

# Legislator Engagement Tip Sheet

The 'interim,' the period between regular legislative sessions, offers the most effective opportunity for advocates to engage with Texas Legislators that represent their community on issues important to survivor safety and well-being. The Texas Legislature is biennial; the next regular Legislative Session will begin in January of 2023. So that members of the 88th Texas Legislature are best poised to champion and support impactful, survivor centered legislation and funding for services, survivors, family violence program advocates, and allies are encouraged to identify and meet with their members in the Texas Legislature over the next year to connect and educate. TCFV is here to support your efforts!

## Finding your Members



- To find out who represents you or your program, go to [www.tcfv.org/public-policy](http://www.tcfv.org/public-policy) and click on "Find Your Legislator".
- If your program serves an entire or multiple counties, utilize the "Find By County" feature and enter each county in your service area.
- Click on each Texas House Representative and Senator to be taken to their official website with background and contact information.

## Reaching Out



- Before you reach out, research your member to familiarize yourself with their priorities. This will offer a great talking point to highlight a shared interest or priority (e.g. preventing child abuse) that overlaps with your advocacy.
- If you have an existing relationship with a member's office, utilize the method of contact/ staff person to connect.
- If you do not have a particular contact with a member's office or if the staff person with whom you have worked is no longer there, we suggest calling their Capitol and /or District office numbers listed on their websites. A great person to ask for in the Capitol office is the Legislative Director or the scheduler in the District office to request an in district meeting with the legislator in your community.
- Follow up with an email or call back if you haven't been able to connect with someone from that office in a couple of days' time.

## Preparing Your Ask

Below are some examples of ways to engage with your Legislators:

- Consider asking them to visit your program and see the critical work your agency does in their district. You can position this offer as an exclusive tour of your facilities, but in a manner that supports survivor privacy.
- Invite them to any of your program's events over the next year.
- Ask them what questions they have - support them as they learn about the needs of victims of domestic violence.



## Having the Conversation

- Highlight that you, your agency and/or the families you serve are constituents of the legislator.
- Share service statistics in your area to show the support you offer and the needs of survivors of family violence in their district.
- Insert your 'engagement ask' here. (See above!)
- Be polite, gracious, and appreciative of the time the legislator or staff give. Thank them for support they have given to survivors of family violence.



## Following Up

Follow up with a thank-you note and an invitation for future dialogue. Be sure to follow-through with additional information that the office requests or that you offer. Regular communication with the member's office is key to future collaborative work with the office.



## Need Support?

The TCFV Policy Team is here to assist! We can help you learn more about your members and prepare for meetings or engagements. Email us at [policy@tcfv.org](mailto:policy@tcfv.org).