMITTING TESTIMONY FOR OFFICIAL HEARING RECORD:

➤ WRITTEN TESTIMONY: EMAIL MALCOLM CAMERON AT MCAMERON@DCCOUNCIL.US WITH "TESTIMONY" IN THE SUBJECT LINE (TESTIMONY AS AN ATTACHMENT OR COPIED INTO BODY OF EMAIL IS FINE)

➤ VOICEMAIL TESTIMONY: (202) 350-1828

➤ ALL WRITTEN TESTIMONY RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE HEARING WILL BE CIRCULATED TO ALL COUNCILMEMBERS AND STAFF

➤ ALL TESTIMONY RECEIVED WILL BE MADE PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD

➤ THE RECORD WILL CLOSE AT 5:00 P.M. ON SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2020

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 4: NOON-3:00 P.M.

TESTIFYING LIVE:

➤ BY INVITATION ONLY -- *If you received an invitation, let joanna know (joanna@jufj.org)*

SUBMITTING TESTIMONY FOR OFFICIAL HEARING RECORD:

➤ WRITTEN TESTIMONY: EMAIL ASTRANGE@DCCOUNCIL.US WITH "TESTIMONY" IN THE SUBJECT LINE (TESTIMONY AS AN ATTACHMENT OR COPIED INTO BODY OF EMAIL IS FINE)

➤ VOICEMAIL TESTIMONY: (202) 430-5720

➤ TESTIMONY RECEIVED 48 HOURS BEFORE THE HEARING WILL BE SENT TO ALL COUNCILMEMBERS AND THE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

➤ ALL TESTIMONY RECEIVED WILL BE MADE PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD -- *Please submit by June 12th*

GENERAL TIPS

- *For individuals:* Keep your testimony focused on your personal story and try to narrow those personal story details to matters that are directly related to the funding asks you are making - campaign staff can help you hone in on these details.
- *For organizations:* Keep your testimony focused on your organization's or your personal, unique perspective (i.e. you don't need to dwell on data points 😊)
- Join the hearing promptly at the start, or at the time the committee tells you to video or call in
- If you're joining by video, keep yourself on mute and camera off until your panel is called
- Bring your game face: stay positive, true to your talking points, and speak only from your personal or organizational experience, expertise, or observations. Legislators may ask you follow-up questions, either supportive or in opposition. If they do, simply respond calmly and reiterate the main points of your testimony.
- **It is okay if you don't know an answer.**
 - A good response when you don't know the answer: "I am not an expert on that matter but I would be happy to do some research or connect you with someone who may know and follow up after the hearing with answers." (And be sure to follow up or please ask a campaign staffer to follow up - you can send hearing questions to joanna@jufj.org).
- Always be polite when communicating with legislators, even if they seem to be impolite to you.
 - Even if a legislator isn't shown as attending a hearing on the video feed, you can be sure either their staffer is there to listen and take notes or that the member is watching the live feed of the hearing on another platform. Be polite even if they're not there.
- After you testify, send an email follow-up to members of the committee who:
 - Asked questions and requested additional information
 - Were especially helpful and say thank you
 - Have a personal relationship with you
 - Seemed undecided and might need some additional urging to support our position
 - Share your testifying accomplishment on social media and tell your friends to write their legislators in support of early childhood care and education!

STORYTELLING NARRATIVE FLOW CHART

CHOOSE YOUR OWN STORYTELLING ADVENTURE

