

SITE VISIT DOs AND DON'Ts

DO Plan well in advance

Elected officials have numerous constraints on their time. Your chances of successfully recruiting a representative to visit your program require that you invite him/her well in advance.

DO Be flexible with your dates and times

Recess periods are often long and some dates and times may work better than others. Accommodating the elected official can mean a lot in the long run.

DO Invite the relevant education policy staffer to accompany the member

While the elected official is the boss, his/her staff can be key advocates of your cause and are often in charge of the “day to day” dealings with the office.

DO Distribute schedules to everyone who will be involved in the tour

It is important that the tour run as smoothly as possible and that everyone involved knows his/her role. Once the schedule has been finalized, create a schedule to distribute to all participants. Send a copy to the member’s scheduler.

DO Involve your employees, staff and/or local leaders

Representatives will want to interact with staff as a way to better understand how your program is adding value to the local community. Invite local leaders who understand your footprint in the community and state and can reinforce your messages.

DO Take the member wherever they request

While you may have planned your tour, oblige the member if they request to go into “uncharted” territory. Sometimes representatives will request to walk into an office or talk to employees in passing; these are positive encounters. However, this also shows the need to make everyone aware that a member of Congress will be visiting, and they should be prepared to answer any questions.

DO Let the member dictate the timing

While it is important to spend as much time with the member during his/her visit, schedules are tight and they may need to leave early. However, if the member is engrossed and has an open schedule, let the visit run over by keeping the conversation going and the member engaged. A well-orchestrated hour tour should be the goal.

Don't Be discouraged

Members are unable to fill all the requests that are sent to them. Try again for the next available time they will be in their district or state, or offer to visit their district office for a quick meeting with the member and /or their district staff at their convenience.

Don't Assume the members know about the 21st CCLC initiative

Remember, some members have little working knowledge of the 21st CCLC initiative and how it has been implemented in communities – urban and rural – across the United States. Use this time to educate them about afterschool programming and the importance of the 21st CCLC initiative and the work of the Afterschool Alliance.