



Legislative Advocacy 101: Preparing for History Advocacy Day in Wisconsin

Before your visit: How to Prepare for Your Meetings and “Do Your Homework”

- Visit your legislator's webpage before meeting with the legislator or staff at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>. This will give you an understanding of the committees the elected person sits on and their background. Look through their recent press statements and current legislation to get a sense of the office’s interests. This will assist you in making connections between your interests and that of the office you are visiting.
- Make a list of community events to leave with the office that you and your local history organization are planning for 2024-25. Let them know of opportunities to participate in the event such as speaking or award ceremonies. Legislators and staff are always looking for content to share on social media.
- Review all the key resources on the Advocacy Day website that will be a part of your Advocacy Day packet at wihist.org/advocate.
- Email Kate Easton or Kennedy McCarthy with any questions you have regarding the day.

Day of visit: What to Expect and Meeting Protocols

- Remember that you are the constituent. Legislators and staff know their district and want to understand issues impacting the community they serve.
- Meeting with the legislative staff is just as impactful as meeting with the legislator!
- Let the legislator or staff member know who you are and where you live. Use your own personal stories and passions as to why you made the journey to Madison to visit with the office to celebrate history. Explain why local history and the Wisconsin Historical Society are important to you, the legislative district, and the state.

- Use the key resource documents provided in your packet (also can be downloaded from the webpage) as guides and visual aids during your visit.
- Stay within the 30 minutes scheduled for your visit. Legislators and staff are busy folks.
- Remember to leave your packets with the legislative staff.
- It is appropriate to let the legislator and staff know that you may not have an answer to their question. Please make a note and tell Kate Easton or Kennedy McCarthy there is needed follow-up from your visit.
- Follow up with a quick thank you e-mail. WHS will also be sending thank you notes.
- Remember...advocacy can be done year-round!
- Do not discuss your meetings in hallways or the elevators. Wait to share your experiences until you leave the building.
- **HAVE FUN!!!!**

Talking Point Options:

1. Thank the legislator or staff member for their past support of the Society and your local history affiliate.
2. Why are your history organizations so important?
 - Describe how they improve your quality of life, foster civic engagement in your community, build community ties, and provide lifelong learning opportunities.
3. Thank legislators and staff for supporting Wisconsin Historical Society 23-25 budget requests.
 - Capital Budget Success:
 - The History Center was “re-enumerated” in the capital budget and an additional \$42.3M in State Funds was provided to the project, bringing the total State Support for the Design and Construction of the History Center to \$112.3M! The Society is raising \$48.2M to match the State contribution to the building and exhibits and an additional \$18M for soft costs and transition expenses.
 - The Society also received \$12M to update, repair, and maintain its existing facilities across Wisconsin. This was a \$4M increase from the last budget.
 - Operating Budget Success:
 - \$2 million to enable the Society to transition its IT support services from the University of Wisconsin to the State’s Department of Enterprise Technology.
 - \$2 million towards collections care, preservation, and digitization in preparation for the History Center.

4. Agency Updated KPI's:

- Society Scorecard: [Access document on webpage](#)
- Legislative 411: [Access document on webpage](#)

5. Impact in the Local Community:

- Historical Markers Program: [Access webpage here](#)
- History Makers Tour: [Access webpage here](#)
- Certified Local Governments Annual Report: [Access document on webpage](#)
- District Maps: Available on March 27th, 2024

6. Why are the Society's state budget priorities and agency programs important for your local history organization and community?

- We are among the nation's oldest, largest, most active state historical societies with world-class collections, the Society is a trusted source of historical information. We are proud to serve a critical role as the preservers and transmitters of cultural heritage from generation to generation.
- The Society makes major contributions to Wisconsin's economic, educational and cultural health through innovative initiatives and programs. Our educational programs inform and entertain adults and challenge young people to think critically about their place in history.
- Historic preservation improves Wisconsin's quality of life and reinvigorates neighborhoods. Our historic sites, museum, collections, archives and programs promote tourism and provide for comprehensive study, appreciation and enjoyment of North American history.
- The Society wants Wisconsinites to find themselves as part of the state's story. By immersing the public in the lives of Wisconsin people past and present, we hope to invite people to participate in conversations that connect the past to the most vital issues of the present and future.