



DSPN ADVOCACY RESOURCES



Meeting With Your Legislators

To contact your state legislator, the first step is to identify who they are. You can find this information by using the tool available on the [Legislature's homepage](http://legis.wisconsin.gov) (<http://legis.wisconsin.gov>). In the center of the page, you'll find a button labeled "Who Are My Legislators." By entering your address, you can access the profile of your legislator, which will include their phone number and email address.

You also have three federal legislators.

- Two U.S. Senators:
 - Senator Tammy Baldwin: 202-224-5653, baldwin.senate.gov
 - Senator Ron Johnson: 202-224-5323, ronjohnson.senate.gov
- One Representative in the U.S. House of Representatives. You can find their contact information using the tool available on the [U.S. House of Representatives homepage](https://www.house.gov) (<https://www.house.gov>). In the top right of the page is "Find Your Representative". By entering your zip code, you can access the profile of your legislator, which will include their phone number and email address.

Arranging the Visit

To schedule visits with the legislator's office, it's important to contact them by phone at least 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Avoid dropping in unexpectedly. Generally, meetings should not exceed half an hour, but you can expect to have around 10 to 15 minutes for your discussion.

Explain the reason for the visit and identify who will be attending. To improve your chances of meeting face-to-face with legislators, organize a group that includes constituents from various experiences and backgrounds.

Depending on the current legislative situation, you may need to meet with staff members instead of the legislator. Since legislators often rely on their staff's insights, these meetings are also very important.

After arranging the appointment, confirm the visit by email. Follow up with a phone call several days before the meeting.

Preparing for the Visit

If you're attending as a group, make sure to agree on your message and designate a spokesperson in advance.

Prepare well-reasoned facts and figures to support your issue, but avoid overwhelming the legislator with too much information. Be ready to answer questions and address counterarguments. If you encounter a question you can't answer, don't hesitate to say that you will find the information and follow up with the legislator.

Additionally, create a “leave-behind” information packet for the legislator. This should include your contact information, fact sheets, personal stories, and other relevant materials.

During the Visit

Be sure to arrive on time. Be familiar with your agenda to ensure that you stick to your main points. Avoid assuming that the legislator is already acquainted with the details of the issue or bill you are discussing.

Keep your presentation simple and straightforward, as you may only have 5 to 10 minutes once you take introductions into account.

Begin the visit by introducing yourselves and thanking the legislator for meeting with you. If applicable, express your appreciation for any supportive positions they have taken in the past.

Start the discussion by clearly framing the issue at hand. Support your position by explaining why the proposed measure is good public policy.

Provide examples of how the legislation impacts people within the legislator's district. Sharing personal stories about how the legislation will affect you and others can be very impactful. Including statistics can also help reinforce your message.

Make a specific request for legislative action to take control of the meeting, as you will have set the agenda. If attempts are made to divert the discussion, politely steer it back to your issue.

Finally, if the legislator appears supportive, seek a commitment. If the legislator remains opposed, kindly ask them to keep an open mind and remain neutral.

Don't overstay your welcome. Conclude the visit by expressing your gratitude and, if applicable, invite the legislator to visit your organization.

Following the Visit

Always conduct a group debrief immediately afterwards. Personal visits significantly enhance a legislator's awareness of an issue, especially when they are followed by additional actions.

Send a thank-you note or letter which reinforces your message, restates an understanding of the legislator's position and highlights the main points of the visit. Also provide the legislator with any additional materials or information they may have requested.