

# Petitioning

A petition is a formal document that people sign to show that they want a person or organization to do or change something. Think of it as a letter with a thousand signatures. It's also easier to get people to sign a petition than to write a letter themselves. Officials know this—that's why they pay more attention to a letter-writing campaign. But a petition can help spread the word about your CAP issue and project. A petition can be a paper petition or you can create an electronic petition.

**Give your petition a clear, simple title.** Tell what you want.

**Include your group's name on the petition.**

**Address the petition to an individual or group who can help you with your problem.**

**Write your petition like a short letter.** Briefly describe the problem, your plan, and your reasons.

**Provide numbered spaces for people to write their signature, address, and telephone number.** The numbers will help you count the signatures you have collected.

**Make every page a separate petition.** That way more than one person can gather signatures. Also it makes it clear that people know what they were signing.

**Get permission to set up a table at school, your local mall, or a community center.** If you have an electronic petition, post a link to it using social media. You can also send out a notice of your petition in an email.

**Be able to tell people about the problem and your strategy in clear, simple language.** People will want to know more before they sign.

**Let people make up their own minds.** Deliver your message and let your ideas speak for themselves.

**Get your friends to sign first.** People will feel better if a lot of other people have already signed your petition.



## Sample Petition

<b>DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM</b>	<b>TITLE</b> → <u>Homes for the Homeless</u>																																																								
To the Anytown City Council:  We, the undersigned, reside in Anytown, U.S.A. We are concerned with the rising number of homeless people in our city. We support City Council Member Doggett's proposal to build temporary shelters on the city-owned vacant lot at the corner of Wayne and Garth streets. The shelters will house 60 homeless people for six months. Social workers, paid by the state, will work with the residents to get them jobs, medication, and other help.  <b>WE URGE YOU TO PASS THIS MEASURE!</b>																																																									
<b>COLLECT INFORMATION</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"><thead><tr><th>#</th><th>NAME</th><th>ADDRESS</th><th>TELEPHONE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table>	#	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	1				2				3				4				5				6				7				8				9				10				11				12				13			
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<b>GROUP NAME</b> →	Petition circulated by Civic Action Project Students at Anytown High School.																																																								

**Set a deadline.** Energy for the drive will last a short time. Make the drive short. You can then claim, "In only a week, we collected 500 signatures."

**Make copies of the petition before you deliver it.** You may want to contact the people who signed it.

**Do something special to deliver the petition.** Present it at a public meeting or invite the media or post the results on social media.