USE YOUR VOICE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

How to set up and host legislator visits

Purpose:

- To build authentic relationships with policymakers.
- To educate them about the mission, your community, and the real-world impact of their decisions.
- To create a memorable, human-centered experience connecting policy to people.

Core Principles:

Respect: Honor their time and role.
Clarity: Have a clear message & goal for the visit
Authenticity: Share real stories, not just stats.
Preparation: Plan ahead so the visit feels intentional, not rushed.
Hospitality: Make them feel welcomed and appreciated.

Basic Flow:

Before the visit:

- Identify which legislator you want to invite and why (align with their committees/interests if possible)
- Reach out formally (email/letter) to invite them and propose a few date/time options.
- Confirm attendees on your side & assign roles (who greets, who speaks, who takes notes).
- Prepare materials: a simple agenda, talking points, leave behind documents, and any visuals or handouts.

During the visit:

- Welcome and introductions: thank them for coming.
- Share your purpose: what you hope they'll take away from this experience.
- Showcase your program/site: tell stories illustrating your impact.
- Leave time for Q&A and conversation.
- Thank them again and offer follow up materials.

After the visit:

- Send a thank-you note or email within 24-48 hours.
- Offer to answer further questions or connect them with additional resources.
- Document the visit and feedback for your records.

Source: The WA-SEN Guidebook, available from wa-sen.org

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Pro Tip:

- Align your visit's goals with the legislator's interests for more meaningful connection.
- Keep the visit within 30-45 minutes. Busy schedules appreciate brevity.
- Have a photographer (if appropriate) to document the visit for social media and reports.
- Make it interactive; show, don't tell.
- If something goes wrong (tech glitch, someone's late, etc.) stay calm and adaptable; they notice grace under pressure.

Sample invitation email/letter template.

Subject: Invitation: WA-SEN's Student Summit & Town Hall Oct. 19th - Representative _____

Email Body:

Hello,

I am attaching an invitation from Washington Student Engagement Networks (WA-SEN) for Representative _____ to speak at the attached event.

Thank you in advance for helping me get this request along. If your office has any comments, questions, or concerns, please reply directly to this email or use my contact information below. I am happy to pass along information to our team to ensure this event meets the necessary guidelines.

Warmly,

(Your name and contact information)

(Attach details about the event and what the speaker can expect)