

How to Conduct an In-Person Library Tour



Here are the steps you'll need to host a successful library tour!



1. SCHEDULE THE VISIT.

- You can find the website links and contact information for your federal, state and local elected officials utilizing [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).
- Contact the legislator using the provided website contact form, email address, or event appearance request form if available. If you have a strong relationship with an individual on the legislator's staff, inform them of the proposed visit. In your message, be sure to confirm that you are a constituent, mention the name and location of your library, and briefly describe the purpose of the library tour.
- Decide if any portion of the tour is something you'll want to be recorded by video and/or photographed. If so, you will need to ask for consent from the staff beforehand, and be clear on how you will utilize the footage.
- Follow up as needed until a date and time are finalized. Once finalized, be sure to provide specific instructions to the legislator's office on where they will meet you at the library on the day of the tour, such as the designated entrance.

• SAMPLE E-MAIL:

*My name is ____, and I am a librarian at the **(Library Name & Location)**. As a constituent, I am writing to invite you to join me for an in-person tour of our library. We would like to show you around our facility, as well as offer a look into all of the dynamic services we provide to members of our community. We would be pleased to host you for a brief tour at a time that works best for you. With your consent, we would also like to record a portion of our visit and share highlights with our patrons on our website and social media.*

*Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at **(provide contact information)**.*

2. PREPARE FOR THE TOUR.

Content:

Create a practice script or outline to ensure that you will stay on task during the tour.

- Introduce yourself, the library, what you do.
- Thank the legislator and any present staff members for their time.
- Show them around, highlighting strategic people, programs and places that will appeal to your VIP visitor, including:
 - Other staff (showing the job opportunities/human face/dedication to your library)
 - Projects that are supported by IMLS and other funding sources
 - Sections of your library that might be of interest to your elected leader, depending on their background: makerspace, early literacy programs, job assistance center, etc.

Content (Continued):

Repeat the core message of the visit: the desire for collaboration and the need for continued resources for libraries.

- Allow time for the legislator/their staff to ask any questions.
- Offer the legislator your library's resources – physical space for town hall meetings, research assistance, etc. – if your library can be of service to them, their staff, or their constituents.
- Thank them again, and remind them that you would love to continue working together to address the community's needs through strong library services.

Do a practice run beforehand!

- Familiarize yourself with the key messages.
- If you and the legislator's office have agreed to record a portion of the tour, who on your staff will be responsible for filming? Do you have the proper equipment needed? Film a practice tour. In your practice footage, how is the lighting, the sound?

Logistics:

Important things to consider:

- Have a member of your staff greet the legislator upon entrance, to guide them inside and show them where to go. Let their office know the name and cell # of this designated staff person ahead of time.
- Consider the flow of the tour and the physical environment. Try to keep the overall walking time at a minimum. For brevity, consider the location in the library that the tour will start and end, and work your way back to where the legislator will be exiting.
- Who will be conducting the tour? Will any other library staff members be present? Do your staff members reflect the diversity of your community?
- What do you know about your legislator? **Research them before the visit.** How have they supported your library or libraries? What are their main interests? What is their alma mater? Make the visit personal. Review their social media posts.
- **What are the main areas you would like to show to the legislator/their staff, and why? How will these resonate with the legislator and highlight what your library provides for the community?**
- Remember to keep the tour brief (aim for no more than 20 minutes, with time for questions).

3. HOST THE TOUR.

4. SAY THANK YOU.

- Send a thank you email to the legislator and their staff promptly after the visit, and be sure to include any helpful resources about your library (website link, one-pager, etc.) so that their office can follow up with you.
- **Contact ALA's PPA office and let us know how it went!**

 **Tweet thanks to your elected official after the tour, tagging them and [@LibraryPolicy](https://twitter.com/LibraryPolicy)!**