

### Important Reminders

- **Testimony can be 5 minutes long, which is about 500 – 600 words**
- **You will need to provide 10 hard copies of your testimony**
- **OVSJG’s budget is what is being evaluated, and information about your services validate the funding request**

### Prepare Your Message

#### **DEVELOP A SOLID KNOWLEDGE BASE OF THE BUDGET**

- Refer to percentages of budget increases/decreases when possible
- Identify key programming/service benefits and possible challenges that are affected by the budget
- Be able to provide a review of cost saving areas to show good stewardship and budget maintenance
- Express the importance and impact of organization services/programming to the city
- Be prepared to discuss how budget cuts will affect client services

#### **DEVELOP/HIGHLIGHT KEY MESSAGE POINTS**

Focus on no more than two or three key points, for example:

- Existing funding has made it possible for us to serve [x] clients per year
- We have long waiting lists for mental health services
- Our physical office space places limits on our services and ability to grow

#### **COORDINATE YOUR TESTIMONY WITH OTHERS IN ADVANCE**

If possible, you should coordinate with other organizations that share your position on an issue so that all concerns can be made to the Council in a coordinated way that keeps the Council Members engaged

### Prepare Your Written Testimony

#### **BRIEFLY INTRODUCE YOURSELF**

- Tell who you are and give information about the program you are representing
- Provide an overview of services and populations served, to include achievements, goals, and challenges

#### **STATE YOUR GOAL AND OUTLINE YOUR MAJOR POINTS**

In a few sentences, tell the committee what you hope to accomplish in your testimony

#### **TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEM**

- Discuss the problems that sexual assault victims face when trying to get adequate services to address all their needs
- Use touching anecdotes/stories from your work or personal experiences
- Discuss the citywide significance of the issue and then try to relate the problem to specific Wards, if possible
- Be as specific and detailed as possible
- Develop testimony that fully explains the importance of funding amounts and how important budget preservation and/or budget increases are to your organization
- Discuss what additional funding would actually cover

## **AVOID JARGON, ACRONYMS, CLICHÉS, OR TOO MANY STATISTICS**

- Make sure you speak in layman’s terms
- Statistics can be useful, but should be used sparingly
- Note, however, that your written testimony is a place to include a few important statistics that you can’t fit into your oral testimony

## **LIST YOUR SPECIFIC, CONCISE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Your conclusion should be a brief restatement of your request

## **Prepare Your Oral Testimony**

### **GIVE THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- What do you want the Committee Members to remember when you leave the hearing room; use this as your guide to creating concise oral testimony
- Keep the intricate detail to your written testimony
- Don’t be afraid to ask for what you need, but make your requests reasonable

### **PERSONALIZE YOUR TESTIMONY**

- Let them know how the issue affects their constituents
- Explain how this particular budget will affect your practice and the communities you serve

### **MAKE EYE CONTACT**

- Separate your pages, removing clips and staples
- Use large type, double-space your text, and highlight key phrases and talking points
- Don’t carry a sentence over to the next page

### **RESPECT THE TIME LIMITS**

- Plan to testify for one minute less than your allowance
- Time your presentation and adjust your testimony accordingly
- Keep your testimony concise and accurate
- Don’t rush; speeding through your testimony is not the answer to staying within the time limit
- Be prepared to state a strong conclusion quickly and concisely in case you run out of time
- Thank the committee for the opportunity to speak, even if your time has run out

## **Prepare for Questions from Committee Members**

### **PERSONALIZE YOUR RESPONSE**

- What have you seen in your work
- Describe a particular situation that exemplifies the issue

### **REMEMBER YOUR Q&A FORMULA**

- If a general question is posed to all panelists don't be afraid to answer it
- Respond directly to the questions posed
- Answer concisely, honestly and quickly
- Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know;” say you will find the answer and get back to them immediately

### **PRACTICE ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS**

- Try to anticipate and be prepared to address the tough questions
- Get to the point and offer to provide additional information in writing

*Much of the material herein was adapted from various other sources*