

Guidelines for a FES Chapter Legislative Event

What are the goals of a local FES Chapter Legislative Event?

1. Provide Legislators an opportunity to meet local FES members.
2. Provide a forum for Legislators to tell us what is important to them.
3. Educate Legislators about FES, our roles and functions.
4. Educate Legislators about issues important to FES.
5. Expose Legislators to the members of the FES Government Affairs team.

How do I set up a Legislative Event?

Speak to your local legislative chapter representative (check with your President to identify that person). Your legislative chapter representative will know what dates are good and which format will best suit the group. Remember, you may have to sacrifice a regular meeting date to meet the needs of your local delegation... be flexible. Send each of the Legislators an invitation letter outlining the event, including the fact that they will have an opportunity to speak. Other items to include are facts like whether the FES Executive Director or Lobbyist will be there and a RSVP date. Remember the no gift rule and be sure to provide the Legislators with a ticket price, if they plan to eat and drink.

If you need help with an invitation letter, contact Samantha Hobbs at shobbs@fleng.org.

How do I insure a good turnout?

One of the best ways is to have your Chapter leadership divide up the membership list and call members asking them to attend the event. Emphasize the importance of a good turnout for these Legislators.

Be sure to coordinate with FES HQ. By coordinating this with the state office we will have uniformity in our approach to the legislators.

What is the best format to conduct a Legislative Event?

There is no one best format. Use the format that your Legislators feel is best for them.

The Panel. Legislators, Chapter Leadership, FES Leadership or Government Affairs team members are seated at a head table facing the membership.

1. Chapter Leadership makes brief announcements, conducts a little business (limit to 3 minutes), tells a little about the Chapter, introduces the Legislators, dignitaries, and either the FES Executive Director or Lobbyist. Use this time to outline how FES and the legislators can help each other by working together. (3 minutes)
2. Meal is served.
3. Chapter Leadership presents a short bio on the FES Executive Director or Lobbyist (1-2 minutes).
4. FES Executive Director or Lobbyist presents the legislative issues that are important to FES (10-12 minutes).
5. Legislators are given an opportunity to stand up individually and speak about issues important to them. Typically they will address issues important to FES, as well. (Depending upon the number of Legislators present, limit this to 3-6 minutes each). If you know that you will have only one Legislator, be sure to let them know that they will have about 10 minutes to speak.

6. FES members are given an opportunity to ask questions of the Legislators (10 minutes).
7. Chapter Leadership closes the meeting and presents mementos (mementos should include the FES logo), if any (2 minutes).

The panel runs about 45-50 minutes from start to finish, depending upon the number of Legislators present. It is a good idea to schedule the meeting for 1.5 hours to allow time to get meals served and for the typical networking that occurs at FES Chapter meetings. The program should start about 25 minutes after the scheduled meeting starting time.

The panel works well at lunch or dinner meeting.

The Mixer. Each Legislator is seated at a different table among the members. There is an assigned host at each table to make sure introductions are made and that there is productive dialog. There is no head table. **Same sequence of event as the Panel**, except that Legislators will probably be a little less inclined to give a formal presentation.

The Reception. Finger foods, bar (optional), usually auditorium style seating or a mixture of seats and tables.

1. Use of a check in table at the front door is very important. Be sure that Legislators are identified with a name tag. It is a good idea to assign someone to each Legislator to move them about the room with introductions.
2. Since the reception is finger foods, there is no formal start to the event... people migrate towards the food and beverages as they arrive.
3. About 30 minutes into the reception Chapter Leadership makes brief announcements, conducts a little business (limit to 3 minutes), tells a little about the Chapter introduces the Legislators, dignitaries, and either the FES Executive Director or Lobbyist (3 minutes)
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7. FES members are given an opportunity to ask questions of the Legislators (10 minutes).
8. Chapter Leadership closes the meeting and presents mementos (mementos should include the FES logo), if any (2 minutes).

In each case set up the first 30 minutes as a social time. This gives time to meet and great people and make sure everyone is there when you start the meeting.

After your event be sure to send a thank you letter to the Legislator.