

STEPS FOR SUCCESS: Letter to the Editor

A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is an easy way to make a BIG impact. While editors do not publish every letter, but they do pay attention—especially to letters that are well-written and connected to an article they just published.

Here are a few helpful tips:

Writing Your LTE

- **Make it relevant.** Relate your LTE to an issue recently (within the last day or two) discussed in the publication to which you are writing. Most outlets are writing about the budget situation, so it shouldn't be difficult to find an article to that concerns funding cuts to job training programs.
- **Be concise.** The first sentence should summarize your position. One of the biggest mistakes in LTE writing is using the first paragraph (or the entire letter) to build to the point. Most editors read 2-3 sentences before making a decision to go on.
- **Mind your word count.** Check the LTE guidelines for the paper you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they don't, 200 is generally considered the maximum length. Many papers will not consider LTEs over their word count.

Submitting Your LTE

Many newspapers have specific format requirements, so please check the paper's web site before submitting. Always include full contact information for the author(s).

- **Follow the guidelines.** Follow the outlet's rules regarding letters and make sure to adhere to the guidelines on length. Spell everything correctly and pay close attention to grammar—letters are not usually edited, rather the outlets select well-written letters that meet their guidelines. Email your letter to insure timeliness. To do this, paste the text into the body of an email—DO NOT SEND AS AN ATTACHMENT. You may also fax it, but sending it electronically is generally the preferred way to receive letters.
- **Follow up.** Once you have submitted your Letter to the Editor, you can follow up with a call 24 hours later to find out if it will be printed.