

# Tips for Hosting a Legislative Visit

## ***Why schedule a personal visit?***

Personal visits are an extremely effective means of engaging your legislator(s) on issues of interest to your organization. Legislators want to meet and hear from their constituents. However, they are very busy people, so it is crucial to make the most of the time you have with your representative and senators.

## ***The best time to schedule a legislative visit***

The best time to schedule a legislative visit is during the summer and fall, when the legislature is not in session. The Connecticut Legislature meets from January through the beginning of June in odd years, and February through May in the even (election) years. Summer and fall are optimal times to request a site visit from your legislator and have time to discuss important issues.

## ***How to determine who your elected officials are***

You can find out who represents you personally or the area in which your organization is located by either calling your town clerk, or going online to <http://www.votesmart.com>.

## ***Before your visit***

- Invite your legislator in advance by phone, and follow up with a letter confirming the date and time of the meeting. Expect no more than one hour for a typical site visit.
- Make it easy for your legislator to meet with you. Offer several possibilities and do your best to accommodate their schedule.
- Prepare a good fact sheet about your organization or legislative issue.
- Learn in advance where your legislator stands on your issue or the mission of your organization.
- Be prepared to explain how your organization affects voters in the legislator's district.
- Dress appropriately for the visit – normal business attire is acceptable.
- If possible, invite a Board Member or community person, already known to the Legislative.

## ***During the visit***

- Be on time, prepared, and polite.
- Start with a concise introduction to your organization, containing the following information:
  - Who you are
  - What your organization does
  - What you need from your legislator
  - A reference to the fact sheet you have prepared. Make sure the legislator leaves with a copy of the fact sheet in his/her hand.
- Do not attack the legislator for his/her record on your issue(s), and do not disparage government or politics.
- Do not use technical terms or acronyms, unless you are certain that your legislator will understand them.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say you will find out and get back to him/her – and follow through.
- Before s/he leaves, ask how you can be of help to him/her.
- Thank him/her for their time.

### ***After the visit***

- 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.