

LEGISLATIVE MEETING GUIDE

First and foremost, legislators want and need to hear from you. They want to hear from you because they want to win your support and to keep a good rapport with their constituents. They need to hear from you because Austin during the legislative session can be a vacuum; it is your place to provide a boots-on-the-ground perspective they may be lacking. You are the expert on your issue and can offer a unique standpoint and context.

Follow these 5 simple steps to schedule a meeting with your legislator(s), or their staff

1. Find Your Office

To find who represents you by address, zip code, city, or county, [visit the search page](#) of the Texas Legislature. Check for any changes as the webpage may not be up to date.

2. Know Your Content

When calling the office to schedule an appointment, you may be asked what the topic of discussion will be for the meeting. You can be brief and say that you are visiting the office to share more about your organization, key community issues, & determine ways you can be a resource to the office.

As you prepare for the visits, remember that your unique value-add is that you offer a local perspective and you are an expert on the community. Be sure to start collecting stories or brush up on your community impact statistics before going into your meeting.

3. Make the Call

Place a call to your legislator's District office using the phone number provided on the [website](#), and ask to **speak to the scheduler**.

4. Let the Office Know You're a Constituent

When connected with the appropriate staff for scheduling an appointment, lead with the fact that **you are from the area United Way/211 call center/COG/etc.** Follow with the framing you decided in Step # 2.

The staff that you speak with will instruct you on the process their office uses to schedule meetings.

Request a meeting with the member, but don't dismiss the importance of being scheduled with key staff. Staff are critical players so any face-to-face is good opportunity for relationship building and education.

5. Follow-Up



A few days before your meeting, contact the office to **confirm the time, location, and list of attendees**. Be sure to make an 'Ask' during your meeting, and follow-up with staff about any questions they may have during your discussion.

Preparing for Your Visits

For additional support on visits, please reach out to Ashley.harris@uwtexas.org and stephanie.obanion@uwtexas.org

The UWT team wants to support you as you prepare!

Goals for the Legislative Visits During the Capitol Day

- Build or strengthen relationships with members of the Legislature
- Position 211 as a critical/valuable resource for our state and to position yourself as a resource to policymakers
- Determine interest/support/areas of alignment on 211 priorities and opportunities for improvements, including HB 555 by Rep. Bucy and increased funding to support 211 TIRN.
 - FOR YOU: see breakdown of funding asks and one pager of HB 555.

Sample Meeting Agenda

Note: If you are with a group, meet outside the office to discuss each person's role and talking points for the meeting.

1. Introduce yourself, share connections, ask about staff
2. Texas 211 Network & context of visit
3. Your 211 Call center/organization: lift-up 1-2 local/state highlights
4. Transition to key messages on the top (1-3) issues/priorities related to 211
 - a. Share local data highlighting issue(s), such as 211 Counts data, your budget, etc.
 - b. Share stories to illustrate the issue(s) & power/value of 211.
5. Ask for member's support on our 211 Funding Priorities & HB 555 by Bucy
6. Ask them questions, including what they're working on.
7. Offer to be a resource and thank them!

Expectations

- Most meetings will last 20-30 minutes
- Even if scheduled with the member, you may meet with staff or a member might walk-in halfway through the meeting (STAFF ARE IMPORTANT!)
- Dress is business professional

After Your Visits

- Take a moment to share your visits on social media – Post photos and tag your members! They love the press.
 - Use your post to reinforce the ask you shared.
 - Use Hashtags: #211Texas #211Day
- ***Immediately capture important notes and relay the information to United Ways of Texas so we can be sure to learn from your insights and follow-up with the office if needed.***
- Send thank you's (handwritten cards always welcome) & follow-up to the offices