



# Reconnecting Union Heights:

## *Community Action Toolkit*

The Union Heights community in North Charleston, SC, has a powerful vision to build long-term resilience through a transformative revitalization project, supported by an \$11.4 million EPA Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant. This vital project aims to bring affordable housing (Project 218), critical home repair and weatherization for existing homes, workforce training, and community leadership development, all while reconnecting a neighborhood historically divided by infrastructure.

However, the federal grant for this project has been unexpectedly frozen, reinstated, and now terminated by the current administration. This action, which The Sustainability Institute (the nonprofit leading the project) has challenged with a lawsuit, threatens to derail years of planning and hard work.

This toolkit is designed to empower you, the community members, to stand up, voice your concerns, and demand that the obligation to this grant funded project is fulfilled.

## Understand the Impact: Why Your Voice Matters

***Reconnecting Union Heights*** is more than just a grant; it's an investment in the future of Union Heights. Its termination or delay means:

- **Delayed Progress:** Essential improvements like affordable housing, home weatherization, and job training are put on hold.
- **Economic Setback:** Loss of jobs and economic opportunities that the project would create.
- **Environmental and Health Impacts:** Households will continue to suffer negative and consequential environmental and health impacts that the grant is designed to solve.
- **Erosion of Trust:** A breach of trust between the community and the government agencies meant to serve them.

Your collective voice is crucial to highlight these impacts and pressure decision-makers to reinstate the funding and allow this project to move forward.

# Identify Key Decision-Makers and Influencers

To effectively advocate, it's important to know who to contact:

- **Federal Elected Officials:**

These officials can advocate on your behalf in Washington D.C.

- Tim Scott, U.S. Senator for South Carolina
- Nancy Mace, U.S. Representative for North Charleston
- James E. "Jim" Clyburn, U.S. Representative - District 6

- **Local and State Elected Officials:**

These officials have a direct stake in local community well-being.

- Reginald L. "Reggie" Burgess, Mayor of the City of North Charleston
- Deon T. Tedder, SC Senate District 42
- Wendell G. Gilliard, SC House District 111

- **Community Organizations & Legal Support:**

- The Sustainability Institute (leading the project and the lawsuit).
- Other local community advocacy groups.

## Action Strategies: How You Can Make a Difference

Here are concrete steps you can take today:

1. **Contact Your Elected Officials**

This is one of the most direct ways to make your voice heard.

**Methods of Contact:**

- **In-person (Most Impactful):** Visit the office locations of your representatives to speak to your representatives and/ or their staff directly.

**The office locations for your federal elected representatives are:**

**Tim Scott, U.S. Senator for South Carolina**

2500 City Hall Lane  
3rd Floor Suite  
North Charleston, SC 29406

**Nancy Mace, U.S. Representative for North Charleston**

900 Island Park Drive Suite 260  
Daniel Island, SC 29492

**James E. "Jim" Clyburn, U.S. Representative - District 6**

130 W. Main Street  
Kingstree, SC 29556

- **Phone Calls:** Call their local or D.C. offices. A quick, polite call can have a big impact.

*Sample Script:* "Hello, my name is [Your Name] and I'm a constituent from Union Heights in North Charleston. I'm calling to express my strong concern about the termination of the EPA Community Change Grant awarded to The Sustainability Institute to support revitalization efforts in Union Heights. This project is vital for [mention 1-2 key benefits like affordable housing, job training, or critical home repair]. I urge Senator Scott to advocate for the immediate reinstatement of this funding. Thank you."

**These are the phone numbers for your federal elected representatives:**

**Tim Scott, U.S. Senator for South Carolina**

D.C. Office: (202) 224-6121  
Local Office: (843) 727-4525

**Nancy Mace, U.S. Representative for North Charleston**

D.C. Office: (202) 225-3176  
Local Office: (843) 352-7572

**James E. "Jim" Clyburn, U.S. Representative - District 6**

D.C. Office: (202) 225-2313  
Local Office: (843) 355-1211

- **Emails:** Send a personalized email.

**Subject Line:** "Urgent: Reinstate EPA Community Change Grant - Reconnecting Union Heights"

**Content:** Briefly introduce yourself, explain your connection to Union Heights, describe the project's importance, and clearly state your request for the grant's reinstatement.

**These are the email links for your federal elected representatives:**

**Tim Scott, U.S. Senator for South Carolina**

Email form: <https://www.scott.senate.gov/contact/email-me/>

**Nancy Mace, U.S. Representative for North Charleston**

Email form: <https://mace.house.gov/contact>

**James E. "Jim" Clyburn, U.S. Representative - District 6**

Email form: <https://clyburn.house.gov/email-me/>

- **Letters:** A handwritten or typed letter can be very impactful.  
*Letter template and letter writing components are provided on a separate page.*

**The mailing addresses for your federal elected representatives are:**

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- **Social Media:** Tag your representatives on social media platforms (Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram) using relevant hashtags like #UnionHeightsSC, #ReconnectUnionHeights, #Project218.

