

Albuquerque Model City Council Curriculum

Writing to Public Officials

- A letter to a councilor should start, “Dear Councilor [Jones].”
- In your first paragraph, you should always explain who you are and why you are writing. You might say something like, “My name is Jane Doe, and I am a student at Leadership High School. We have been studying about city government in our English class, and I would like to offer some suggestions for improving our district.”
- Always be polite. If you attack the councilor, he or she is unlikely to listen to your suggestions.
- Be clear about what you want. The councilor is more likely to be able to work on a problem if you are specific about what you would like changed and suggestions you have for changing it. For example, just saying that your neighborhood is boring for teenagers is not specific, but saying that you would like to see a recreation center for teens built with basketball courts and a skate park is helpful.
- Be as personal as possible. If you have an experience or story that helps to show the need for improvement in your neighborhood, include it in the letter. A councilor may be more likely to act upon a complaint about transportation for the disabled if it comes from a handicapped person who has trouble getting around the neighborhood.
- A letter to a councilor should end with “Sincerely,” and you should sign your full name and give your address as well as your phone number and email address if you have them. Otherwise, the councilor cannot contact you to ask you further questions or to let you know that he or she will be working on the problem you have discussed.