

Ten tips for communicating with legislators via telephone

Source: Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

A telephone call is a quick and direct way to reach a legislator's office. Be prepared to talk with an aide, rather than directly to the legislator. Provide all the necessary details to the aide.

1. **Identify yourself.** Anonymous calls will be ignored.
2. State that **you are a constituent.**
3. **Focus on one issue.** This is more effective than a long conversation about all the issues on your mind.
4. **Be brief.** State your purpose for calling in the first few sentences of the conversation. If you are calling about a piece of legislation, identify it appropriately. (Call the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council if you need help doing so.)
5. **State your message.** Be precise about the action you wish the legislator to take.
6. **Include facts and personal experiences briefly.** Stress how it affects you, your business, your organization, your community and provide examples. These personal examples are effective and important facts create solid debate.
7. **Do not be scolding or "preachy" or philosophical in your approach.** Be practical about the benefits or problems with the legislation to make your case. You are not likely to change any one's personal beliefs with one phone call, but you can change their course of action if they understand the practical implications of the issue for you and your community. Be sure to emphasize the importance of arts and cultural institutions to the constituents of the legislator's district.
8. **Offer your services** to provide materials or experiences that will support your position.
9. **Provide a phone number and address** where they can reach you for more information or to send a response.
10. **Be courteous at all times and thank the aide or legislator for their time.** Request a written response to your call. By being polite you are more likely to receive a response.