



Guidelines for Organizing a Site Visit

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate the importance of the Marketplace Fairness Act to our jobs, community and economy is to invite members of Congress to experience firsthand a local business operation. This is a tremendous opportunity to showcase how vital fair competition is and highlight who stands to be hurt the most if we continue to conduct business using an antiquated system. Through the site visit, public officials will learn more about how the issue is impacting our industry, and they will also get a chance to see how their decisions directly affect their constituents.

Before Conducting Outreach

- Review key messages and points
- Plan the visit carefully
 - Identify the key aspects to the site visit. For example:
 - Host a meet and greet at a local business
 - Celebrate a milestone or store anniversary
 - Participate in a promotional event
 - Launch of a civic initiative
 - Employee recognition ceremony or scholarship awards
 - Be clear about what you would like to achieve and assess how you may illustrate the goals from your site – ex: value of local business to the community; relationship with customers; need and value to community members; importance to job creation; etc.
- Practice the “ask”
 - Rehearse what you want to say and how you want to say it
 - Be focused and provide real examples of how your business and community are impacted by the sales tax loophole
 - Be prepared to address concerns for the future of the local economy if Congress doesn’t take action

Issuing an Invitation to the Member

- To get started, call or visit your legislator’s district office to obtain several dates for when he/she may be available. Make sure you ask for the best way to send an invitation (ask for fax number, street address, and email, depending on the preferred method).
- Follow your call or visit with a formal letter of invitation to your event. In the invitation, include information about your center, the number of employees who work there and other information about your contribution to the community and the local economy. A sample invitation is provided at the end of this guide.
- When inviting multiple public officials to the same event, make sure to inform your guests who will be attending. As you work on your invitation list, you will want to consider any political sensitivity that may exist (i.e. controversial legislation, tension between individuals, etc).



Conducting the Site Visit

A well-planned tour will enhance your reputation with elected officials and can even result in positive publicity within the community.

- Keep the visit simple. Your goal is to provide the legislator with a better understanding of your business, its impact on the economy and community, and the industry as a whole.
- Demonstrate to the elected official(s) how your business has or will be affected if the Marketplace Fairness Act isn't passed.
- Allow time for the legislator(s) to address attendees/customers/employees.
- Be sure to prepare a printed fact sheet about your business that includes economic contribution, history in the community, employment, and contributions to the local community and organizations. Also, be prepared to answer similar questions from the legislator and his/her staff members.
- Have volunteers on hand to help distribute fact sheets and assist where needed.
- Identify employees ahead of time who will participate in the event (i.e. leading the tour, providing material, handle customer/guest service during the visit, take photos and video, etc).

Social Media During the Visit

- Make sure a volunteer or employee is assigned the task of taking photos and video throughout the visit.
- Share photos and images through Twitter, Facebook, the store website and any other digital channels. Be sure to include @efairness in posts.

Immediately Following the Visit

- Send a thank you letter to the official within a few days of the visit. If you have copies of photos that were taken during the event, include those with the letter. Also, remember to send a separate thank you letter to any of the legislator's staffers who may have helped you coordinate his/her attendance. A sample letter is included at the end of this guide.
- Share the details of the site visit with 21stcenturyretail.org at info@21stcenturyretail.org, so that it may be included in a success story on our website.