



SAMPLE EMAIL

Housing



Before

Dear [affordable housing advocate],

I attended the city council meeting last week and learned that the city council had approved the creation of affordable housing units. One council member specifically focused on ensuring that we were paying close attention to neighborhood safety and the health needs of the community residents.

I work in public health and am writing to see if you would like to meet to talk about these things. As you may know, the public health field has data and tools that could help address your concerns and establish some measurable outcomes. I hope we can work together when thinking about the link between housing and community health.

Sincerely,

This opening offers information the recipient is already likely to know and misses the opportunity to acknowledge the recipient's expertise and knowledge.

This sentence both implies that safety and health are not on the housing sector's radar (i.e., the council member had to enforce close attention to those issues) and misses the opportunity to illustrate the author's own understanding of the interrelatedness of housing and health.

Avoid unspecific asks and vague language. Other sectors may be unfamiliar with the work of public health and how it is linked to their own work, so it pays to be as explanatory and concrete as space allows.

Demonstrating a grasp of what, specifically, housing advocates are likely to be concerned about will foster the recipient's receptivity to the idea of collaboration with the public health sector.



SAMPLE EMAIL Housing (continued)



After

Dear [affordable housing advocate],

As I'm sure you know, last week the city council approved the creation of affordable housing units. As a public health professional, I believe that making safe and affordable housing available to everyone represents an important investment in creating healthy communities, so I'm heartened to see the council is taking action.

Housing advocates have been working hard to make this vision a reality, and my public health colleagues and I are eager to help. I am writing to offer public health data expertise that may be beneficial to your efforts.

Before moving to [CITY], I participated in a tri-county coalition to launch an affordable housing initiative. We brought housing advocacy groups, city planners, and local public health professionals together to develop a plan that made new affordable housing units central to the revitalization of key areas in the region. By partnering with public health, advocates were able to use data to make the case for housing as a foundational component of community health. We demonstrated that quality housing underlies a range of measurable community outcomes, from reducing chronic health problems to increasing educational attainment. We also secured commitments to fund new housing units in all three counties and successfully advanced designs that emphasized healthy spaces and opportunities for social engagement.

Are you available to meet to talk about how we might collaborate to fuel your efforts? The council's action last week could be an opportunity for us to join forces to advance our community's well-being, and I'd be grateful to learn more about your perspective on the best ways to keep affordable housing a priority.

Sincerely,

This opening positions the recipient as a presumed expert who is well informed.

Appealing to Value of Investment alongside community responsibility can engage housing advocates by establishing a shared commitment between housing and public health work.

Remember not to make it all about public health's agenda. Instead, emphasize collaboration and the supporting role public health is willing and able to play.

When possible, share a success story that demonstrates the collective benefits of collaborating across sectors to achieve better results.

Use the Foundation of Community Health metaphor in place of the term "social determinants of health."

Find opportunities to highlight goals and priorities that showcase a 21st-century public health approach to promoting community health.

Reinforce the idea that cross-sector collaboration with public health can empower other sectors and advance their goals.