



Make Your Legislative Visit a Success!

Why Visit with our Legislators? The purpose of visiting your legislators is to share your local experience, explain what you think about an issue, and tell legislators what you want them to do. ENACT Day is a great opportunity to tell legislators that health equity, nutrition, and physical activity are priorities for their constituents (that's *you!*)—and so should be priorities for them.

Convening Your Team The strength of ENACT is our diversity: all of us, regardless of our “special interest” in nutrition, biking, health disparities, public transit, etc., believe that better nutrition *and* physical activity policies are needed for healthy communities. Each legislative team will include a combination of community members, students, public health advocates, and others.

The Visit Agenda While all visits will share the **ENACT Day 2017 Policy Agenda**, the talking points to cover for each visit is your team. Some individuals will want to focus on educating legislators; others want to lobby on specific bills. **Both parts are critical to a successful legislative visit.** At the training, you will learn more about ENACT bills. With your team, decide who will be the leader on each bill, and who will facilitate the discussion to keep everyone on track.

Legislative visits have three key elements:

- 1. LAUNCH**
- 2. MAKE THE CASE**
- 3. SEAL THE DEAL**

→ **1. LAUNCH**

- ◆ **Introductions.** Each visitor should introduce themselves and briefly note relevant personal information, such as, “My family lives in XYZ town, and my children attend XYZ school” or “I’m a healthcare advocate in XYZ city.” Assign a lead participant to start the meeting, and keep the conversation on track.

→ **2. MAKE THE CASE**

- ◆ **Policy Priorities.** Now is the time to focus the visit on specific policy issues. Some ENACT Day participants are comfortable discussing specific bills and urging them to take a certain position. Others can share their local experience and provide perspective. **Both are essential to a successful visit.** For example, if the group is raising the issue of improving access to school meals, one team member with children that rely on school meals could talk about how important that is for their child and family. Then, another person can mention the specific bill that would make that policy goal real.

- ◆ **Values.** Remember to express the values that underlie your concern. You are participating in ENACT Day because you believe we need policies that create healthy communities for all Californians. Sharing these values is a great way to connect with your legislator. For example:

- “As a parent, I want my kids to develop healthy eating habits, like eating breakfast, and I think schools should support me in making sure my kids can have access to breakfast every day, even if they don’t have time to eat at home.”
- “I believe every California child—regardless of where they live—should have access to healthy school meals, so they can focus on learning and succeed at school, and have a better chance of getting ahead in life.”

→ **3. SEAL THE DEAL!**

- ◆ **Get a Commitment.** Your goal is to get the legislator to commit to some action on the bills you care about. To do so, you need to gauge where the legislator is:
 - *Polite but non-committal:* Ask the legislator what s/he would find useful in forming an opinion: visiting a local food pantry, seeing a school, research, etc. The goal is to find out how to keep the issue alive and on their radar.
 - *Somewhat interested:* Again, ask what the legislator would need to firm up his/her position. See above for options. Confirm that once this material is provided, the legislator would vote in support.
 - *On board:* Confirm that the legislator will vote in support when the bill is next heard in committee or during a floor vote. Ask if they would share information about the bill with members of their caucus.
- ◆ **Determine the Follow-Up.** At the end of the visit, leave the ENACT Day Legislator Packet with the legislator or staff member, and explain that bill fact sheets are included. Ask the legislator what you can do to follow-up, and thank them for their time.

What If...

The legislator knows nothing about the bills? Legislators usually specialize in a few areas, so they may not know about the bills included in ENACT 2017. That’s why you are there: to raise the profile of bills you think are important. Start your discussion with your personal connection to the issue and how the bill will help. Also, be sure to point out that the packet you are leaving with the legislator includes fact sheets.

I don’t know the answer to a question? That’s OK! Never try to answer a question if you aren’t sure of the answer. It’s perfectly fine to jot down the question and say you will get back with the information. If you can’t follow-up personally, include the question on the ENACT Day Evaluation Form and ENACT Day staff will follow up.

The legislator or a teammate is getting off track? If you are the meeting facilitator, it’s your responsibility to steer the discussion back to the issues. A useful transition might be, “That’s an important point. I know we have limited time, so I’d like us to turn back to [bill number].”