

HOW TO HOST A SITE VISIT WITH AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

The goal of a site visit is to find ways to show, rather than “tell,” a lawmaker the value your program brings to the community. This might mean creating opportunities to have lawmakers connect with the people you serve, “sample” your services, or visit an existing event you have planned.

Overall, the goal is to educate leaders on the importance of funding your work. We know lawmakers are more likely to support funding a cause when they understand exactly how the money will be spent — this is your opportunity to do just that. Further, this is an opportunity for you to deepen a relationship with a lawmaker and offer them a chance to connect with constituents in their district.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF TO PLAN AN EFFECTIVE SITE VISIT

- What are your specific and realistic goals for this site visit, keeping in mind that these visits are often brief and you may only have 15 to 20 minutes with them?
- Which electeds will be in attendance?
 - ▶ How can you ensure they see the value investing in your program would bring to their constituents specifically?
 - ▶ Can you frame the site visit as an opportunity for them to connect with their constituents?
- What questions do you plan to ask the elected?
 - ▶ When thinking of messengers, who is best positioned to ask those questions?
- What questions do you anticipate the elected asking you?
 - ▶ Are you prepared for challenging questions?
- How can this be an opportunity for relationship-building between your organization and the elected?
- Do you plan to create leave-behind materials for the elected? (e.g., a one-pager of recent research into your issue area, an op-ed written by someone with lived experience in their district, etc.)
- What communications materials can you develop from the visit?
 - ▶ Is the elected open to taking a photo or video with members of your organization or the people you serve?
 - ▶ Are they open to you posting on social media?
 - ▶ Is the elected interested in giving a press statement in the form of a brief press conference following the site visit? Alternatively, are they open to a trusted journalist shadowing the site visit in real-time?



TIP: Press attention is often most desired by your champions, who can leverage media coverage as an opportunity to show their longstanding or newly refreshed commitment to the issue, rather than lawmakers you’re still persuading, who can see it as an imposition. Further, certain advocacy conversations can be more effective without a journalist in the room — a lawmaker can be more candid without a recorder present.