




LeadingAge[®]
Ohio

GRASSROOTS GUIDE

A PATH TO
**HOSTING, INFLUENCING
AND CONNECTING WITH
LAWMAKERS**

www.leadingageohio.org
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WHY SHOULD LEADINGAGE OHIO MEMBERS MEET WITH LAWMAKERS?

LeadingAge Ohio is proud to represent over 400 mission-driven, values-based providers and partners in Ohio. The services our members provide cover the continuum of long-term and post-acute care. **As Ohioans continue to age and the need for these services continues to grow, it is critical that our unique membership has a strong voice with Ohio lawmakers.**

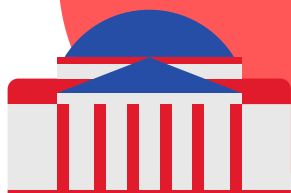
Connecting with lawmakers and being strong advocates for our membership is one of the top priorities of the LeadingAge Ohio staff, however, these connections are made much stronger when our members join the effort. **Our members are the local power that can help appeal directly to lawmakers, connecting the dots on why the services our members provide are so important and providing tangible examples of quality care in their own districts and hometowns.**

We hope this guide helps the LeadingAge Ohio membership to better understand what makes up a grassroots visit with a lawmaker, provides a framework for setting up one of these meetings, and encourages members to dive into advocacy!

INVITE A
LAWMAKER
TO VISIT



JOIN AN
ADVOCACY
MEETING



HOST A
CANDIDATE
FORUM



ORGANIZING

A MEETING WITH A LAWMAKER

Organizing a meeting with a lawmaker or hosting a candidate forum can seem like a daunting task, but it is truly as easy as an email or call. As local elected officials, state lawmakers must remain connected to the people and businesses that reside in their districts. **If the legislator is available on the day you request to meet, there is a high likelihood they will attend.**

Below is a checklist of items to be thinking about before a meeting with a legislator:



- **Goals.** What is my organization's goal for the meeting? It is a good idea to huddle or talk with your team and LeadingAge Ohio ahead of time.
- **Documents and handouts.** Having an overview of your organization or legislative goals on paper can be helpful to hand-off to the lawmaker during or after the meeting. LeadingAge Ohio can provide advocacy briefs on a variety of issues.
- **Staff and resident readiness.** If the visit is taking place in a long-term care or post-acute care setting, it is important to ensure that your staff and residents are prepared for the visit.
- **Planning your tour.** If the visit is taking place in a long-term care or post-acute care setting, think ahead of time about what services and settings you'd like them to see during their tour.

GOALS



Ensuring that the entire team taking part in the meeting understands the goal of the event ahead of time is the most critical way to ensure that it is a success. Many meetings are planned to talk LTSS funding, such as in the state budget, but others are simply scheduled to build relationships for collaboration and awareness later on, such as scheduling a candidate forum or taking part in a golf outing fundraiser in your district. **Know ahead of time why the meeting was scheduled and what the goal is.**



- **Where should we meet?** The meeting location should tie in to the goal; for example, a meeting to discuss increased funding for the Assisted Living Waiver should include a tour of your organization's assisted living facilities. Visits at your organization helps legislators become more connected to your work and the people you serve.
- **Who should be included?** LeadingAge Ohio staff partners are happy to join you for the event. Small groups are preferred - if you'd like to incorporate more staff, consider including their areas as stops on a tour. Be mindful of your staff's preexisting relationships with area lawmakers and what the goal of the visit is. That will help determine who should be involved.
- **How can I get in contact with a lawmaker's office?** LeadingAge Ohio works hard every day to maintain relationships with legislative offices and can help facilitate the meeting. The next page provides contact information for state government offices.
- **When is the best time to invite a lawmaker to a meeting?** State legislators are typically in Columbus Tuesday through Thursday during legislative session and committee weeks. Mondays and Fridays are days that offer the best opportunity to include a state legislator in your event or to schedule a visit.
- **Can I host a campaign event?** During campaign season (summer and fall of even-numbered years), legislators are typically in their districts. This is a great time to host a candidate's forum or visit. LeadingAge Ohio can provide guidance and facilitation for these kinds of events.
- **Can I support candidates on my own?** LeadingAge Ohio's political action committee (PAC) exists to support the friends of aging services and difference-makers at the Statehouse, and uses the collective strength of our membership to be effective. Members who would like to support candidates individually are welcome to do so. If you are a nonprofit provider, ensure you are clear on all rules and regulations in dealing with political campaigns.

Want to talk federal policy? Do you have an Ohio Congressman or Senator visiting your community? Let LeadingAge Ohio connect you with the resources of our national affiliate LeadingAge, or visit the LeadingAge Advocacy Action Center at <https://www.leadingage.org/advocacy-action-center>.





SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR SCHEDULING A GRASSROOTS VISIT

LeadingAge Ohio is always happy to facilitate a meeting. We encourage members to reach out to our advocacy team for assistance in scheduling these meetings.

If you would prefer to reach out yourself, below is a sample script that can be helpful. Contact information for specific legislative offices is available on the next page.

"Hi, I am interested in talking to [Representative/Senator/Director/etc] [Last Name]'s scheduler, please. My name is [Name] and I am the [Title] at [Organization], which provides [affordable housing, nursing home, life plan community, hospice, etc.] in the district. We would really like to host [Legislator Name] at our location for a tour and a conversation with our team.

We know session is out for the summer - do any of the following dates work? [Give 3 date options.] Can you give us an idea of how long [Legislator Name] might have?"

Note: The staff person may ask you what issues you want to address with the legislator; it's important to work with staff partners at LeadingAge Ohio prior to the actual meeting to determine what two or three issues are most critical to discuss based on what is going on in your community, as well as the entire state.

KEY CONTACTS



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www.ohiohouse.gov

Member directory and search tool available under the "Representatives" section.



www.ohiosenate.gov

Member directory and search tool available under the "Menu" section.



www.governor.ohio.gov

www.medicaid.ohio.gov

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