

**CTSO ADVOCACY**

# **INVITE A LEGISLATOR**

**CHAPTER GUIDE**

Washington FBLA  
2019-2020

# HOW CAN STATE OFFICERS HELP?

This year one of the goals the State Officers has selected is to support chapters to invite an elected official (specifically state legislators) to a chapter activity. To do this, we have created this short toolkit which includes relevant information and resources you'll need to successfully get started.

## What's Included

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Page 16: After the Visit  
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After reading this guide, please fill out this form <https://leadable.info/WAFBLALegislatorInvite> and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We are excited to work with you to bring a legislator to your chapter activity!

If your chapter is interested in inviting a legislator to a chapter activity (can be everything from a meeting to a service project to your annual big chapter event) but don't know where to start, the state officers are here to help! **We would love to get on a video call with your chapter officers and/or adviser** to talk about logistics, share our experiences and key insights, and answer any questions you may have.

# INTRODUCTION TO LEGISLATORS

Why Invite a Legislator to a Chapter Activity?



Your legislators represent you, and they want to hear about your powerful experiences with Career & Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) like FBLA. All the CTSOs in Washington State, from FBLA to HOSA, rely on the support of our elected officials for funding and to continue offering these experiences. By inviting a legislator to a chapter activity, you will have a chance to share your FBLA story and advocate for CTSOs and Career & Technical Education (CTE) in our state.

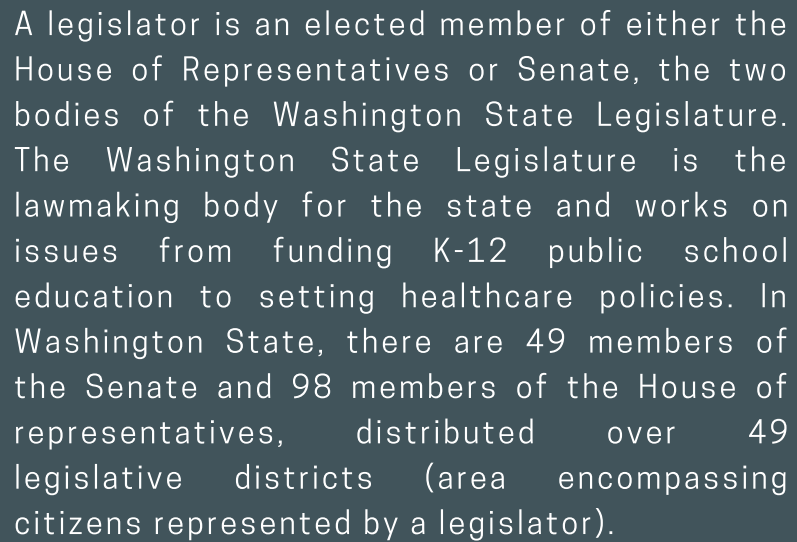
Advocacy is communicating with elected officials and community leaders to educate them on a subject that is unfamiliar to them. Many people that influence decisions made about CTSOs like FBLA simply don't have the time to research all the wonderful things about our organization. This is where you come in. It's up to us to go to legislators and inform them about our powerful FBLA experiences.

What is Advocacy?

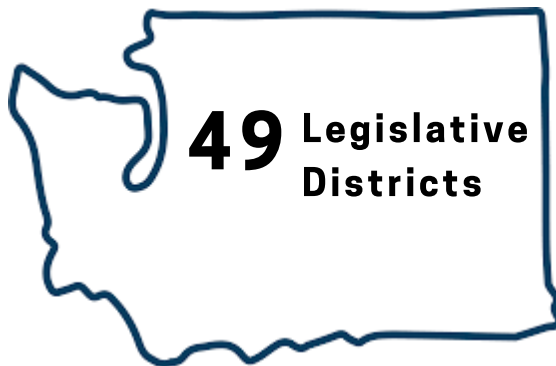




## What is a Legislator?

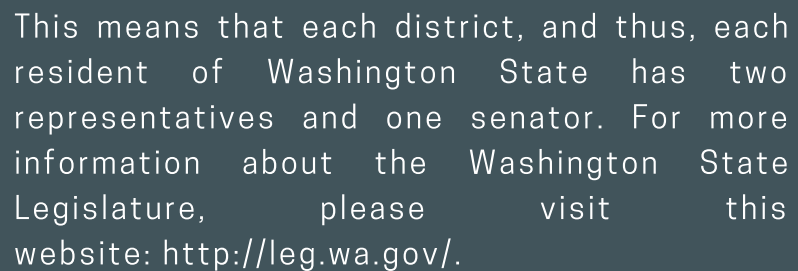


A legislator is an elected member of either the House of Representatives or Senate, the two bodies of the Washington State Legislature. The Washington State Legislature is the lawmaking body for the state and works on issues from funding K-12 public school education to setting healthcare policies. In Washington State, there are 49 members of the Senate and 98 members of the House of representatives, distributed over 49 legislative districts (area encompassing citizens represented by a legislator).



