Virtual Hill Day

7 Steps to Meeting with Lawmakers and Staffers on the Hill or In-district
Prepare

- Nail down your dates - be sure to consider the legislative calendar
- Create a centralized location on your website to house information
- If this is replacing an existing in-person meeting, provide information on airline and hotel reservation refunds
- Determine the format of your Hill day – whether your group will set up meetings with elected officials and/or staff, or host one large forum
- Decide on a digital meeting tool (Zoom, GoToMeeting, Webex, Google Hangouts, etc.)
- Document step-by-step how your supporters will use the digital meeting tool, including how to install the software, activate camera and sound, what to expect, etc. Add screenshots/images when possible
- Organize and schedule your event and meeting(s) - whether through a virtual sign up site such as Eventbrite or using the FiscalNote advocacy app

Determine Your Ask

- Plan internally with communications, government relations and other departments
- Prioritize the issue(s) or policy to focus on
- Make sure the ask is clear when targeting each elected official (signing a letter, supporting/opposing legislation, co-sponsoring, etc.)
- Determine organizational talking points, both internally and externally
- Create collateral as “leave-behinds” to email to staffers afterwards; we recommend one-pagers whenever possible
Communicate, Plan, & Schedule

✓ Promote the event and meeting(s) to your supporters on your website, newsletter/email, and social media

✓ Schedule appointments with legislators and staffers

✓ Assign advocates to small groups based on their matched elected official and assign a staffer liaison (if possible) to coordinate scheduling the meeting(s)

✓ Provide literature (talking points, visuals, “leave-behinds,” etc.) to registrants

✓ Start a digital campaign to have supporters who cannot make it write a letter, call or tweet their officials about your issue/ask

✓ Gather registrant bios and match their addresses with their member

✓ Determine if your supporters have any personal relationships with members or staffers

✓ Communicate agenda, appointments list, elected official bios, talking points on the issues, and links to attend digital meetings with the registrants

✓ Email registrant list and their addresses and bios to each members’ office

✓ Create a meeting feedback form that allows your advocates to inform the organization about what happened from the meeting

✓ Plan a pre-Hill day briefing with your advocates to cover the basics of advocacy, Government, and a deep dive into your ask/issues and how to speak about them to their representatives
Set up for Hill day success with FiscalNote’s VoterVoice

Step 4: Test

- Schedule dry run webinars/meetings for all of your registrants to test their technology
- Set the time for registrants 15-30 minutes before the meeting is due to begin, and send a reminder an hour before it’s due to start.
- Send registrants detailed instructions on how to download/log into the meeting software
- Review the structure of the virtual Hill day, talking points, and answer any outstanding questions from the registrants
- Follow up with registrants, point them to resources to prepare for their meeting, including instructions for the meeting software

Step 5: Run Event

- Communicate with registrants an hour before their scheduled meeting to remind them of their upcoming meeting
- Communicate with registrants 5 minutes before the meeting starts to ensure they will be on time
- Launch coinciding digital campaign to supporters, so they can email, make phone calls, or tweet at elected officials
- Don’t forget to hit record on the meeting(s), so you can send to attendees/no shows later, if possible
- Send press release to the media including photos
- Live tweet, post to Facebook, and encourage attendees to do the same
Follow Up

- Request participants log all notes and feedback in the FiscalNote advocacy app
- Encourage attendees to send Thank Yous to staffers and members who participated
- Send an email out to attendees thanking them for taking part in the Virtual Hill Day
- Send an email to all supporters summarizing the event and discuss next steps
- Follow up individually with staffers/members on action items, if necessary
- Publish article or blog post detailing the day’s event on your website and/or newsletter
- Debrief as a leadership team to determine what went well and what didn’t

Measure Success

- Review the meeting feedback forms; understand if staffers or members made commitments that aligned with your organization’s stance on an issue or policy
- Count how many people registered and attended meetings
- Count how many people participated in your digital campaign related to your Virtual Hill Day
- Count the types of actions taken (emails, calls, tweets, virtual in-person meetings, etc.)
- Determine how many new members aligned with your position
- Survey advocates to get qualitative feedback about the success of the event
Best Practices:

- Run 2–3 digital hill “test run” meetings before you schedule and replace your entire fly in.
- Target offices you already know with advocates you trust to run the test meetings.
- Leverage successful meetings to get additional meetings with other offices; be proactive about their potential objections to digital meetings.
- Make meeting requests to staffers as concise as possible; we recommend under 150 words.
- Most offices are prompt in their response to meeting requests, but some will need a few follow-ups.
- Include a short paragraph about your organization, and a brief bio on each attendee, including their full address so staffers know they’re in the lawmaker’s district.
- Make sure that the “leave-behinds” include contact information for someone in the group who can answer the member or staffer follow-up questions.
- Brief attendees that they may not actually meet with a member; they may meet with a staffer, which is perfectly OK.
- Use Templates for thank you letters and provide sample questions attendees can ask members or staffers.
- Create a Hashtag for your digital campaign that you can speak about during the digital meetings.
- Record meetings, if given permission, and share them with supporters and similar groups in your industry.

Ready to ace your virtual Hill day? Talk to a FiscalNote expert.

Set up for Hill day success with FiscalNote’s VoterVoice.
FiscalNote is the #1 most trusted and secure software solution for managing the policy issues that present the greatest risks and opportunities to your organization. Our 360-degree approach includes policy news & analysis, tracking, stakeholder management, collaboration tools and advocacy.