



IFMA's

Knowledge Library

BLOG POST

How to Invite a Member
of Congress to Speak at
an Event

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Planning and organizing events can be challenging—even more so when the event aims to have a U.S. representative participate. Though it's a bit challenging at times, engaging our elected officials is essential if we want to continue to push the FM industry and profession forward. With the help of leaders and advocates like you, we can make sure our profession is recognized and our voices are heard. These quick tips will **help you engage with Congress, elevate the profession of facility management, and make sure your voice is heard.**



1

Plan in advance

Congresspeople are busy individuals, to say the least. They have countless meetings, travel, voting obligations and myriad other requests competing for their time. Event scheduling is always a ballet of plate spinning, so make sure you plan well enough in advance to give the representative and their staff ample time to coordinate and block the time.

Action items:

- Reach out to your local representative
- Invite representatives to speak at local events
 - [Download our Congress Speaker Invitation Template](#)

2

Find or organize a large event

The larger the audience, the more likely a representative will attend. This tip applies to all speakers and all events, really. It's best to plan and market your event to gather the largest possible audience. This is not only good for overall event turnout, but will help make your case to your representative as to the importance of the event.

Make sure you promote the event via email, social media and at other chapter events and meetings. Better still if you're able to invite honorable guests or media that can help increase exposure.

Action items:

- Create an event calendar in advance
- Make sure you select and test all technology and logistics in advance
- Promote your event on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media networks, as well as at local chapter meetings



3

Be flexible

You may be noticing a consistent theme here: congresspeople are busy. It's an unfortunate reality and one you should keep front-of-mind when planning. Have contingencies and backup plans in place in case speakers fall through. Make sure everyone involved is clear on the itinerary, speaking order and other event logistics so that you can pivot and modify the event at a moments' notice.

Action items:

- Plan backup dates and times for your event
- Coordinate alternate speakers who can substitute in case someone drops
- Remember to keep calm and roll with the punches

4

Ask them to attend a virtual event

As we've all come to learn during the pandemic, sometimes in-person just isn't possible. Even beyond our current remote reality, getting a congressperson to participate virtually is a great option. As we mentioned above, this is another way to be flexible and more accommodating.

We're all learning new ways to engage, so next time you're hosting a chapter meeting, see if your representatives are open to a Zoom call.

Action items:

- Research virtual conference software like Zoom, GoToWebinar, Webinar Jam, Microsoft Teams or other online platform
- Ask the IFMA Government Affairs team to speak at a chapter meeting

5

Help advocate for facility management

The more involved and active you are, the more likely you are to attract the interest and attention of Congress when making your request for them to speak. As they say, democracy is not a spectator sport. If you are active in the FM



community and a vocal advocate for the profession and industry, it'll be much harder to ignore your request when you reach out to representatives to speak.

Action items:

- Attend town halls and local events
- Be a continuous presence in FM, IFMA and government affairs
- Establish a Chapter Government Affairs Committee
- Participate in monthly Government Affairs Committee meetings
- **Attend IFMA's Advocacy Day 2021!**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Advocacy Day 2020 Presentation \[PowerPoint\]](#)

[Congress Speaker Invitation Template \[Word Doc\]](#)

[Contact Your U.S. Representatives](#)

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