

Aging Advocacy Day

Instructions/Tips for Visits with Legislators

- The Day will begin with a short orientation/rally in the Auditorium at the State Library Building at 8:45 a.m. Plan to arrive 15 minutes early to get checked in.
- All those participating will be assigned to a team to make visits with legislators. You will receive team assignments at check in. There will be a lead for each team who is experienced with working with legislators who will facilitate the visits. Teams will be organized to reflect the diversity of those attending.
- Once you are divided into teams, you will receive two handouts to leave with legislators or their staff. One handout is a copy of the latest demographic data about aging in the state which has been compiled by the NC Division of Aging called “Insights Into Aging in North Carolina.” Use this handout to draw attention to the growth in our older adult population and the challenges and opportunities this presents. You can view a copy of this handout here: [Insights Into Aging in NC](#). Legislators and their staff often want to know how to find specific data about the county or counties they represent. You can refer them to this link on the Division of Aging’s website for county specific information: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/2023-north-carolina-aging-profiles/open>.

The second handout you will receive (a copy will be e-mailed to you prior to Advocacy Day), which you will leave with legislators or their staff, provides information on six specific issues that will be highlighted during the visits. These issues were selected because they pertain to issues that were identified as legislative priorities in the Multisector Plan on Aging and have some traction already this legislative session or pertain to programs for which critical funding is in jeopardy or additional funding is needed to address program capacity issues. The six issues of focus this Advocacy Day are:

- Pass Work and Save Legislation (HB 79 and SB 110).
- Pass Property Tax Relief Study Bill (HB 432 which has passed the House already).
- Continue State Funding for NC SHIIP Program (Senate budget plan – SB 257 – proposes a 100% cut in state appropriated funding for SHIIP).
- Continue State Funding for NC Senior Games (Senate budget plan – SB 257 – contains no funding for Senior Games which has consistently been in the budget for many years).
- Adequately and fully fund the Medicaid rebase (projected cost) to ensure that the over 500,000 older adults and persons with disabilities who rely on Medicaid can continue to receive these needed benefits uninterrupted (Senate budget plan – SB 257 – does not provide full funding to cover projected Medicaid costs).
- Appropriate funding to increase the number of Long-Term Care Ombudsmen (SB 362, HB 513, and HB 343).

- Plan for your visits when you gather as a team after the orientation/rally in the State Library Auditorium. Be clear about what it is you want to achieve. When you do your visits, point out to the legislators or their staff that there are six issues on the list. If time allows, note each of the issues. You may only have time to elaborate on one or two issues. Decide ahead of time which issues you may want to focus on (it may vary by legislator). If a legislator has a particular interest in one of the issues (ex. many legislators have signed on to property tax relief bills of some form or fashion this session) take that as a cue and talk about that issue. Talk as a team among yourselves about the logistics of your visit (ex. who will take the lead, who wants to talk about what, etc.).
- Make sure you have enough of the two handouts to leave with each legislator's office.
- If the legislator is not in or available, share the information with the legislative assistant and ask that it be passed on to the legislator.
- Ask if the legislator (or legislative assistant) has any questions. If they have questions, provide the answers if you know them. If not sure or you don't know the answer, take down the question and tell him/her someone will get back with them (within two days with the information). If you do not plan to respond to questions that need follow up, please make sure that one of the members of the planning team for the Advocacy Day is notified of the questions so they can make sure a response is sent.
- If you learn information during your visits with legislators that would be helpful for planning team members to know, please share this with them. Some of the planning team members will be "camped out" at a table in the 1300 quadrant of the Legislative Building (next to the Press Conference Room) throughout the duration of the Advocacy Day. If you have questions or issues that arise during the Day, please see members of the Planning team in the 1300 quadrant or call Mary Bethel at (919) 818-0881 or Chris Brandenburg at (984) 389-5249.
- Consider writing a follow-up note to legislators you visited with to thank them for their time and to also ask again for their support of the issues.
- Pointers that may be helpful as you make your visits include:
 - Be concise in your comments.
 - Be prepared when you enter the legislator's office.
 - Put a face on the issue (ex. share personal story or example).
 - Don't B.S. – if you don't know, get back to them with the information.
 - Be polite.
 - Be specific about what you want.
 - Don't use technical jargon (ex. AAA).
 - Don't be intimidated.
 - Don't threaten or become defensive.