



Arc Guide to Home Visits

Over the years, The Arc has found that the *best* way to influence change with elected officials is by helping people with disabilities and their families tell their *stories*. People with disabilities and their family members telling their stories is the best way for elected officials to learn about how policy decisions affect people.

Sharing a personal story about successes and challenges a person faces can help elected officials understand the impact of their policy decisions and help in getting them to know you on a more personal level. The Arc home visits are an important tool to help build these relationships, educate elected officials and have a supportive network of persons with disabilities and their families there to share their stories too.

WHO ARE ELECTED OFFICIALS?

Elected officials are the individuals that represent you in the Congress, state legislature, county commissioner board, city council, school board, and park board members. They also include members of the Metropolitan Council who are appointed by the Governor. The Metropolitan Council makes decisions about public transportation and affordable housing in the 7 county metropolitan area.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CONNECT WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS?

Elected officials are important because they make funding decisions for programs and supports, make policy decisions concerning who is eligible for programs and can make changes to programs or policies that affect persons with disabilities. They can also propose new programs sometimes in response to requests from advocacy groups like The Arc.

It may seem scary and overwhelming to connect with your elected officials but it is important because your voice needs to be heard. They have busy schedules and it may seem like they do not have time to hear your concerns or ideas for change. Home visits provide a place and dedicated time for those discussions about how programs or policies are affecting you.

A HOME VISIT IS:

- An informal meeting between elected officials and individuals with disabilities, their family members and other interested members of the community.



- An easy way to engage in building a personal relationship with officials, to make sure they understand your issues, hear your concerns, and see you as a valued constituent.
- Specific to your community so only your representing officials are invited. Participants have included state senators, state representatives, city council members, school board members, park board members and Metropolitan Council members.
- Hosted in the home of an Arc member from your community to minimize travel.
- An opportunity for community members to tell their story to their representatives and explain issues related to persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
- A chance for officials to learn about the people they represent.
- An opportunity for elected officials from different levels of government (state, county, school, city) to learn from each other and help solve problems that may require cooperation.

A Home Visit sounds perfect! How can I host one in my district? The Arc does the work for you! We will:

- Invite the elected officials and Arc members and supporters from your area.
- Provide information packets regarding current legislative issues and goals.
- Keep the conversation going and ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- Assist in providing refreshments, set up and clean up.

The Arc Works Around Your Schedule

- Typical times for a home visit are Monday-Thursday, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm.
- Other times can be considered, just let us know.
- Interested in hosting a home visit? Contact The Arc at 952-920- 0855.

For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952-920-0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit www.arcminnesota.org. (Please



note: This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.)

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