



Tips for Planning an Advocacy Day (Virtual or In-Person) at Your State Capitol

1. **Identify your group:** Who will be participating? Will you be partnering with another organization?
2. **Choose a date:** Check your state legislature page to find a time when the legislature will be in session. To find your state legislature page, usually an Internet search can help identify the right page, i.e. "Illinois state legislature." You may need to select a few dates to see what works best for legislators, staff, and attendees. You may also consider holding your state capitol day in conjunction with your annual state CB meeting. By doing so, you can provide training for legislative meetings, invite a legislator to speak, ask for a diabetes day proclamation at the Capitol and increase enthusiasm for advocacy!
3. **What type an event are you planning?** Decide if you want to do legislator meetings or some type of an awareness event. Your legislator's office can direct you who to contact to reserve the space or schedule an event. If you have a small group, you may want to opt for the legislator meetings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many state legislators are doing meetings by phone or video, so keep that option in mind as you think about your event.
4. **What's your ask?** Do you plan to talk about a specific piece of legislation? Is this simply a meeting to meet you legislator and talk about diabetes? Reach out to diabetes organizations in your state like ADA, JDRF, state diabetes coalitions etc to see what legislation they are supporting. Look for opportunities for potential partnerships.
5. **Find Legislators:** Visit our [Legislative Action Center](#), click on the image of your state on the map and scroll down for state senators and state assembly members. Members of your CB can also input their information in the Legislative Action Center to identify the names and contact information of their state reps.
6. **Schedule the meeting (s):** Determine if someone from the CB is going to schedule the meetings or if each participant will schedule their own meeting. Send an e-mail or call your legislator's office. Tell them who you are, where are from, what you'd like to talk about and when you'd like to meet. Ask for their availability. Some legislators request a list of who would be at the meeting. Consider designating someone to scheduling appointments as this might help with communication to the legislator's office, especially if there are schedule changes before or day of event.
7. **Plan for your event:** Review the logistics, confirm the meeting date and time, prepare any materials. Consider preparing a handout to leave behind at the meeting. The ADA outlines the [Burden of Diabetes by State](#). You can share diabetes-related information from your state health department.

8. **Conduct your event:** Bring your business card, talk about your advocacy issue and offer to serve as a resource for your legislator's office.
9. **Follow-up:** After the meeting, follow-up with a thank you e-mail or note and address any remaining items or questions from the meeting.

Resources:

- [ADCES Volunteer Manual- Advocacy Toolkit](#): These include a tip sheet for state capitol meetings.
- [Lobby Day Planning Guides](#). This includes how to schedule legislator appointments.
- [ADCES Legislative Action Center](#): Find your legislators.

Here are some examples of state activities:

- In **Colorado**, you need to have a member of the general assembly sponsor you to hold an advocacy day. We try to build and maintain relationships with assembly members as this makes planning easier. We've also done creative things like delivering healthy snacks to legislators' desks in the chamber and hosting breakfasts for legislators to get some face time and discuss important issues. These take advance planning, as it's a lottery system and not every group is able to reserve a time slot. For this reason, we've started to join other groups in a "Chronic Disease Day." Groups working on chronic diseases issues can work together to get sponsorships and plan breakfasts, etc. There are many possibilities. The best way to start is building relationships and learning more about the options available to you in your state.
- In **Pennsylvania**, we've hosted a Diabetes Awareness Day at the state capitol. In the past, we've engaged different stakeholders, other diabetes associations, industry partners, and the department of health. We've tried to plan for a time when legislators are in session. That can depend on whether it's an election year or not. We have an active Diabetes Action Network in the state and based on their feedback, we took part in a social media campaign, creating and sharing awareness documents. These were shared the general public or legislators, and we created both FB and Twitter friendly formats. It's an example of advocacy efforts that don't require you to have an "in-person" presence.