Tips for Inviting Elected Officials

INVITING ELECTED officials and local policy makers to your event is a great opportunity for them to spend time with constituents and hear about their concerns, as well as get their message out.

Their schedules tend to be booked well in advance so they will probably need much longer notice of the event than will other speakers. Because of their busy schedules, they will often stay only for a short while and will be accompanied by an assistant and possibly other officials.

You will be expected to correspond in detail with their office to make the necessary arrangements, which may include security and other matters.

Here are some tips on how to proceed:

- If you have a direct contact in their office, approach them informally first through your contact to find out the likelihood that they would accept the invitation to participate in your event

- Send an invitation to their office inviting them to attend and participate in the forum

- Explain what issue you will be discussing, why it is relevant to them, and why it is an important topic for their constituents

- Let him/her know what you would like their participation to be — be clear about exactly what it is you are asking them to do

- Note the date, time and location

- Explain that he/she will offer part of the opening remarks (giving them a chance to express goodwill and concern for the community and the other speakers) and may choose to participate in the question and answer period

- Inform him or her that you will be inviting the media to attend and ask about their availability to take questions from the media

- A week after you have sent the invitation, make a follow up phone call to their office scheduler

- Once they have accepted your invitation go over the details of the event

- Confirm the date, time and location

- Explain the set-up of the event and who will be present

- Discuss what you would like them to say at the event and when they will speak

- Offer to send them talking points

- A few days before the event, reconfirm their availability to attend

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