



LEGISLATIVE DAY EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

What is a Legislative Day?

A Legislative Day is when Moms for Liberty members and supporters from across the state gather at the state capitol. Goals for the event can include, but are not limited to:

- affecting legislation
- building relationships
- raising awareness for issues
- educating members on the legislative process
- helping members feel comfortable at the capitol
- empowering members with effective advocacy techniques
- showing support to encourage effective legislators
- demonstrating how Joyful Warriors behave themselves in Moms for Liberty

Each state will have a unique purpose and goals. In states hostile toward parental rights, holding an event to raise awareness and demonstrate a Joyful Warrior attitude is a worthy endeavor. Members in other states may be able to accomplish significant legislative change. Consider what is realistic for your state and keep that purpose in mind as you plan.

Planning is key

Who organizes the event?

The State Legislative Committee hosts Legislative Days. If your state has yet to form this committee, please refer to the Legislative Committee documents on the Chapter Chair portal. Generally, one member of the Committee takes point on the event and may work with a handful of other Committee or Chapter members to execute the event.

When should you hold an event?

Chapters have held successful Legislative Days at various stages of the legislative session. If your main goal is to affect legislation, you generally have more impact earlier in the session. Remember that most of your impact, however, is accomplished through the ongoing efforts of the State Legislative Committee and not a singular event. Consider your goals for the event and choose your date accordingly, considering members' availability. Planning an event over Spring Break, for example, while many are traveling, will likely not yield desired attendance.

What does a simple Legislative Day look like?

Legislative Days do not have to be complicated. A handful of members gathering to take pictures and meet with legislators can be a simple and free way to hold an event in your state. Members attending

may schedule their meetings with legislators, or you can coordinate these efforts. Be sure to communicate with enough advanced notice so members can participate in all aspects of the event.

What other things can we include in a Legislative Day event?

States have had rallies, forums, luncheons, receptions, and galas as part of their event. The remaining portions of this document will help when planning such event aspects. What works in one state may not work in another. You know your people best; keep them in mind as you plan. Many of the following portions of this document will help when planning large-scale events.

Budgeting

Fundraising may be needed depending on the size of the event you are planning. To understand the amount you may need to raise, draft an initial sample budget. Consider the following categories in your budget.

Printing

Agendas, itineraries, the legislative agenda, membership forms, signs, thank you notes, invitations, maps, copies of the Parent Pledge, and more may need to be printed for the event. It is best to plan as if attendees have never been to the statehouse or venue.

Venue

If you want a portion of your event to occur on capital grounds, check to see if you need a permit. Consider ease of access and parking when choosing private venues such as restaurants and event halls. Contact potential venues to inquire about costs, required deposits, and what amenities they offer. Consider things like tables, linens, chairs, audiovisual needs, staging, catering, and the venue's preferred vendors. Depending on what the venue has, you may need to rent items from a third party. When you must rent, it is best practice to get multiple quotes to ensure you are getting a competitive price.

Security

It is always a good idea to consider if any aspect of your event will need security. Know the rules about where protesters may or may not be allowed. Private companies offer hired security, or you may contact the local police/sheriff department to hire off-duty officers. Capitol police may work with you to help secure any aspect of your event on Capitol grounds.

Decorations

Beyond what is provided by your venue, consider what other decor you may wish to have. Flowers, centerpieces, and signage will add to your budget. If you are considering flowers, contact local florists for potential donations. Sam's Club and Costco often offer bulk flowers and arrangements at good prices.

Catering

Will you be serving light appetizers, a full meal, a buffet, or no food? Ask your network for catering recommendations. You may find a caterer willing to donate or discount services in exchange for an event sponsorship. Always inquire about service fees and taxes from all vendors. Venues often have catering staff you will be required to work with.

Photography/Videography

You went through all the effort to plan the event, be sure to capture it! Depending on your budget, you can hire a professional photographer or videographer (or both). You may also ask around to see if any members are photographers and would be willing to volunteer their services free of charge or at a discount.

