



# Advocacy Toolkit

## Using Your Voice for Change

At Community Connections, advocacy means standing up for inclusion, access, and respect for all people with disabilities. Whether you're writing a letter, meeting a legislator, or testifying at the State House, your voice matters. Use this toolkit to help you communicate confidently and make an impact.

**Our mission is to provide life-enriching services that promote optimal independence for people with disabilities.**

**Our vision is to be the leader in providing comprehensive and innovative services that promote community inclusion and improve the lives of people with disabilities.**

## Key Agency Data

- Total people served: 1,069
- Total # of Employees: 320
- Participant Satisfaction Overall 91%
- 40 years of Community Connections Inc
- 8 locations including South Yarmouth, Mashpee, Plymouth, Wareham, Fairhaven and 3 locations in Fall River
- 16 programs including Day Habilitation, Employment Services, Community Based Day Supports, Supported Living, Life Skills, Social Recreation, and Transportation

### Employment Services

- 375 participants received employment services
- 35 new job placements for participants

## Writing to Your Elected Officials

Letters and emails are one of the most effective ways to influence policy decisions. A personalized message stands out far more than a form letter.

### Tips:

- Keep it personal and specific.
- Include a clear ask.
- Stay respectful and concise.
- Follow up with a thank-you note.

### Sample Letter Format:

Dear [Senator/Representative Last Name],

As a [parent/self-advocate/provider/constituent] in your district, I'm writing to ask for your support of [specific bill or issue].

This issue is important because [brief personal story or example].

Please vote in favor of [specific action]. Thank you for your leadership and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[Your Town]

Find your legislators: [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov)

### Example Quotes to Include:

"People with disabilities want to live, work, and contribute to their communities just like everyone else."

"Funding these programs means investing in independence, dignity, and community inclusion."

"Your support helps ensure that people with disabilities are seen, heard, and valued."

## Testifying at the Massachusetts State House

Testimony allows legislators to hear directly from those affected by their decisions. Your story adds heart and authenticity to policy discussions.

How to Prepare:

Stay informed — check upcoming hearings at [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov).

Prepare a 2-minute statement highlighting your main point.

Introduce yourself: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I live in \_\_\_\_\_, and I represent Community Connections."

Focus on one key issue and one short personal story.

Submit written testimony after you speak.

Sample Testimony Template:

Good morning Chair [Last Name], Vice Chair [Last Name], and members of the Committee:

My name is [Your Name], and I live in [Town]. I am here today on behalf of Community Connections, an organization that supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod.

I'm asking for your support of [bill name or issue], which is critical to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to the supports they need to live independently and participate fully in their communities.

For example, [insert short personal story or example].

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to people with disabilities.

Quick Tips:

Speak slowly and clearly.

Be authentic—don't memorize.

End with a thank-you.

# Crafting Your Message

A strong advocacy message connects emotion with facts. Start with why it matters, add one or two data points, and close with a clear action request.

## Message Framework:

Start with WHY	“Every person deserves the chance to live and work in their community”
Add a FACT	“Over 8,000 adults in Massachusetts with IDD are waiting for day programs”

# Organizing a Letter-Writing Campaign or Rally

Group action amplifies your message. A well-organized campaign can mobilize the community and gain media attention.

## Steps to Organize:

- Select a clear issue or bill to focus on.
- Create a short, consistent message for participants.
- Use newsletters, social media, and local partners to spread the word.
- For rallies: get permits, ensure accessibility, and prepare positive signs (“Inclusion Matters!”).
- Always share photos and outcomes. Remember success inspires more advocacy!

## You Are the Advocate

Every voice matters, and every story brings us closer to equity and inclusion. Learn more at [communityconnectionsinc.org/advocacy](http://communityconnectionsinc.org/advocacy)

## Community Connections, Inc.

South Yarmouth, MA





