

# How to Plan A Lobby Day



## 1. Pick a date and coordinate

- o Find out when the state legislature is in session and choose a date early in the season, before they vote on any major legislation. The closer it gets to a budget deadline, the harder it will be to get the attention of legislators.
- o It is good to coordinate with other UFCW locals in your state when possible.
- o Is the state AFL-CIO holding a lobby day? Does it make sense to coordinate with other groups or stagger lobby days to have a greater impact?
- o International staff is happy to consult with you on dates if needed.

## 2. Know your issues!

- o Whether you're working on Right to Work or Paid Sick Leave, know your issue and the bills that are currently being discussed in the legislature.
- o Remember, less is more. You can have a single issue lobby day, but never more than 3 or 4.
- o Having specific issues will help recruit members that are interested in the issue and will serve as the basis for targeting legislators and materials.
- o Once you've decided on the main issues for your lobby day, figure out what your goal is. It could be passing or blocking a specific piece of legislation that is on the calendar, or simply educating the elected official about the dangers of Right to Work.
- o When targeting a specific piece of legislation, be aware of scheduled hearings and vote dead lines.
- o International staff is happy to consult as needed.

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## 3. Identify and recruit members to attend the lobby day

- o Local members' meeting with their own elected officials is key to a successful lobby day. Prioritize legislators to target and then work with union reps to identify and recruit members who live or work in those districts.
- o Decide how many members you'd like to attend the lobby day, and give each business rep a recruitment target.
- o To make it a success, members should be willing, able, and excited for the opportunity to speak with their elected officials. Be sure to let your members know that they will receive ample training before they speak to their elected officials, and they will never attend a meeting alone.
- o Check that members attending, if eligible, are registered to vote. If they are eligible and not registered, take the necessary steps to register them.
- o Find out if members attending participate in ABC. If not, the debrief is a good place to pitch them on the program.
- o Make sure you have the current address for all members attending lobby day so you can identify their elected officials. Elected officials rarely say no to meeting with voters.
- o If you use VAN, the international can great an activist code for you to tag each member attending. This is the quickest way to track attendees, pull addresses and find registration status. Please double check with each member to confirm that the address and phone number we have in VAN for them is correct.
- o NOTE: Many state capitols now require photo ID to enter the building. Research your capitols policies and plan appropriately.

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## 4. Draft agenda/itinerary

- o Check when the legislature is in session, and when legislators keep office hours. Use this block of time as a starting point to plan the lobby day.
- o Include times for all major events of the day (Example Scheduling: arrive at local, transit to Capitol, training, LOBBYING, lunch, MORE LOBBYING, group photo, debrief, departure).
- o You do not need to include everyone's individual meetings; you can create those separately.
- o Include key contact information on the agenda/itinerary.
- o If possible, recruit a high profile elected official to speak at either your morning training, or with all the members once you arrive at the Capitol. The benefit is two-fold: it can be used as an incentive when recruiting members for the lobby day, and the speech will energize members before their meetings.
- o Ask your local president to hold a staff meeting the week prior to the lobby day so you can go over roles, work assignments and make sure that everything needed is ready BEFORE the actual lobby day.

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## 5. Identify targets and set-up lobby meetings

- o Using the list of issues you're working on as a starting point, create a list of officials you want to meet with.
- o If you're not sure which legislators to target, work with the State AFL-CIO, the UFCW International, or other partner organizations who are working on the same legislation.
- o Include members who are attending the lobby day on this list.
- o Call each legislator's office and let them know that you are calling from UFCW, that you have members coming to the Capitol for a Lobby Day, and would like a constituent meeting with the elected official. You may need to provide an address of the member from the district.
  - If you don't have a member from a targeted legislator's district attending, you can still request a meeting. Make sure to let the office know that you have members in their district and that staff and other members from the state would like to speak with them.
- o Make sure all meetings scheduled fall within the time you've blocked out in the agenda.

## 6. Identify group leaders

- o An effective lobby day is about influencing legislation and empowering your members. Select staff members that can be group leaders. Leaders will make sure everyone has their materials, gets to their meetings on time, and can help move the conversation in meetings with several members, but it's important that as much as possible these meetings are member and not staff driven
- o If possible, leaders should be people who have been to the Capitol in the past and know their way around. It's helpful to have reps or members who have lobbied before and are comfortable answering questions of other members.

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## 7. Logistics – Transportation, Training, Lunch, and Lodging

- o Work with your local President to determine whether you will be paying members lost wages for the lobby day.

- If you are, make sure to have reimbursement forms for the members to fill out at the end of the lobby day.

- If you are not, make sure that is communicated to all members before lobby day.

- o **Plan transportation**

- Where are you meeting?

- Is your local near the Capitol?

- Is there parking?

- How many members are attending?

- What time of day are you starting?

- If it's a small group, you may be able to carpool.

- If you are planning a larger lobby day, it may be easier to rent a bus to transport members and staff

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## o Morning training

-- It is important to bring all the members and staff together the morning of the lobby day to train them, answer any questions, and pump everyone up for the day's events. If possible, this is best done at the union hall before heading to the capital.

-- If you are unable to use a UFCW union hall, you may be able to find a space at a State Fed or AFL-CIO space in the capital.

-- If members are traveling on their own to the capital, make sure they have the location of the morning training.

## o Meals

-- Since your lobby day will likely take up a good portion of the day, find a spot near the Capitol that everyone can meet, take a break, regroup and get a bite to eat.

-- Your Capitol may have a cafeteria. If so, you may want to consider having lunch there and inviting legislators, as it's a chance for members to talk to them in a less formal and potentially less intimidating setting.

-- If your lobby event is taking place over 2 days, make sure to plan meals appropriately.

## o Hotel (if needed)

-- If you are bringing members from a good distance away, or are planning a 2 day lobby event, you will need to book hotel rooms.

-- If applicable, make sure to let members know that they will be sharing rooms.

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## o **Swag!**

-- If at all possible, brand your members in UFCW gold (shirts, scarfs, hats, etc). A large contingent of people showing up at the Capitol in UFCW gear can have a huge impact and show your ability to mobilize, not just for any legislators and lobbyists you encounter, but from members of the public and press that are in the building. It also helps foster a sense of ownership for members. Plus, it will make the picture on the Capitol steps look great!

## o **Downtime**

-- Odds are there will be gaps in some, if not all, of your members' schedules between meetings. If one of the chambers has public seating, encourage your members to sit in the gallery. Not only will it give members the chance to see the legislative process in action, but it's a chance for legislators to see your mobilization efforts by the sea of gold.

## o **Photos**

-- Don't forget to bring a camera and take photos (where permitted) of members during the lobby day.

-- Build in time either at the start or finish of the day to take a group photo in front of the Capitol.

-- In addition to being a nice souvenir for members who attending, these photos can be used in newsletter, social media and handbills for future recruiting efforts.

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## 8. Assemble packets for members

o The International's Communications Department can work with you to personalize any of the sample documents or create specific talking points/leave behinds for your local

o **Packets for members should include:**

- Agenda (including contact information)
- Name tag
- Paper and pen
- Personalized meeting schedule
- Map of the Capitol
- 1 pagers: Why we lobby, 7 steps to effective lobby, How the legislative process works
- Issue specific talking points
- Leave behinds for the legislators; make sure there is enough for every meeting scheduled
- Reporting form
- Thank you note (to be completed during the debrief)
- Contact information for you and their group leader

## 9. LOBBY DAY!

- o Expect the unexpected!
- o HAVE FUN!