

4 STEPS FOR ORGANIZING AND HOSTING

AN ADVOCACY MEETING



Organizing an effective advocacy meeting takes planning and thought, but doesn't need to be complicated. Follow these steps to help you stage your advocacy meeting.

TAKE FOUR

1. CREATE A PRE-MEETING RUNNING AGENDA

Here are some things to consider when organizing the meeting:

- What's the main focus of the meeting?
- Who do you want to invite or ask to attend the meeting?
- How long do you want the meeting to run for?
- Do you want to run the meeting as a presentation, Q&A, or town hall? What's the style going to be?
- What are you hoping the takeaways and impact of the meeting will be?

2. DECIDE ON A SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

What will be the most accessible meeting environment? Is it necessary to have the meeting in person or virtual? What day and time are best to drive turnout among your target participants? Do you want people to pre-register to help you in your planning?

If it's going to be in person, consider providing refreshments such as coffee, water, and snacks. Prepare for any printed materials you want to have on hand.



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3. CREATE A MEETING AGENDA

Be thorough in planning out the agenda. You'll want to plan sections of the agenda down to the minute (give yourself about 3-5 extra minutes between transitions). Clearly outline speaking orders if you're planning a speaking program and include timestamps for how long they'll speak and when. Build in time for a Q&A or discussion and time for networking. (Check out our example agenda at the end of this guide)

Avoid making the meeting too long. You'll have the greatest impact if you can keep your meeting to roughly one hour or less. You can reserve more time for discussion or networking, but stay aware of how long you're asking people to remain engaged. Attendants might have more or less time to participate depending on the place and time of the advocacy meeting.

If the meeting needs to run longer than an hour, consider building in time for breaks and regrouping.

Lawmakers appreciate knowing the agenda and participants ahead of time. Be sure to send them a list of participants as well as your planned agenda a day or two before the meeting.

4. USE THE MEETING AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND BUILD SUPPORT

Remember to follow up with participants to keep them engaged and involved. Consider sending out a post-meeting survey or administer one at the end of the meeting. If you choose to create a survey, include a section for participants to let you know if they want to get more involved and how.

Share your gratitude with the people who participated and care about your cause. Keep them engaged by following up with next steps and ways to keep connected within the community.

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SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

**Creative Community Meeting with State Rep Doe and State Senator Smith
3pm - 4pm**

3:00 pm - Senator Smith and Rep Doe arrive.

- **Introductions (round robin of names and organizational affiliations)**
- **Senator Smith and Rep Doe introduce themselves**

3:10 pm - Susan, an artist from the district, shares about her recent community art project that engaged community members and local artists.

3:15 pm - David, Executive Director of Arts Ed Org, talks about arts education initiative.

3:20 pm - Blair, Director of Programming from Museum, introduces upcoming exhibit on local history.

3:25 pm -Kelsey shares economic impact data from the district. Asks for Senator Smith and Rep. Doe to support \$30 million for the Mass Cultural Council's FY25 budget.

- **Share any data on how much funding went to the lawmakers' district and what that meant for the creative community.**
- **Give examples of how an increase will support the lawmakers' districts.**
- **Time for Q & A on budget ask.**

3:40 - Richeline shares a report on the social impact of arts. Introduces the Arts Advancement Bill.

- **Share quick description of what the bill will do**
- **Gives examples of how the bill will help the lawmakers' constituents.**
- **Asks for Senator Smith and Rep. Doe to co-sponsor the bill and make it a priority when talking to leadership.**
- **Time for Q&A on the bill**

3:55 - Wrap up and Thank you's