**49**  
**Representatives**

**98**  
**Senators**



This means that each district, and thus, each resident of Washington State has two representatives and one senator. For more information about the Washington State Legislature, please visit this website: <http://leg.wa.gov/>.

The first step to answering this question is to identify your legislative district. By inputting your school's zip code into this link (<https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>), you will be able to identify your legislative district and the two representatives and one senator that represents you. Identifying your elected officials is a key first step, which is why the state officers ask for your school's legislative district when you contact us for support!

Who  
Represents  
Me?



What Chapter  
Activity  
Should I Invite  
a Legislator  
To?

Any chapter activity would work great, as long as it is professionally planned and represents your chapter in a positive light. You can invite a legislator to a regular chapter meeting for a meet & greet with members, a chapter service event, or even your chapter's annual big celebration after Winter Conference.



Pro tip: Invite your legislator during February is National Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month and the second week of February is FBLA-PBL Week (<https://www.fbla-pbl.org/cmh/celebrations/fbla-pbl-week/>).

Invite your legislator to experience what FBLA has to offer and inform them about the importance of school-to-work activities.

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# CTSO ASKS 2019-2020

What is a  
Legislative  
Session?



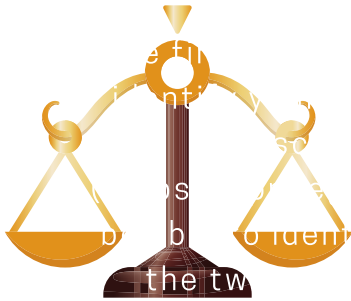
The Senate and House of Representatives meet in session each year to create new laws, change existing laws, and enact state budgets. Each legislative cycle is two years long, with odd-numbered years as long sessions (105 days) and even-numbered years as short sessions (60 days). Session always starts on the second Monday in January, and because 2020 is an even-numbered year, 2020 will be a “short year” for the state legislature!

As members, we know that the greatest barrier for students to fully access FBLA’s opportunities are financial. Many of us have experienced the challenge of fundraising for SBLC or not being able to attend because of the conference registration fee. Currently, state proviso funding is only \$100,000 per year, split equally between the eight CTSOs in Washington (\$12,500 each). In order to eliminate barriers to equity and access, each organization needs dedicated proviso state funding of \$200,000 per year (\$1.6M total).

What Policies  
Affect FBLA?



## Differences Between Advocacy and Lobbying



It is important that you and your chapter advocate for FBLA, CTSOs, and CTE, instead of accidentally slipping into lobbying. As an advocate for FBLA, you can:

- Explain how certain grants or policies help FBLA and support members
- Educate legislators about FBLA and its opportunities Encourage legislators to experience FBLA firsthand and see its impact on students

To avoid lobbying please do not ask/tell legislators how to vote, support or oppose a piece of legislation, or support legislation or a candidate using FBLA's name or image. If you are uncertain about an action, it's better to play it safe and stick with sharing your FBLA story. After all, you're the expert on FBLA!



# BEFORE THE VISIT

## Reaching out to Legislators



If your chapter is interested in inviting a legislator to a chapter activity, ensure the activity date is at least two weeks out. Before you invite a legislator try to search for their website (you can just type their name + “wa leg” into Google). On their website, they will often write about their background and what they’re passionate about (check out the committees they’re currently serving on). You can specifically choose to reach out to legislators based on their interests or can use this information to tailor your outreach.

When you email the legislator, be aware that it may be their legislative aide who responds. These individuals, also known as “staff,” are important people in the office—they often make recommendations to the legislator and ultimately decides what goes on their schedule. In all communication it is important to treat staff members with courtesy and respect. Legislators can be very busy, so if you don’t hear back within three business days, please use the “follow-up email” template to follow up! If that doesn’t work after three more days, don’t hesitate to directly call the office and introduce yourself.

As you will notice in the templates on page 19, there are a lot of red brackets for you to fill in the accurate information. Don't stress—these are simple logistical information, such as the legislator's name, date/time/location of your chapter's event, how many FBLA members will be present, etc. It is important to make sure all relevant details are included; however, if you are not completely sure, it is always safer to give an approximate or not include the information. If anything changes, be sure to let the legislator know as well!

Include  
Details When  
Inviting a  
Legislator



Prepare Your  
FBLA Story



Your FBLA story makes you stand out. Lean into the idea that as a student and FBLA member, you've directly experienced the positive benefits of FBLA, and thus, are the best person to speak about it! Before the legislator visit, it is a good idea to give chapter members a heads up, circulate this guide, and encourage each individual to start thinking about their FBLA story. Some questions that may provide a good starting point include:

- Why did you get involved with FBLA and what does the organization mean to you?
- When did FBLA "click" and when did you know it was something for you?
- How has FBLA prepared you to be a community-minded business leader, connect school to work, or pursue your goals?

