



Librarians from western Mass take the bus to the State House.

Legislative Day

A Guide For Newbies

by Jan Resnick, Western Massachusetts Library Advocates

After an easy trip to the State House, take the opportunity to talk to your legislators about your library and its importance to your users.

When we arrive at the State House:

1. Proceed to the General Hooker entrance of the building and go through security.
2. At the Great Hall, visit the sign in desk and pick up information packets for legislators.
3. It is now time to go to visit legislators. A list of legislators and office numbers will be available, and there are plenty of people and signs to help you find your way.

The agenda for the day is pretty straightforward.

- The bus arrives at the State House between 10 - 10:30.
- Visit legislators, attend events. Invite your legislators to join you.
- 10:30 am – First Time Attendees Get Together - Special Collections Room 55.
- 11:00 am – 12:30 pm – Visit the Library Showcase in the Great Hall and Grand Staircase areas. (The showcase features visual displays of the variety of programs, technology and community involvement that happens daily in libraries across the Commonwealth.)
- Lunch in the Great Hall at 12:30 (Provided by sponsors; no charge to attendees.)
- The bus leaves at 2:30.

It is useful, but not imperative that you make an appointment. Library Legislative Day is a significant recurring event. Legislators and their staff know to expect library visitors. The important thing is to:

- **Stop by your legislators' offices,**
- **Speak to your legislators and/or their staff.** Describe what your library provides for your community, ask for their active support for the MBLC legislative agenda, explain why the agenda items are crucial for your library (State Aid, delivery, resource sharing and network support, data bases, training and the MBLC), and why your library is important and necessary for your users. You'll have a few minutes to make a couple of key points on the value of state funding for libraries and to ask for their support. ***Specific local examples of library use or need are particularly effective.***
 - ***Invite them to join you for lunch. (The podium will recognize all legislators present at the luncheon.)***
 - ***If you can't speak with your legislator or an aide directly, leave your card, an info packet or a note so that they know you were there and what action you would like them to take.*** These notes and your presence are very important. Our legislators are aware of the commitment we have made to take the day and travel to Boston. Your note, even if your legislator is not available, makes a significant impression.

The Legislative Day Bus is organized and underwritten by the Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA). Legislative Day is sponsored by the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA). The sponsoring organizations pay for the lunch; there is no cost to you or your legislator.