

# Contacting Your Legislators

## Find Your Elected Officials

- Find Your Legislators:
  - List of all [Vermont Representatives and Senators](#)
  - [Search for legislators by town or name](#)
  - *Click on the legislator's name for their email, phone number, committees, bio, voting history, and more information!*
- House and Senate Committees:
  - [Committee Lists](#) (click the green box that says "show all members")

## Contacting Your Legislators

### Tips:

- **Be proactive!** Reach out to legislators in your district to introduce yourself and your organization, inform them of the value of the nonprofit sector, and let them know you are a resource for them.
- **Be clear and concise.** Legislators are busy and hear from many people about different issues every day. By keeping your message brief and direct, you are respecting their time while making it easier for them to digest what you are communicating.
- If you are reaching out on a specific issue:
  - Let them know what the issue is. How is it impacting their constituents? Give local examples. How is it impacting nonprofits? Why should they care?
  - If there is a bill, let them know the bill title/number.
  - Tell them what you are asking them to do (vote yes, vote no).
  - Follow up: Don't forget to thank them for their support!
- **Be compelling and credible.**
  - **Tell a story.** Stories help others to understand the importance of the issue by connecting it to real life examples that demonstrate its impact.
  - **Share data.** Good data is important but is most helpful when used to provide context for the story you are telling.
  - **Documented impact.** How does the solution you propose address the problem? Has it been implemented elsewhere? Does your organization have a history of success you can point to?

### **Phone Talking Points:**

- I am [YOUR NAME] and I work for [ORGANIZATION], a Vermont nonprofit.
- I'm calling to introduce you to my organization and to share about the value of Vermont's nonprofits.
- Vermont's more than 6,300 nonprofits employ 1 in 7 Vermont workers and generate over \$9 billion in revenue annually.
- [ORGANIZATION] employes (x) people and engage (x) volunteers in your district.
- Our mission is to [YOUR MISSION] and we can be a resource for you on [TOPICS]. Please reach out if we can be of assistance.
- We would also welcome you to visit [ORGANIZATION] when you are in [TOWN or COUNTY]. Please contact me if we can schedule something.
  - OR – I'll be in Montpelier on [DATE] and would love to find a time to meet if you are available.
- [CONTACT INFORMATION]

### **Email Template:**

Dear [REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR \_\_\_\_\_],

My name is [NAME] and I am the [TITLE] for [ORGANIZATION]. [ORGANIZATION] is an organization in your district that [MISSION STATEMENT]. We employ (x) people and engage (x) volunteers in your district to [SERVE X NUMBER OF YOUR CONSTITUENTS/OTHER KEY METRIC ABOUT IMPACT].

Vermont's 6,300+ nonprofits provide vital services our communities rely on. As a sector, we employ 1 in 7 Vermont workers and generate over \$9 billion in revenue annually.

We are reaching out to... [INSERT ISSUE OR INVITATION].

- ...Ask you to support [X BILL].
- ...Set up a meeting to share about our work and how we can be a resource to you regarding [TOPICS]. [INSERT AVAILABILITY/LOGISTICS].
- ...Bring your attention to [ISSUE].
- Etc.

Here is an example of [STORY ABOUT IMPACT OF YOUR MISSION or IMPORTANCE/IMPACT OF BILL/ISSUE].

Additionally, we invite you to visit when you are in the area to share more about our organization's work. Please do not hesitate to reach out and I hope we can find time to connect soon.

Thank you for your service and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[SIGNATURE BLOCK]

### ***Meeting Tips***

- Start on time. Be prepared, and polite.
- Start by concisely introducing your organization. Include the following information: Who you are/ What your organization does/ What you need from your legislator.
- Bring "leave behinds."
- Use local examples.
- If they are at your facility, consider arranging a short activity that will showcase the work of your organization and allow your legislator to see your staff or volunteers in action.
- Don't attack the legislator for his/her record on your issue(s), and don't disparage government or politics.
- Don't use technical terms or acronyms, unless you are certain that your legislator will understand them.
- Don't stick to a rigid agenda – approach your meeting as a conversation.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you'll find out and get back to them – and follow through.
- Before they leave, ask how you can be of help to them.
- Thank them for their time and support.
- Follow up after with requested information, any additional resources and to thank them for their time.