

A Step-by-Step Guide to making a Deputation – Prepared by Anna Willats

Writing a deputation or speech arguing for changes at a political or institutional level around a social justice issue is easy! Just use the following format and the examples provided as a guide for your 2-5 -minute deputation.

1. Understand who you are presenting to and what their role or function is – for example, when you present to the police services board, you can only comment on policy re policing, not operations (how policing is done). They will not discuss specific incidents or deal with complaints. If you are presenting to the Executive Committee or other committee at City Council, you need to know what the agenda item states – are they making a decision, receiving a report, or putting together a recommendation to Council? You want your deputation to be on topic to be considered.
2. Your deputation should begin with an introduction of yourself and an explanation about the context you're speaking from ... as a front-line worker, as a survivor, as an academic researcher, etc. - make sure to include this information and explain why you're qualified to speak to the issue being considered by the committee.
3. In the body of the speech/deputation, make sure to outline the issue by using a true story or incident. Include statistics about the reality of the issue. Include the impact this issue has on the entire community the body you're speaking to is representing (ward 12 residents, the entire city, homeless people, etc). Refer to other work that has been done by others on the issue if possible, so that the body you are presenting to has some history and context for your recommendations.
4. In your speech/deputation, make recommendations about what you want the people you are addressing to do about this issue or problem. Make sure that your recommendations are about things that those you are presenting to have authority over. Refer to the support that exists in the community for the recommendations you're making and how they will improve the current situation. State what you expect the body you're speaking to, to do about the issue.
5. Practice saying/reading your deputation! You will be cut off after 5 minutes so you want to make sure to be finished everything you want to say. In some cases you only get 4 minutes so be prepared to cut a little bit out. Make sure to time yourself ahead of time.
6. Be prepared to answer questions. Know your facts about the issue. Take resources with you to refer to. Offer to send them additional info about the issue.

Looking for ideas of how to answer questions about how to maintain city services and balance the budget?

To respond to these questions, you could add personal stories and examples to these themes:

1. The importance of investing in the City of Toronto to build a city that works for all of its residents. A long-term vision for the city should include all residents.
2. Pulling investment from community services leads to greater costs down the road– if the city puts off investment now, we end up having to pay much more later. The programs that could be cut were designed to meet the needs of Torontonians and serve a valuable purpose in our communities.
3. The proposed cuts to community services are not necessary. There is a \$139 million surplus from this year that could pay for these services. City council should not choose to balance this budget on the backs of the poor and vulnerable just to build its reserve. There are immediate needs within the community that should not be ignored.
4. City Councillors have the option to avoid cutting services – these services are part of Torontonians’ values. Councillors can make choices to raise revenue, not just make cuts, and people who have made deputations have clearly made that point.
5. The budget presented for 2012 shows that there is not a funding crisis at the city – the city needs to choose to invest in its people and growth for future generations to enjoy. We don’t want things to get worse in Toronto.
6. Cutting over 2300 jobs will impact services in the city and affect families that contribute to this city. Wiping out these jobs will make it more difficult for other Torontonians to maintain jobs as daycares, TTC and other services that working people rely on face cuts.
7. The proposed cuts will damage Toronto's local economy, and could fuel negative economic trends for many years. With City cuts (which primarily translate into city and nonprofit job losses) our unemployment levels will increase, and our local purchasing power will decline. We are already in a position where the private sector is anxious about consumer demand, and is very hesitant to spend to create new jobs. Making cuts at a time when we face great economic uncertainty could further inhibit private investment. This in turn could diminish the city's tax base, and set up a downward spiral where the City will have less and less capacity to address its policy priorities each year. It is simply not a prudent approach to sustaining our city's economy through tough times.

Service Cuts and User Fee Increases

- elimination of the Hardship Fund in June 2012
– sign the petition now! <http://togethertoronto.ca/campaigns/hardshipfund/>
- cuts to library hours, purchase of library materials
- elimination of priority recreation centres (no more free registered programs for children and youth in priority centres)
- cuts to arenas, increase in recreation facility permit costs, increases in user fees for recreation
- closure of some wading pools, outdoor pools, elimination of programming at some school board pools and shared use schools
- closure of three emergency shelters (Birchmount, Downsview Dells and Bellwoods)
- 9.8% cut to community grants for services delivered by nonprofit community organizations (unclear how these cuts will be applied – across the board vs. targeted cuts)
- closure of visitor cafeterias in long term care homes
- cuts to student nutrition programs
- elimination of over 2,300 City positions
- deferral of hiring of police, firefighters and paramedics (questions about how this will affect overtime spending)
- 10 cent TTC fare increase
- cuts to 56 bus routes and 6 streetcar lines as of January 8
- no more Wheel Trans service for dialysis patients
- cuts to streetcar and subway replacement purchases
- cuts to services that maintain a healthy tree canopy
- cuts to sustainable energy and climate change policy development and implementation