



Blueprint for inviting elected officials to events

The purpose of this blueprint is to assist library staff in hosting a successful event with an elected official present. Three kinds of events that might involve an elected official are: a library event where an official is an attendee; an event that features the official as a speaker; or an event the official is hosting an event using library space for their own purposes and where they set their own agenda.

- ★ Plan out event logistics before sending the invitation, for example, but not exhaustive
 - Be prepared to make adjustments when needed, for example, a legislator's staff member may attend in the legislator's place
 - Double-Check that you have library board members who can be present
 - Check to see if there are city protocols you need to follow
 - Ensure you have access to space
 - Ensure you have sources for necessary equipment, such as a podium, loudspeakers, etc.
 - Ensure you have access to an ample supply of chairs
 - If there is potential for the activity to be contentious, make crowd control arrangements
- ★ Remember to make the ask with as much lead time as possible
 - Allow 2 weeks minimum
 - 1 month or more is better
- ★ Be clear about your expectations of the official, for example, is it a(n)
 - Speech
 - Award
 - Listening session
 - Something else
- ★ Plan to greet and chaperone the official and/or their staff member while at the event
 - Get business card from official contact person in order to facilitate further communication
 - Board member who can be present
 - Staff member who can be present
 - Mayor (who will not miss the opportunity)
 - Typically NOT the director
- ★ Follow up with a hand-written thank you card
 - Within 1 week after the event
 - Send photos if any are available
 - Send clippings from the local media if there was coverage
 - Answer questions they may have asked
 - Send along feedback from the community



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The links below provide additional detail to get you started, and ideas you may employ to customize your planning to your event and library.

<https://rdwgroup.com/blog/inviting-elected-officials-event/>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/sample-invitation-legislator-or-candidate-attend-event>

<https://na.theiia.org/awareness/PublicDocuments/How-to-Get-an-Elected-Official-to-Attend-Your-Event.pdf>

<http://voicesforservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Tips-for-Hosting-a-Successful-Site-Visit-2017.pdf>

Other ways to connect your library with elected officials

- ★ Write a letter to the official, inviting them to make use of your facility to reach members of the community.
 - Bill that is currently being considered
 - Listening session
 - Be part of our panel on Topic X
- ★ Put the official's office on your mailing list for electronic newsletters
- ★ Follow your elected officials on social media
 - Read their posts
 - Comment when appropriate
 - Don't make comments that you wouldn't be willing to make when speaking face-to-face with an elected official and be aware that you are representing your library