



Hosting a Lab Tour for Your Policymaker

Hosting a lab tour for a policymaker or their staff provides a deeper understanding of your research beyond other advocacy methods. Watching science in action and interacting with lab members on-site will give your policymaker a personal look into your work. **SfN staff** can assist in coordinating these events and provide social media promotion to garner even more support.

To schedule a lab tour:

- Contact your institution's government relations office and tell them you are planning a tour for a policymaker to develop support for biomedical research funding.
 - ▶ Your institution may want to provide a photographer, guidance, or expand on the advocacy work you are conducting.
- Reach out to your policymaker's office via phone or email:
 - ▶ If you have a contact in the office, reach out to them; otherwise, contact the health legislative assistant in the DC office or the district scheduler in the local office (SfN can help you identify these individuals).
 - ▶ Emphasize that you are a constituent, including the town or neighborhood you live in.
 - ▶ Briefly describe your research.
 - ▶ Invite them to see firsthand the impressive work made possible through **NIH/NSF funding in their district/state**.
- Plan for a one-hour tour, including discussion and demonstrations or examples of your work.
- If possible, arrange for multiple laboratories to participate.
- If the policymaker is unavailable, they may offer to send a staffer in their place who will report back to the elected official.

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Hosting a Lab Tour for Your Policymaker (cont.)

Tips for the tour:

- Highlight work relevant to the policymaker's committees/caucuses/interest areas.
 - ▶ You can find this information on their official .gov website, through local and national news articles about or authored by the lawmaker, or their voting record on [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov). SfN can help provide this information as well.
- Emphasize the value of your research and reinforce the need for robust, predictable public funding to continue this work.
- If appropriate, in the context of discussion of your research, highlight the importance of animal models in scientific discovery.
- Make the tour interactive and have demonstrations and hands-on activities if possible.
- Take photos! SfN staff can share these on social media and increase the reach of your event.
- Post about the visit on social media and tag your policymaker.
- Follow up — offer to be a resource for their office and thank them for their time.

Let SfN know how it went, share photos, or reach out for assistance by contacting your partners at SfN at advocacy@sfn.org.

Example Invitation:

Dear [first name of staffer],

I am a scientist from [city/state] writing to invite [Rep./Sen. XXX] and staff to tour neuroscience facilities at [institution] to see firsthand the valuable research conducted by neuroscientists in our district.

The tour will last one to two hours and will provide [Rep./Sen. XXX] the opportunity to meet both established scientists and researchers early in their careers. Our institution is home to researchers who study [include a short scope of work]. Our team has been focused on [more specific scope of work, but still short]. [Include context about how the lab's work has the potential to impact the state and how your research has the potential to help people or lead to further studies down the road]. We are confident that a tour of our facility and discussion with our researchers will provide [Rep./Sen. XXX] with valuable insight on the importance of federal support for basic science and research.

Please contact me by phone at [provide one or two phone numbers] or by email at [email address] with further questions and to schedule the event.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[name and address block including institution, address, email address and phone number]

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