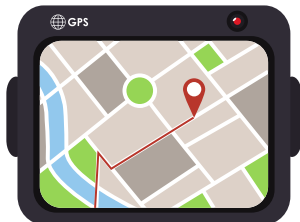
The key aspect of your FBLA Story is the story. Make sure you're showing, not telling, what your FBLA experience has been like!

As in every business meeting, your chapter should come up with an objective or end goal associated with inviting the legislator—beyond individually sharing your FBLA stories. Does your chapter want to initiate a long-term connection with your elected officials? Would you like to invite your legislator to judge at Winter Conference? Is the goal to raise awareness for National CTE Month or FBLA-PBL Week? As a chapter, brainstorm key points and action items you would like to leave the legislator with!

## The “Ask”



## Logistical Information



Meeting with a legislator can be a bit scary. Remember, they are just people! Do be professional student business leaders, but don't feel like you have to be someone you're not. As you organize the event, here are some items to keep in mind:

- Make sure the legislator can easily find your chapter day-of! If your chapter meeting is located in a classroom, you may provide detailed instructions and/or greet the legislator at the front of the school.

Pay attention to what chapter members wear. This could be an awesome day to wear your chapter t-shirt (or even an SBLC t-shirt from a previous year) or wow the legislator with business professional clothing!

Does your chapter have a historian or PR person? You'll want to get a group picture with the legislator (for memories, and also to post on Twitter/tag the legislator in)!

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Finally, the last step in preparation is to meet with a State Officer and make sure everything is all set. This could be an opportunity for your chapter to ask questions and iron out the last few details as well! To request to speak with a State Officer, please fill out this form (<https://leadable.info/WAFBLALegislatorInvite>). We are excited to speak with your chapter and will get back to you with a date, time, and video call link as soon as possible!

Make Sure  
You're  
Set With a  
State Officer!



**MAKE SURE THE ABOVE STEP IS COMPLETE BEFORE YOU MOVE FORWARD. MEET WITH A STATE OFFICER!**

# DURING THE VISIT

## Introduction and Welcome



- Greet the legislator when they arrive at the door as Senator or Representative [Name]
- Acknowledge/announce the legislator in front of the entire chapter
- Officers should introduce themselves with a firm handshake, greeting, name, role in the chapter, etc.
- Briefly explain what FBLA is in your own words and what your chapter does. Assume the legislator knows nothing about FBLA.
- Encourage members to introduce themselves and share their FBLA story

After you welcome the legislator, introduce them, provide context about FBLA, and invite members to introduce themselves and their FBLA story. The legislator wants to meet as many of their constituents (you!) as possible. Some ideas for activities to organically interact with your legislator includes.

- Play an icebreaker game (e.g., human bingo)
- Facilitate dialogue around a topic your chapter is passionate about (e.g., financial literacy)
- In a less structured setting (e.g., chapter party or community service activity) have an informal meet & greet.

## Get to Know the Legislator



## One-Pagers



A one-pager is a common communication tool in policy advocacy. It is a single page of information that summarizes major points and guides discussions with legislators. You may find it helpful to prepare a one-pager about FBLA for your legislator so they have some background information. National FBLA uses this document: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/media/2019%E2%80%939320-FBLA-Fact-Sheets.pdf>; however, feel free to create one that is directly related to your chapter activities as well. If you decide to create your own, please include information (especially the mission statement) from this website: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/about/>.

Finally, leave the legislator with upcoming events in FBLA that they can be part of—for example, invite your legislator to judge at Winter Conference or ask them if your chapter can visit in Olympia on CTSO Civic Engagement Day (February 21)!

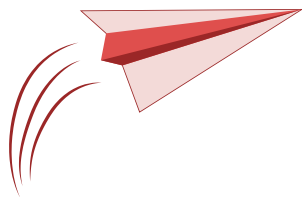
## Upcoming Opportunities

## Overall Message

You represent Washington FBLA. Make sure to be prepared, knowledgeable, professional, and flexible. Your job is to inform and excite the legislator about powerful CTSO and CTE experiences for students.

# AFTER THE VISIT

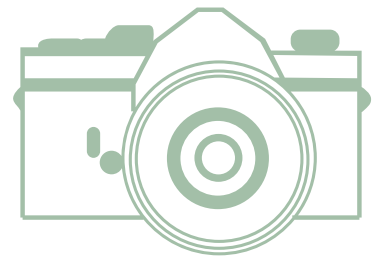
## Follow-Up Correspondence



Have you heard that following up is the key to success? The same rule applies here! It is important to develop a working relationship with your elected official and establish constant communication. This starts with a thank you letter! On page 19 you will find a template that you can use. If your chapter wants to go the extra mile, also send a handwritten card to the legislator's office with a printed photo!