**2. Raise awareness and begin to build broad support.**

- **Write Letters to the Editor/Op-Eds:**  
Submit short opinion pieces to local newspapers (e.g., The Post and Courier, Charleston City Paper). Share your personal story and the project's significance.
- **Share on Social Media:**
  - Post regularly about Project 218 and the grant termination.
  - Use compelling photos or videos of Union Heights.
  - Share articles and updates from The Sustainability Institute or news outlets.
  - Encourage friends and family to share.

### 3. Community Organizing - Strength in numbers

- **Attend Community Meetings:** Stay informed about meetings organized by the Sustainability Institute or other local groups. Your presence shows solidarity.
- **Host Small Gatherings:** Organize informal meetings with neighbors, friends, and family to discuss the issue, share information, and plan local actions.
- **Build Coalitions:** Connect with other community groups, faith-based organizations, and local businesses that support the revitalization of Union Heights. A united front is more powerful.

### 4. Support Legal Action

The lawsuit filed by The Sustainability Institute is a critical avenue.

- **Stay Informed:** Follow updates on the lawsuit from The Sustainability Institute
- **Share Information:** Help disseminate accurate information about the legal challenge within the community.
- **Show Community Support:** While you cannot directly intervene in the lawsuit, strong community advocacy and public support can demonstrate the profound impact of the grant termination, which may indirectly bolster the legal case.

## Crafting Your Message: Focus on Impact

When communicating, always emphasize:

- **Community Benefit:** How this grant directly benefits the people of Union Heights and North Charleston (e.g., "This project means safe, affordable homes for our seniors," "It creates jobs for our youth," "It helps families in desperate need of critical home repair").
- **Personal Stories:** Share how the project would impact you, your family, or your neighbors. Personal stories are powerful.
- **Long-Term Vision:** Remind decision-makers of the long-term positive transformation this project promises.
- **Resilience:** Highlight the community's determination and resilience despite setbacks.

**Avoid:** Getting bogged down in political jargon or placing direct blame on an individual or group. People care most about the tangible impact on lives.

# Resources and Support

## **The Sustainability Institute**

3973 Rivers Ave, Suite 10  
North Charleston, SC 29405  
843.529.3421

[www.SustainabilityInstituteSC.org](http://www.SustainabilityInstituteSC.org)



**Project Website:**

<https://sustainabilityinstitutesc.org/reconnecting-union-heights/>

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Email form: <https://mace.house.gov/contact>

### **James E. "Jim" Clyburn, U.S. Representative - District 6**

130 W. Main Street  
Kingstree, SC 29556

D.C. Office: (202) 225-2313

Local Office: (843) 355-1211

Email form: <https://clyburn.house.gov/email-me/>

**Remember:** Your voice is powerful. By working together and consistently advocating for this project, the Union Heights community can ensure its vision for a brighter future becomes a reality.

# Letter Writing Template

## Basic Components

### Date

### Your Contact Information

Your Full Name

Your Street Address

Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Phone Number (Optional)

Your Email Address (Optional, but recommended for faster response)

### Their Contact Information

Ensure you have the correct spelling of their name and their official office address.

### Salutation

"Dear Senator [Senator's Last Name],"

### Introduction (First Paragraph)

Clearly state the purpose of your letter and identify yourself as a constituent.

- **Constituent Identification:** Mention that you are a constituent from the Union Heights neighborhood in North Charleston, SC.
- **Your Purpose:** Briefly state why you are writing  
*I am writing to express my concern about the recent and wrongful termination of the EPA Community Change Grant that was rightfully awarded to The Sustainability Institute.*

### Body Paragraphs (One to Three Paragraphs)

This is where you elaborate on your issue or request.

- **State Your Position Clearly:** Explain your stance on the issue.
- **Provide Specifics/Evidence:** Support your position with brief, factual information, personal anecdotes, or relevant data. Avoid overly emotional language; stick to facts and logical arguments.
- **Explain Impact:** Describe how the issue affects you, your family, your community, or the state/nation.
- **Be Concise:** Keep each paragraph focused on a single point.

## Conclusion (Final Paragraph)

Reiterate your main point and thank the senator for their time and consideration.

- **Restate Your Request/Message:** Briefly summarize what you want the senator to do or understand.
- **Call to Action:** Politely ask for a specific action.  
*We ask that you please investigate the circumstances surrounding the termination of this grant and advocate for its immediate reinstatement.*
- **Thank You:** Express gratitude for their attention to your letter.

## Closing

"Sincerely," or "Respectfully,"

Your Signature  
[Your Full Name]

## Tips for Writing Your Letter:

**Be Polite and Respectful:** Even if you strongly disagree, maintain a courteous tone.

**Be Specific:** Refer to bill numbers if applicable, or specific policies.

**Keep it Brief:** Senators and their staff receive many letters. Aim for one page.

**Proofread:** Check for any spelling or grammatical errors before sending.

**Follow Up (Optional):** If you don't receive a response within a few weeks, you might consider a polite follow-up.