



Getting Published in Local Media

Write a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a powerful advocacy tool and a major component of RESULTS advocacy campaigns. We do this because:

1. They appear on the Editorial page, the most read section in the paper
2. Strong media work can move decision makers and can put a message directly in front of a decision maker or their staff ([see an example here](#))
3. Media educates the public, building political will and engaging new people
4. Members of Congress track published media that mentions them by name

Getting your first piece published can feel overwhelming at first. With a little support (and a little more persistence!) you *will* see your message published in your local newspaper.

Purpose of a Letter to the Editor

The goal of your LTE is to persuade your:

- Member of Congress → Support a solution
- Community → Care about an issue

Deciding the basic message for your LTE is as easy as putting together a Madlib. Just fill in the blanks.

_____ *should* _____.

(WHO: person) *should* (WHAT: action)

The rest of the message can include a mix of facts and opinion to persuade your audience to agree with your message.

For inspiration and to see more examples, read other letters to the editor published by RESULTS volunteers [here](#).

Key Components of a Letter to the Editor

Create your letter using the **EPIC format** (Engage the listener, state the Problem, Inform about a solution, give a Call to action).

Local or timely hook

Responding to a recent article in the newspaper or a recent event is a great way to increase your odds of being published. Do a search on the newspaper's website for recent articles that are related to our issues. Try using search terms like "poverty," "education," etc.

In reference to your recent article "Missouri lawmakers approve \$6 billion COVID-19 emergency funding bill" I am grateful both our state legislature and Congress have now passed emergency legislation to help people survive this crisis.

Why it matters

Why do I care? What makes it compelling now? Why does my MoC need to know about it?

But more is desperately needed. Thousands of laid off workers in Kansas City have no income now and no guarantee they'll still have jobs when the crisis ends. Without help, they and their families face hunger, eviction, and possibly homelessness. We must help. In the next coronavirus response bill, Congress must prioritize housing and hunger by providing \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance, passing a national moratorium on evictions, and increasing the maximum SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) benefit by 15 percent.

Call to action

Mention members of Congress by name if possible

I urge our Congressman Cleaver and Sens. Blunt and Hawley to help people secure stable housing and keep their families fed during this economic crisis and beyond.

Submitting Your Letter

There are a few ways to submit your LTE. You can:

- E-mail it directly to the paper (e.g. letters@kcstar.com - look on the newspaper's website for the address)
- Submit it through your paper's website (usually an online form)
- Submit it through the RESULTS website via the [Action Center](#)
- Mail a hard copy to your local paper (takes longer)

Important! Most papers require you to include your name and contact info to be published. If you are a new writer, they will sometimes contact you to verify authorship.

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

- **100% of letters you don't send never get published!**
- Keep your letter to 150 words or less
- Submit your LTE to multiple newspapers
- Be persistent, rejection is normal. Keep writing, re-writing, and re-submitting until you are successful
- Ask for feedback: Share your LTE with a media buddy or RESULTS staff for their support
- Email or mail your published media to your members of Congress and deliver them as leave behinds in congressional meetings
- Find online media action opportunities in the [RESULTS Action Center](#)
- Report your published media to RESULTS [via the website](#)
- An argument based on merit rather than emotional or personal attacks is respectful and more persuasive, and is more likely to get published