

How to effectively meet with Minnesota state legislators

Meeting with legislators can feel overwhelming and daunting. Remember, elected officials work for the people - aka you! Use this guide to build confidence, get prepared, and reach your advocacy goals. It can take practice, but it is critical that decision-makers hear your voice and your communities' voices.

Find and Email Your Representatives



[Who Represents Me?](#)



Minnesota House of Representatives Emails

- Legislator: rep.firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov
- LA: firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov



Minnesota Senate Emails

- Legislator: sen.firstname.lastname@senate.mn
- LA: firstname.lastname@senate.mn

Request a Meeting

- Address the email to the Legislator and always CC their Legislative Assistant (LA).
- Include if you personally are a constituent and/or your organization works in their district.
- Share the issue that you wish to discuss. Include a bill number if you're discussing specific legislation.
- Provide specific days and times you can meet.
- State if you prefer to meet in person at the Capitol, in the Legislator's district (e.g., at your organization or coffee shop), or online.

Sample Email

To: rep.firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov
CC: firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov
Subject: Meeting request from XYZ Organization

Dear Rep. X,

My name is Y and I serve as a case manager at XYZ organization, which is located in your district. I am requesting a meeting to share our support for changes to state grantmaking and contracting (House File 1234) and hear your feedback. The meeting will be with myself and our executive director, Z.

We are available to meet at the Capitol or online on Fri, Jan 1 from 3-5pm, Tues Jan 5 from 10-12pm, or Thurs Jan 7 from 1-4 pm. If those times do not work we will do our best to be flexible and work around your schedule. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to connecting!

Sincerely, Name

Prepare for Your Meeting

- Prepare your talking points and practice in advance. Be clear and concise!
- Ensure all members of your meeting party are prepared and assign talking points that you are all on board with.
- Prepare for a give and take exchange—be ready to tell them what you know, what your community and organization needs, and be willing to listen to them.
- Decide your goal. Are you making a specific ask? Are you sharing information and inviting a legislator to tour your nonprofit? Co-sponsor or introduce legislation?
- Consider preparing responses in advance for questions you anticipate receiving.

- Prep and print materials for your group and the legislator to review during the meeting. Ensure the messaging is clear, include your org's name & contact info
- Remember you are offering something legislators want and need: information and community relationships.
- Plan out your meeting with time frames for each person speaking - this can help with nerves and the limited time.

Sample Prep Schedule

10:00-10:02	Intro	Person A
10:02-10:06	Proposal	Person B
10:06-10:12	Discussion	Person A
10:12-10:14	Make the ask	Person C
10:14-10:15	Thank you	Person B

During the Meeting

- Be prompt and patient. Legislators are meeting with dozens of people per week, often in only 10–15-minute increments, and sometimes are running behind or will be interrupted during the meeting.
- Keep it short, concise and laser focused. Make the most of your time with the legislator or staff.
- Start by introducing yourself and thanking them for their time. Sharing personal or professional connections is appropriate.
- Provide personal and local examples (especially if you are their constituent) on the impacts of any proposed legislation - this is important!
- If making an ask, clearly ask if they support your proposal and why. If they are unsure, say you will follow up in x days/weeks for an update.
- If not making an ask, be clear that the meeting is to establish a connection or provide an update that doesn't require an action step on their part.
- Not sure how to answer a question? Do not lie or make something up. Say, "I am not sure, but I will find out and get back to you." Follow up via email within a few days and include context of your conversation.
- While it may be disappointing to meet with a staff and not the legislator, treat them with the same respect. Sometimes, it can be even more strategic because of their influential position.

After the Meeting

- Compare notes with members of your team who were in attendance. Make sure you are all on the same page what the legislator said and committed to, along with your follow up tasks.
- Within a few days of the meeting, send a thank you email to the legislator and their LA and attach any materials you provided in the meeting for easy reference.
- Set a date to follow up with the legislator if there was an action item, such as checking in on what they decided for your ask. It's important to follow through on this.
- Consider preparing responses in advance for questions you anticipate receiving.
- Prep and print materials for your group and the legislator to review during the meeting. Ensure the messaging is clear, has your organization's name on it, and includes your contact information.

Sample Follow Up Email

To: rep.firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov

CC: firstname.lastname@house.mn.gov

Subject: Follow up on HR 123 from XYZ Organization

Dear Rep X,

Thank you for meeting with XYZ org on January 10th to discuss topic Y. Find attached our handout with additional information on our proposal for House File 123. As promised, we are following up to learn of your decision to introduce this legislation. We are happy to connect if additional questions have arisen since we last met. Thank you again for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, Name

At the Capitol Complex

- Keep your cell phone on silent, especially during a hearing. Step out of a committee hearing to have a conversation - whether in person or on the phone.
- Testifying? Always be kind, courteous, and stay within the allotted time frame provided. Offer the Committee Assistant (CA) to bring printed copies of your testimony for the Committee.
- Always treat others with respect, especially staffers like Legislative Assistants (LA), Committee Assistants (CA), and Pages - they run the place and are critical to our democracy.
- Have a few of your business cards on you to share with legislators, staff, and advocates
- If the legislator you want to talk to is in a Floor session, leaving a note that will be brought into them (House: Capitol 214, Senate: Capitol 2nd Floor) is a great way to send a message or say thank you. Include the time and what you are wearing or look like if you are requesting them to leave the Floor to meet you so they can easily find you.

Sample Note

To: Senator X

Hello Senator X,

Thank you for your support on Senate File 123! I would like to request your presence the Senate Floor to quickly share a critical update on this legislation. I am wearing a green winter coat and white hat. Thank you,

Sincerely, Name and Org (add time)

General Tips and Tricks

- Message your legislator when they do things you like! They often only hear when folks disagree, so reaching out when you have a win in common affirms their efforts and offers another opportunity to build a relationship.
- Share if you have anything in common, especially if it would help build a bridge. (“We appreciated your comment in the paper about X, thank you for your vote on Y, thank you for visiting my kids’ school”)
- Don’t say anything in an email to a public official you wouldn’t want to see on the front page of a newspaper, as their emails can become public through data requests. Choose your words with great care!
- Sign up for a legislator’s newsletter to see how they talk about their work and priorities. Sign-ups are on their legislative page.
- Sign up for emails of key committees you follow (and even the legislators on those committees) to be kept in the loop. Sign-ups are on the committee’s webpage
- Tell the truth and bring facts. Being a trustworthy source goes a long way.
- Greater MN Legislators are often in St Paul mid-week and are typically in their home district Friday-Sunday. There are no committee meetings on Fridays for all legislators, meaning there’s often more availability to meet.

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