

Use this reference guide to craft a message that is specific, personal, informative, and timely to gain attention and prompt action.

Steps for Building Your Message:

- Establish the importance of the city perspective.
- Target your message so that it focuses on your local environment and legislators.
- Create different versions of your message to resonate with certain members of Congress and political situations.

SPIT Messages

After you create your general message, you will convert it to a targeted local message that will resonate with your members of Congress and their staff. Like you, members of Congress care most about the constituents and communities they represent. Therefore, developing messages relevant to your community is critical to effective advocacy. You can use the SPIT technique: Specific, Personal, Informative, Timely.



SPECIFIC

Be as specific as possible about what your legislator can do.

- *Vague: Please help our city continue to provide valuable services.*
- *Better: We would like you to cosponsor a bill.*



PERSONAL

Powerful messages are personal in nature.

- Find people in your community who can help you tell a story related to your issue.
- Compelling stories have greater impact.
- Which local citizens have benefited from specific projects or services?



INFORMATIVE

You may need to describe:

- Number of people served.
- Number of people employed.
- Specifics about programs provided.
- Geographic reach of the service.
- Demographics of the community.
- Special services provided to the community.



TIMELY

Demonstrate how your message relates to a decision that will be made in the near future.

- *Example: Because Congress considers these issues annually, as part of DOT funding legislation, the TIGER program is an important priority for your consideration at this time.*

Example:

SCENARIO:

In 2013, the Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded the city of Goldsboro, North Carolina a \$10 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant. This program is authorized and funded through Congress, but is often a target for elimination.

MESSAGE:

Please continue to fund the TIGER program. In Goldsboro, we have used these funds to benefit small businesses. Through this grant we plan to complete three major transportation projects serving 16 blocks and more than 240 small businesses. These projects will spur \$9.7 million in economic growth and development and create 481 jobs. Because Congress considers these issues annually, as part of DOT funding legislation, the TIGER program is an important priority for your consideration at this time.



SPECIFIC:

A specific action was mentioned: "Continue to fund the TIGER program."



PERSONAL:

The message mentioned that small businesses have benefited from the program.



INFORMATIVE:

The message listed the number of businesses that will benefit, the amount of economic growth to be gained, and the number of jobs to be created.



TIMELY:

The message mentioned that Congress considers this issue annually, so the decision will need to be made soon.