Miscellaneous

When budgeting, you should consider swag bags, t-shirts, bottled water, speaker gifts, and other incidentals that may increase costs.

A crucial part of budgeting is being realistic about your fundraising ability. You can plan for fantastic food and full swag bags, but if you cannot raise the funds to pay for them, you are setting yourself up for failure. Talk with your committee when budgeting; discuss potential donors to determine a realistic goal for your group to raise. Building in a small contingency fund to allow for unexpected expenses is wise. Selling tickets and securing sponsorships are the two ways most states pay for their Legislative Day events.

Tickets

Setting a reasonable ticket price for attendees that will also help cover event costs is essential. Consider what you offer attendees. Will they be treated to an excellent meal, have exclusive access to a speaker, or receive a swag bag? These things increase perceived value. You do not want the ticket price to discourage parents from coming and advocating for their parental rights. Some states have had low-cost/free portions of the event along with higher-priced optional receptions or galas.

Sponsorships

With a budget in mind, you can establish sponsorship options or levels. Generally, sponsors seek marketing benefits that help get their name out into the community. Keeping sponsorship levels simple will increase your chances of securing sponsors. Some things you may offer include but are not limited to:

- name/logo on the event page
- email to attendees
- signage at the event
- speaking opportunity
- social media post
- tickets
- preferred seating
- promotional item included in the swag bag

Create a clear sponsorship proposal that explains the opportunities and benefits of sponsoring

your event. Proposals can be a single-page flyer, a pamphlet, or a brochure. You may encounter sponsors wishing to support your event anonymously who opt out of receiving sponsorship benefits.

Before approaching sponsors for donations, review resources such as "Art of the Ask" and "Fundraising Fundamentals" on the Chapter Chair Portal. Practice your pitch with friends and family. When approaching a donor, it is best to make the ask in person. An email or phone call can set the stage, but nothing beats an in-person ask. When you follow up with potential donors, thank them for their time and consideration. Don't let a "no" stop you!

Collecting Funds

Moms for Liberty does not have authorized state-level entities. Therefore, there cannot be a state bank account to hold funds for legislative events.

States should consider using a specific Chapter to house the funds for the event. The Chapter whose leader is coordinating the event is the best choice to house funds as this makes expending funds simplest. Keep in mind that Chapters who raise more than \$50,000 in a single year may be required to file additional reports with the IRS.

A Chapter may use its account or a separate designated account to hold the funds. When a Chapter collects event funds, it must provide the State Legislative Committee with a transparent accounting of money received and spent. When using online donation services or portals, a separate "campaign" may often be set up to collect these funds.

Funds for state events may only be sent to Moms for Liberty Inc national with prior approval. It is best to determine beforehand what the State Legislative Committee would like to have done with any leftover funds. These can be donated, divided among the Chapters, or set aside for future Committee approved events.

Spending Funds

It is best to have the event coordinator bring their draft event budget to the full Legislative Committee for discussion and approval. With approval, the event coordinator can then spend collected funds in accordance with that budget. Large variations in expected costs should come back to the Committee for approval. It is best practice to have one person authorized to sign contracts and spend funds for the event. Oversight can be provided by the Legislative Committee Executive Board.

Optional

Different states have incorporated the following optional things into their legislative events:

- had Moms for Liberty recognized from the floor of the state House or Senate
- arranged tours of the capitol through a member of the legislature
- put together a photo scavenger hunt for attendees

- arranged for a parental rights proclamation to be passed
- held a signing of the Parent Pledge for members of the legislature
- gifted flags that flew over the capital to out-of-state guests
- shared their state pride by giving speakers gifts that were representative of their state history

National

When you have set a date for your Legislative Day event, please inform National by emailing julie@momsforliberty.org. Julie will add it to the national calendar so that, if possible, a member of the Executive Board can attend with you.

After the Event

Reflect on what went well and what you'd like to do differently next time; this is a valuable activity to do with the entire State Legislative Committee. Follow up with sponsors and speakers to thank them again for their support. A handwritten thank-you note will help strengthen your relationship with legislators.