

Guide To Effective Legislative Visits

1. **Find out who your Senator and Assembly Member is and those that serve your ILC.** You can easily find out who your legislators are on [NYAIL's website](#) by inputting your address.
2. **Contact their office.** You can do this by calling their offices. Contact information can be found on the [Assembly](#) and [Senate](#) websites. Alternatively, you can call the Assembly switchboard at 518-455-4100 and ask to be connected to your Assembly Member's office. For the Senate, you can call the Senate switchboard at 518-455-2800. However, the Assembly and Senate websites offer a lot of helpful information and it would be good to become familiar with them.
3. **Schedule the appointment.** You should ask to speak to the scheduler. Provide options for dates and times for the meeting. They may ask you to complete a form and email it back to them. They will likely want to know who will be joining you and the topic(s) you would like to cover in the meeting. A typical meeting is 30 minutes, though you may have less time than that.
4. **Prepare for the meeting.** Once available, send the advocacy materials along to the office with a confirmation of the upcoming meeting. Make sure you have identified the topics you plan to cover. If you are bringing other people, determine who will speak to which topic, and who will listen and take notes. If you have someone who can share a personal story related to one of the subjects, make sure you help prepare them in advance so they are comfortable and on topic during the meeting.
5. **During the meeting.** If applicable, take a minute to chat with them and share pleasantries. Make sure to introduce yourselves and the organization. Exchange business cards. When speaking to your issues, make sure to be clear and concise. If someone has a personal story to share to help explain the importance of an issue, they should share it at that time. This can be an extremely effective way to help legislators connect to the importance of our issues. Make sure you include an 'ask, such as supporting or opposing a proposal being discussed. Remember to be polite, even if the legislator is not supportive of your position. If they ask a question you do not know the answer to, let them know you will get the answer and follow-up. Then make sure to do so.
6. **After the meeting.** Follow-up with an email thanking them for the meeting and reiterating your main points. If the legislator made a commitment to do something in the meeting, let the association know.

A note for virtual visits

Meeting in person is ideal. It shows legislators that you care enough about an issue to travel to their office. It also allows you to make a connection with the legislator or

staffer you are meeting with. However, while we are unable to meet in-person, Zoom or another video conferencing platform is an effective way to hold a meeting with a legislator.

- Most legislators will have an account, but some may want to use your Zoom account. Your ILC may have an account or be able to get one. If not, Zoom does allow free memberships for meetings up to 40 minutes. Since legislative visits are typically less than 30 minutes, this is a good option.
- **In preparing for a virtual visit, make sure you and those attending the meeting with you know how to use the platform ahead of time. You may want to hold a practice session in advance and plan to log in 15 minutes in advance to make sure everything is working for you and your team.**