

## 10 Tips for Organizing a Successful Lobby Days

1. **Choose the priority issues and legislation.** Determine which issue(s) and/or specific pieces of legislation around which you are organizing constituents. To build community buy-in, involve consumers, AIDS services organizations and coalitions in choosing issues and legislation.
2. **Choose location and date.** Check venue availability; learn details and timeline of reservation process, especially if using space in the capitol building. Determine if there are any dates to stay away from due to conflicts or dates to build upon that might increase participation, visibility, media coverage, etc. Check the legislature's calendar to make sure they will be in session, and choose a date that will have an impact.
3. **Raise funds.** Contact potential funders such as pharma at least three months in advance of event to ensure your funding request is submitted within their required time frame. Consider fundraising to provide scholarships to advocates living with HIV who would not be able to participate without financial assistance.
4. **Recruit advocates.** Create and circulate a flyer publicizing lobby days. Utilize all networks and community leaders as modes to recruit consumers, service providers, and allies from throughout the state to participate--planning councils, prevention planning groups, AIDS services organizations, consortia, HIV/AIDS church ministries, student AIDS activists, agencies addressing substance use, LGBT, women's, youth, and other advocacy organizations. Engage case managers and consumers early in recruitment efforts.
5. **Train advocates.** Train lobby days participants on issues and prepare them for speaking with lawmakers. Create and circulate a fact sheet with the legislative "asks". Carve out time in the training for advocates to practice with one another. Be clear with your advocates about what "the asks" are and remind them that they are experts on their own experiences.
6. **Organize a rally.** Hold a rally to kick off the legislative visits and create a draw for the media. Invite press to speak with participating advocates. Ask advocates to make signs with catchy slogans.
7. **Visit legislators together.** During the event, group advocates to make sure they visit legislators together, especially new advocates. Identify and connect seasoned advocates to serve as mentors for new advocates.
8. **Document your successes.** Take pictures to document all lobby days activities. Post them on your organization's website. Send one with an explanatory caption to print and online press following the event.
9. **Follow up and thank thank thank!** Ensure advocates follow up with their legislators. Have thank you notes on-hand for them to write messages reiterating their points and thank the legislators for their time and consideration of the issues.
10. **Stay connected.** Use email and phone to keep advocates active throughout the year and build momentum for the following year's lobby day. Thank them for their participation and inform them of the outcomes of the issues on which they lobbied.