

MEETING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR BEGINNERS

TIPS & TRICKS FOR CONNECTING WITH LEGISLATORS

Getting Started

Are you interested in making deeper community connections? Do you want to see more impactful change? Would you like to support and implement policies that support victims/survivors, prevention, and other things related to sexual violence? Then policy is the place for you! There is a wide range of ways to be involved in policy work, but we are going to keep it quick and easy. One of your first steps towards influencing policy changes is learning who your elected officials are.

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How to Find Your Elected Officials

Enter your address to find out who represents you at the local, county, state, and federal levels:

[FIND REPRESENTATIVES](#)

You can look up your school board members here:

[FIND BOARD MEMBERS](#)

Learn About Policy Initiatives

After figuring out who you need to talk to, it is important to know what to talk about. Having some knowledge about policy proposals can be helpful when asking your elected officials to support those policies or legislation.

You can use the website below to find out which MNCASA and MNCASA-supported bills have been introduced in the Minnesota legislature, what stages they are in, and get updated alerts.

[GET ALERTS](#)

Learn more about other advocacy issues and how to get involved here:

- <http://www.mnactivist.com/p/about-mn-activist.html>
- <https://takeactionminnesota.org/>
- <https://endsexualviolence.org/toolkit-templates/>
- <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/get-involved>
- <https://mn.gov/portal/government/local/>

Meeting with Elected Officials

Now that you know who your elected officials are, you can connect with them. Take this time to ask for their support of current policy, inform them about your organization's work and expertise within the community, and promote upcoming events:

TIPS FOR MEETING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Don't be intimidated.
- Communicate by email, phone, or in person.

- Know what you're asking them to do.
- Share how the issue affects the community they serve.
- Get to the point. Meetings usually last no more than 15 minutes.
- Discuss policy, describe your services, seek funding, and ask for action.
- Mention any community connections you might have in common (school, faith, clubs, etc.)
- Provide materials about your organization, including invitations to Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities or other events.
- If you don't know the answer, let them know that you will find more information and follow up with them. You can ask MNCASA for help with follow up.
- Ask how you can be of continued service.
- Remember that your elected official works for you.

NON-PROFITS AND LOBBYING

As a nonprofit organization, you CAN lobby in a limited manner by:

- Educating the public and elected officials about an issue
- Supporting non-partisan candidate forums
- Discussing ballot measures
- Hosting voter registration drives or other non-partisan Get Out the Vote efforts.

As a nonprofit organization, you CANNOT:

- Endorse or rank candidates
- Coordinate activities with a candidate
- Make a campaign contribution for or against a candidate (money or time)
 - Let a candidate use your resources unless they are made equally available to other candidates.
 - Make sure to check limitations by grant funding.
 - Individual staff members can support specific candidates when they are not on the clock and representing your organization.
- Learn more at <https://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/public-policy/elections>