

Talking to your local municipal council



In order to have a week or the entire month of March 2008 designated for Community Social Services Awareness, you should get onto the agenda of your local council by either the last council meeting of 2007 or their first meeting of 2008.

Here is a quick guide to getting on the agenda to make a presentation to your local municipal council requesting that they designate either a week or a month in March 2008 for Community Social Services Awareness. A set of draft speaking notes is available to assist local activists to make a brief presentation to local councils.

1. Do the research

Municipal councils usually have regularly scheduled meetings at which they hear delegations from the community. Find out when the meetings happen – either by calling your local council hall or by looking at the website for your municipality. Many websites have a handy guide to tell you how to apply to get on the council agenda.

2. Make the request

Councils usually want something in writing – and you can often fill in an online form. It always makes sense to make a phone call first to make sure that the meeting times have not changed and to see if there is anything else you should know before making a request.

In making the request, you will need to link the delegation request to the work of your local council. Some of the points you may want to make are:

- ✓ Your presentation is about important services in the community
- ✓ You are looking for council support to build awareness in the community
- ✓ Many of the issues – such as housing, social services, crime and violence – that council deals with are affected by community social services.

Follow up on your request with a call to your municipal council, to make sure they received the request and to get an idea of when your delegation might get on the agenda.

Most councils have a procedure to follow if you want to distribute material. In the case of Community Social Services Matter – we will be distributing a draft resolution and a questionnaire for council members. You may need to give these materials to the council staff in advance for distribution at the meeting.

3. Other resources

You or others who are organizing the presentation may know someone on council or someone who works for the municipality. You might want to talk to them to get their views on how to make a successful presentation.

Also remember – most council meetings are open to the public and they are sometimes televised on the local community cable TV. If you want to get sense of what it is like to make a presentation before you go, you can attend a meeting in person or watch one on your local cable station.

COPE 491