



Tips for Legislator Visits

Tips for Scheduling the Meeting

- ▶ **Make the invitation by phone.** This is not a time to be passive and send an email. If you are inviting them to your facilities, make it as easy as possible by offering several options and doing your best to accommodate their schedule. Expect the appointment to be no more than one hour.
- ▶ Once a meeting is scheduled, **follow up with a letter confirming the date and time of the meeting**, and directions to your location.
- ▶ Remember – legislators *want* to hear from you, but their time is at a premium.

During the Visit

- ▶ Start on time. Be prepared, and polite.
- ▶ Start by concisely introducing your organization. Include the following information:
 - Who you are.
 - What your organization does – be sure to your elevator speech prepared. We hope you will also work in some facts about Kentucky's nonprofit sector and how critical the sector is to Kentucky's economy and quality of life. Check out our More Than Charity resources (<https://www.kynonprofits.org/advocate/morethancharity>), including local data (<https://www.kynonprofits.org/advocate/MoreThanCharityLWAs>).
 - What you need from your legislator – make a clear, actionable request.
 - A reference to the fact sheet you have prepared. This should contain easy to understand facts and figures about your organization.
- ▶ If they are at your facility, consider arranging a short activity that will showcase the work of your organization and allow your legislator to see your staff or volunteers in action (keep in mind some some may have accessibility challenges).
- ▶ **Go local—your effectiveness is based on geography.** Legislators want to hear your thoughts and opinions because you are a constituent. One of your most useful strategies is to relate the issue and your position to your community. This is an opportunity to reinforce the economic importance of the sector locally (<https://www.kynonprofits.org/advocate/MoreThanCharityLWAs>).
- ▶ Don't attack the legislator for her/his record on your issue(s), and don't disparage government or politics.
- ▶ Don't use technical terms or acronyms, unless you are certain that your legislator will understand them.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer to a question, say you'll find out and get back to her/him (and follow through!).
- ▶ Before the visit ends, ask how you can be of help to her/him.
- ▶ Thank her/him for her/his time.

After the Visit

- ▶ What happens after a meeting is almost as important as the meeting itself.
- ▶ Follow up with a thank you note along with any information that you promised during the visit.
- ▶ Keep in touch during legislative session – contact your legislator on issues of interest to your organization, and remind him/her of his/her visit to your facility.
- ▶ Follow-up is important because you are building a long-term relationship.
- ▶ If the legislator helps pass legislation, etc. remember to reconnect and thank them for their support.
- ▶ Consider using social media to promote the visit.