



Engaging with Public Officials

Fall 2018 - Planning Checklist

The goal of reaching out to public officials is to build support and investment in your after school program. This can be done most effectively through a site visit or district office meeting.

Host A Site Visit

The most impactful way to build support for your program and community is to have a public official learn about your program needs and assets by experiencing it firsthand.

Set a date:

- Fax the district office of your target public official to offer a few dates and times this fall when students will be present. [[Sample fax](#); contact information for [state legislators](#), [U.S. Representatives](#), and [U.S. Senators](#)]
- Call the district office a few days later to check on your request with the scheduling assistant.
- Want to join over a million people celebrating after school programs on the same day? Host your event on **Thursday, October 25** as part of [Lights On Afterschool](#). This is the only nationwide event celebrating the important role after school programs play in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Send out invitations:

- Fax your invitation to your representative's district office. [[Sample invitation](#)]
- Call the district office a few days later to check on your request with the scheduling assistant.
 - If the public official is not available to attend, invite a member of the staff to attend. This is often the first step in building a relationship with the official.
 - Invite them to be part of your event as a speaker or honor them with an award.
- Invite established and potential allies from your community (city officials, school board, county office of education, police department, district attorney, chamber of commerce, teachers, and families). [[Modify your public official invitation](#)]

Create the agenda:

- Plan a short youth-led activity. This can be a performance or demonstration, or prepare students to interact with small groups of visitors (e.g. lead tours, answer questions).
- Prepare a short speaking program that includes your key attendees and messages. [[Sample agenda](#); [messaging document](#)]

Gather materials:

- Send materials to public officials in advance if they are speaking at the event
- 1 page overview of your program. [[Sample overview](#); [ASES funding by Assembly District](#); [ASES funding by Senate District](#); [21st CCLC funding data](#)]
- News articles about program achievements and issues you want to discuss.
- Information about your ask(s). [[Information on after school sustainability](#)]
- Contact information for your program.

Follow up:

- Send a thank you note to the public officials and community members who attended your visit.
- Attach photos from the visit.
- You can also send information about future events to keep them engaged.
- Take photos during the site visit and post them on social media – make sure to tag the public officials.

Meet At Their District Office

If you are running into capacity or timing constraints to host a site visit, a district office meeting is your next best option.

Request a meeting:

- Fax the district office of your target public official to offer a few dates and times this fall when your group is available. [[Sample fax](#); contact information for [state legislators](#), [U.S. Representatives](#), and [U.S. Senators](#)]
- Call the district office a few days later to check on your request with the scheduling assistant.
- If possible, gather a group of 5 key stakeholders to the meeting, which may include: students, families, school district leadership, other after school providers in the public official's district, and local government or community partners.

Plan content and coordinate with attendees:

- Research your public official [[State Legislature](#), [U.S. Congress](#)]:
 - Committee and caucus membership
 - Past support of issues impacting after school
 - Other issues that you are both passionate about
 - Occupation before entering office
- Determine your talking points:
 - Successes and challenges of your program
 - Data about your program and the community it serves
 - Personal stories that connect the data to the people impacted by your program [[How to develop your story](#)]
 - Clear ask of public official (e.g. support more funding for ASES in 2018)
- Determine roles for each meeting attendee (e.g. facilitator, note taker, testimonial speakers).

Prepare materials:

- 1 page overview of your program. [[Sample overview](#); [ASES funding by Assembly District](#); [ASES funding by Senate District](#); [21st CCLC funding data by CA Congressional District](#)]
- News articles about program achievements and issues you want to discuss.
- Information about your ask(s). [[Information on after school sustainability](#)]
- Contact information for your program.

Build public awareness:

- Take photos during or after the meeting
- Post photos on social media and make sure to tag the public official.

Follow up:

- Send a thank you note to the public officials and community members that attended your meeting.
- Attach photos from the meeting.
- Be sure to include an invitation to host the official or their staff at your site or information about future events to keep them engaged.

Say “Thank You”

Whether it is at a site visit or district meeting, on social media, or mailed to their office, let public officials know how much you appreciate their continued support.

Deliver messages from your program:

- Students can send artwork. [[Sample art work](#)]
- Students, families, and staff can send postcards. [ASES thank you templates: [High Five](#), Postcard #1: [Front & Back](#), Postcard #2: [Front & Back](#)]
- Use your phone to record short videos of students, families, and staff saying why they are thankful and post on social media. Be sure to “tag” the officials in your post so they are sure to see the video.

Present an award:

- If you have a public official at your site, present them with a certificate and offer them a chance to say a few words. Make sure to take photos or video to post on social media.
- If you are visiting their district office, present the certificate during your meeting and take a photo for social media too.

This is a list of key steps to help you plan, but it is not exhaustive. If you have questions or need additional materials, please contact Jen Dietrich at the Partnership for Children & Youth at jdietrich@partnerforchildren.org.