

HOW TO HOST YOUR LAWMAKER



a step-by-step guide for successful advocacy in your setting

Hosting lawmakers or candidates for office in your community can be an excellent way to share your story and influence legislative outcomes.

Be assured — lawmakers and candidates for office want to meet with you and those you serve to learn about the issues that are important to those who elect them. To help you plan, promote, and execute a successful visit, we have prepared a step-by-step planning worksheet to prepare you for an advocacy visit.

STEP 1. WHO SHOULD WE INVITE?

You can look up your lawmakers by visiting www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts. Enter the address of your setting. Each elected official who represents your site – at the federal, state and local levels - will be listed along with their contact information. Every Minnesotan has one state senator and one state representative; consider coordinating with both to schedule a visit at the same time. Use the lines below to help you identify and organize contact information for those you'd like to invite:

Name	Email	Address	Phone	Invitation Sent	Follow-up Call
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:
				<input type="checkbox"/> date:	<input type="checkbox"/> date:

STEP 2. WHO SHOULD WE INCLUDE?

It's entirely up to you who you include in the visit. Consider including staff, professional caregivers, those you serve and family caregivers. Use the space below to jot down community members you'd like to include:

Community members who should attend:

STEP 3. PLAN THE VISIT

You can suggest dates or invite your lawmakers to a specific event your plan to host, but be flexible. Lawmakers have busy calendars, so you may have to adapt your plan. Use the space below to jot down dates you can suggest:

Possible dates:

There are a variety of ways to host elected officials. Just be sure your lawmakers have a chance to have conversations with you and those they represent. Here are some ideas for what you can include on your:

Small group meeting with staff only

Event (ex: summer picnic, holiday party)

Small group meeting with select residents

Site tour

Community Forum

STEP 4. SEND YOUR INVITATION

Once you've identified who you want to invite and a tentative date and agenda, use this sample invitation either via mail or email for the initial invitation. Be prepared to follow up with your lawmaker's staff by phone.

Dear [REP./SEN. LASTNAME]:

On behalf of [ORGANIZATION], I would like to extend an invitation to you to visit [COMMUNITY/PROPERTY] located at [ADDRESS]. [ORGANIZATION], which proudly serves [#] seniors in your district and employs approximately [#] employees.

During the visit, you will have the opportunity to tour our community, meet with the people we serve and their caregivers, and learn what issues matter to them.

I am happy to follow up with your office via phone to find a time that may work in with schedule. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [PHONE] or email [ENTER EMAIL ADDRESS]. Thank you in advance for your consideration. On behalf of the caregivers and seniors at [ORGANIZATION], we look forward to your visit.



PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

Great job! You've set up a date and time your lawmaker will visit your site. Now what? You'll need to do a little work in preparation for your event, but we will be right by your side.

STEP 5. DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

This part is easy! Your message is simple, and you share it every day: we are proud to provide quality care for those we serve. LeadingAge Minnesota can help you with the rest. We will share specific details you may need to know about the issues that matter most. You may also want to have a few key facts on hand to share with your lawmaker including:

How long you've operated:

How many people do you serve:

What services do you provide:

Do you have clients on Medicaid or Medicaid Waivers:

How many people work in your setting:

What are the most pressing issues you are facing related in your setting:

STEP 6. DEVELOP AN AGENDA

Plan on about one hour with your lawmaker, but defer to their schedule. Your time together can include a short tour, a sit down meeting with site leaders, meet-and-greets with those you serve or introductions to professional caregivers. Ask yourself who and what in your setting you're most proud of and share it with your lawmaker. Have a few people on hand to greet the lawmaker and their staff when they arrive and introduce the legislator to as many people as possible. Don't forget to take pictures of their interactions throughout the tour. Below you can sketch out your agenda:

**DRAFT
AGENDA:**

TIPS FOR HAVING A SUCCESSFUL VISIT



Almost there! Just a few tips and tricks to make sure you have the best visit possible.

PREPARE YOUR TEAM

- Identify who will meet the legislator; (such as: advocacy staff, leadership, a community champion, LeadingAge Minnesota staff, caregivers, and residents). Be sure to introduce them to people in a variety of roles throughout your organization, including caregivers and residents.
- Communicate to staff and residents the date/time of the site visit and why the legislator is visiting.
- Share key messaging with everyone who will be interacting with the legislator during the visit.
- Utilize materials and "leave-behinds" from LeadingAge Minnesota. Avoid using marketing resources you might have to entice prospective residents.

MESSAGING GUIDELINES

- Your key messages for a lawmaker visit are different from those you share to attract new residents because the goal is different. Instead of focusing on your building amenities, tell a story about how their support impacts the people you serve and their caregivers.
- Pick one or two policy points (or specific pieces of legislation) to focus on. Too many policy requests can be overwhelming for you and the legislators. Think about what policy change would have the biggest impact on your community.
- Tell a story that gets beyond numbers and the bottom line. Remember it is about the WHO and the WHY. Incorporate meaningful stories from seniors and their caregivers about the impact of the services you provide.
- Make sure your team is prepared and knows their key messages you want to share. If conversations go off topic, bring it back to your core messages.

Use this space to note what your key messages will be and who will share them

STEP 7. CALL US! WE CAN HELP.

We are here to help you with any questions you have. Contact Dan Nelson as your primary contact for anything related to hosting your lawmakers. We are your resource to provide up-to-date information on policy issues and can attend your visits as well, if you like.



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Driven to transform and enhance the experience of aging, LeadingAge Minnesota is the state's largest association of organizations serving older adults. Together with more than 50,000 caregivers, our members provide quality care, services and support to nearly 55,000 older adults in independent living, assisted living, adult day, home care and skilled nursing.