

Hosting a Legislative Breakfast

In general, a legislative breakfast or event should:

Be no more than 1 hour.

Be in the legislators' home area BEFORE the session starts if possible – otherwise you may want to consider holding an evening meeting with simple hors d'oeuvres or dessert for example – whenever people can attend.

Be hosted at the L.O.B. AFTER the session starts (it is hard for them to make something in their home towns once the session starts).

Be hosted in an easily accessible area such as a local social club/clubhouse, a Regional Mental Health Board room, or a NAMI Affiliate meeting place.

Include invitations to all the Senators and Representatives in several surrounding towns that your organization or group serves (if you invite 12 people, commonly some will not be able to attend).

Invite legislators and community stakeholders 3-4 weeks in advance of the event with a deadline for the RSVP's. Be sure to follow-up with friendly phone calls to legislators and community members you haven't heard from approximately 1 week before the event.

Serve simple breakfast items such as coffee, tea, juice, bagels, muffins, or pastries.

Be a COLLABORATIVE EFFORT between an agency program, such as a clubhouse, a local NAMI affiliate, the Regional Mental Health Board, etc.

Be creative! (Displaying clubhouse members' art, for example, can be a great way to initiate conversation).

Focus on a couple of key issues (such as funding Supportive Housing and specific Community Services) you know will be important in the upcoming Legislative Session.

Be less formal with a small group (everyone might have time to go around and briefly introduce themselves and very briefly state their issues with the mental health system such as supportive housing needs or successes). Be more structured for a larger group (have a couple key people highlight 2 or 3 important issues for your group).

Have an "ask" – a statement regarding your hope for their specific support or legislation. For example, you could ask the legislators to support funding 650 new units of Supportive Housing.

Allow time for the legislator(s) to respond to the issues that have been outlined for them.

Take pictures! Get your event published in a local newspaper! You can include photos and/or an article.

Always thank your legislators for attending. Send them a thank you note and reinforce your issues and/or "asks".

KTP can lend support by answering questions, providing collaborative leads such as local NAMI affiliates & Regional Board contacts, providing fact sheets (Supportive Housing, Alternatives to Incarceration, Young Adult Services, Raising the Income Limit for Medicaid, etc.) and the KTP legislative priorities tri-fold.

Please call KTP at (860) 882-0236; (800) 215-3021 or email us at keepthepromise@namict.org with any questions or for support. Schedule breakfasts and meetings with your legislators TODAY! These meetings are an important and effective way to let your legislators know how they can affect change.