Make sure to have your chapter's Historian or Public Relations Officer take photos of the event and a group photo with the legislator. Post on social media and tag the legislator on Twitter (their staff will usually repost)! Share this photo on your school newsletter or the local newspaper with a press release. Finally, send this information to your State President, Ashley Lin ([president@wafbla.org](mailto:president@wafbla.org)) and you may be featured on Washington FBLA's social media. If you receive any positive public relations, you can follow up with the legislator and share a link!

## Photos and Social Media



# SUGGESTED TIMELINE

The table below serves to highlight the key action items your chapter will need to carry out in order to invite a legislator to a chapter meeting. Of course, feel free to add/remove steps or shift the timeline as relevant to your specific chapter!

## Action

## Time Before Event

Identify the event you'd like to invite a legislator to. What's your "ask"?

4 weeks

Figure out who your legislators are and who you're inviting

2-4 weeks

Invite your legislator via email (see template on page 9)

2-4 weeks



## Action

## Time Before Event

Complete this form (Insert Wufoo Link) to plan with a State Officer. We can answer technical questions, talk about how to structure the legislator visit, help craft FBLA stories/"asks," and more!

1-2 weeks

Let your chapter members know and practice sharing your FBLA story

1 week

Wow the legislator at your chapter event! Remember to take photos

Day of event

Send a thank you email to the legislator

Day of event

Create a press release with your photo and share with school media sources and your state officers

<1 week

# OUTREACH TEMPLATES

\*Sections with asterisks\* are optional and should only be included in your email if relevant to your chapter's specific scenario. If you are unsure of how to format or wordsmith a specific phrase in your email, we highly recommend that you work with your chapter adviser!

Request a  
Legislator  
Visit

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last Name]:

My name is [Your Name], and I am a student at [School Name] as well as the [Your Position] of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter at my school. FBLA is a Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO) inspiring and preparing the next generation of community-minded business leaders through relevant career preparation & leadership experiences. You may have seen us around the capitol last February advocating on behalf of our members during National Career & Technical Education (CTE) Month!

\*In honor of FBLA-PBL Week/National CTE Month\*, our chapter would like to invite [Senator/Representative] [Last Name] to our [Chapter Event] on [Date] from [Time to Time]. At this event FBLA student members will share how powerful CTE and CTSO experiences have shaped our education and the importance of increasing access to these opportunities. Additionally, you will have a chance to see \*Something About the Amazing Work Your Chapter is Doing\*.

Would [Senator/Representative] [Last Name] or a staff member be able to stop by our event for 15-30 minutes on [Date] from [Time to Time] to speak with FBLA members about our CTSO and CTE experiences? The event will be held at [Location] and we anticipate approximately [Number] of chapter members will be present.

Thank you for taking the time to be an active CTSO ally in our state. We anticipate hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[School Name] FBLA Chapter

Didn't Hear  
Back?  
Follow Up!

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last Name]:


I hope this email finds you well!

On behalf of my Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter, I wanted to circle back to our request above. Would [Senator/Representative] [Last Name] or a staff member be able to stop by our event for 15-30 minutes on [Date] from [Time to Time] to speak with FBLA members about our CTSO and CTE experiences?

The event will be held at [Location] and we anticipate approximately [Number] of chapter members will be present. Our FBLA chapter is very grateful for [Senator/Representative] [Last Name's] support of CTE and CTSO programs, and we are excited to share our FBLA experiences!

Thanks again for your support, and please let us know if there's any additional information we can provide.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[School Name] FBLA Chapter



Thank You  
Email

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last Name]:

Thank you so much for speaking with the [School Name] FBLA Chapter earlier [today/this week]. We are very grateful for the opportunity to share our FBLA stories and to see [Senator/Representative] [Last Name's] support for powerful CTE and CTSO experiences.

OPTION 1: As one chapter member said, \*insert quote that talks about why it was great the legislator came to a chapter activity\*

OPTION 2: What you said about \*thing\* greatly resonated with chapter members because \*connect back to the importance of FBLA/CTSOs/CTE\*

During our meeting we mentioned that our FBLA Chapter is looking for more support with \*insert your ask\* Additionally, Washington FBLA has our State Conference from April 8-11, 2020, in Spokane, WA. If you are able to make it, we would love to see you there! Here are some potential engagement opportunities: <https://wafbla.org/judges-exhibitors>

I've attached a photo with [Senator/Representative] [Last Name] from the event below. Thanks again for stopping by, and we look forward to staying in touch!

With gratitude,  
[Your Name]  
[School Name] FBLA Chapter

[Insert Photo from Event]