



CP ACTIVE



A national advocacy movement
Breaking Down Barriers Together

How to start an online petition

From the CPActivist Toolkit

Online petitions can be a great way to get attention and build support for your issue. Collecting a lot of signatures can help you gain the attention of politicians, decision-makers, and even the media.

But petitions serve another important purpose – they build a supporter base of people who support your campaign, who can be asked to take action. That's how you build a movement.

Before you start

Before you write your petition, you need to decide:

1. Who are the decision makers you're targeting
2. What you're asking them to do
3. The impact of the change you want to see

Decision makers are the people with the power to make the change your campaign is asking for. They could be a politician, the CEO of a company, or a regulatory body that makes the rules that companies need to follow. Instead of just writing to the Prime Minister, do your research to find out who directly responsible for the thing you want to change.

Your asks are what you're asking the decision makers to do. Make sure what you're asking for is specific and achievable.

Example: a petition to change food packaging

You've decided you want to start a petition to make food packaging more accessible for people living with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Your online research finds that *Food Standards* is the government agency that sets the standards for food packaging, and the *Ministry for Primary Industries* is the government department that's responsible for enforcing them.

You address your petition to John Smith, Chair of the Food Standards Board, and Jane Clark, the Minister for Primary Industries, asking them to:

1. Change the Food Standards Code to require companies to make their food packaging accessible for people living with a disability
2. Make it mandatory to consult with people from the disability sector on all future changes to the Code



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Write your petition

Now that you've decided on your targets and your asks, it's time to write your petition. Write clearly and respectfully, but make sure you speak from the heart. Personal stories are the most effective.

1. Introduce yourself
2. Explain the problem you're asking them to solve
3. Describe how it impacts people living with a disability
4. Outline what you're asking them to do
5. Explain the positive impact it will have

Below is a suggested template to get you started.

Template petition

To [list the decision makers your petition is targeting],

*I am writing to you as a [**Introduce yourself:** insert your age, gender and/or profession] living with cerebral palsy.*

*[**Explain the problem:** eg. shops and restaurants in my local area don't have accessible entrances]*

*[**Describe the impact:** eg. this limits my access to entertainment, social activities, and prevents me from fully participating in our community]*

*[**State your ask:** eg. as our Mayor, I'm calling on you to improve local planning laws and make accessible entrances mandatory for all public buildings]*

*[**Explain the positive impact:** eg. this will give every member of our community an equal opportunity to enjoy everything our community has to offer and support local businesses]*

Kind regards,

[Your name]

Publish your petition

Once you've finished writing your petition, you're ready to put it out into the world. There are lots of websites that allow people to create their own petitions – CPActive recommends using [Change.org](https://www.change.org).

Follow the steps to create an account and publish your petition page. You'll need a petition title, photo, the petition text, and the email addresses of the people you're targeting.



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[Click here for a step-by-step guide on creating a Change.org petition.](#)

Promote your petition

Getting your petition online isn't the end of the job. Once it's live you need to collect as many signatures as you can to demonstrate how many people support your call for change.

Social media is a great tool for this. Share the petition on your social media channels and ask your friends and family to do the same.

Find online groups or communities that are sympathetic to your cause. Message them directly to introduce yourself and ask them to share your petition with their followers.

Contact organisations that are likely to support you and reach out to them, asking them to share the petition with their networks.

Email is also a great tool for spreading the word. Write a template email introducing the petition and the change you're trying to create and ask them to forward it to all their contacts.