

HOW TO: HOST A LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

1. Find common interest.
 - ◆ Reach out and develop a group of people who have a common interest (i.e. Community services for people with disabilities are shamefully underfunded; waiting lists for children's long-term supports; lack of funding in Birth to Three program.)
 - ◆ Share your experiences with one another (i.e. my son has been on a waiting list for four years, some parents were driving several hours to receive therapies.)
2. Determine legislative breakfast is the right route!
(i.e. we need to educate both legislators and the public about this funding crisis in a powerful way. We wanted to get as many legislators as possible in one location and demonstrate that this was not just an isolated problem, but affected families throughout their districts.)
3. Develop a strategy.
 - ◆ Will our issue be competing with other compelling issues in a tight budget year?
 - ◆ Symbol or theme that will be a great visual for the media (People Can't Wait [PCW] logo)
 - ◆ Connection with local organizations – What local organizations will work with us? Contact state organizations for assistance with this (Family Voices of Wisconsin wfv.org, WCDD)
 - ◆ Which elected officials will be invited?
 - ◆ What will be the format of the event (i.e. order of community speakers – they should represent the issue will, some should represent local organizations in the community that represent larger numbers of people)
4. Decide on location and make arrangements
 - ◆ Consider agencies in your community, public space, and community centers.
 - ◆ Who will sponsor event? (i.e. agency or individual – should represent issue and large number of people or have name recognition or political clout)
5. Gather information.
 - ◆ How can we educate ourselves on all angles of this issue?
 - ◆ Create a brochure or flyer describing the issue that will be sent out to families, providers, community members, agencies, and the media.
6. Spread the word.
 - ◆ Post flyers about this event at doctor's offices, grocery stores, and Laundromats.
 - ◆ Send flyer to local disability organizations for community newsletter coverage.
 - ◆ Write press releases for local papers (send one week ahead, follow up with a reminder alert and phone call one day ahead).

- ◆ Gather letters from individuals with disabilities, families, providers, and clergy around the area to present to legislators/elected officials.
 - ◆ Keep in contact with individuals, families and organization via e-mail.
 - ◆ Recruit as many people to "signed on" to the cause as possible to diversify the issue.
7. Contact the media.
- ◆ Write and tell personal stories to the media (attach to press release and prepare for same-day coverage - #6).
 - ◆ Designate one person in our group as a media contact who will call local media (radio, t.v. newspapers) in the communities where we are located (see #6).
8. Attention to detail.
- ◆ Designate one person to be responsible for the details of the breakfast (i.e. food and materials). Try to secure donations of breakfast bagels and juice/coffee for the event.
9. Connect with elected officials.
- ◆ Target information, PCW logo, and/or theme at elected officials.
 - ◆ Compile and forward each personal story to elected officials in a binder.
 - ◆ Include general information about the issue as well as letters from doctors and providers to broaden scope.
 - ◆ Confirm attendance.
- 10 Personalize the issue.
- ◆ Bring pictures attached to PCW logo to give the issue a face.
 - ◆ Your event will be successful because it touched people's hearts.
10. Final details
- ◆ Send a reminder alert follow by a phone call to media.
 - ◆ Contact local agencies, individuals, family members, and providers to ensure turnout.

Courtesy of Lisa Pugh, Parent Advocate