



Advocacy Day: Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I attend?

Creating and maintaining strong relationships with lawmakers and their staff is key to strengthening the public policy influence of the Goodwill® enterprise. Congress has many issues to discuss this year including the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and the Older Americans Act while trying to reduce the deficit. By conducting Hill visits you will be educating offices about the mission of Goodwill and our legislative agenda and equipping them with the information to make informed decisions when drafting legislation and voting on our policies.

What do I have to do?

Simply, register for the Spring Conference and we'll take care of the rest. If attending visits on the Hill you'll be required to attend a **mandatory** training on Monday, April 16 from 1:45 – 5:00. There will be an optional pre-conference webinar to provide additional logistic information, what you can expect and background material on the policy issues. You are also invited to attend a reception on Capitol Hill while conducting visits on Tuesday, April 17 to honor GII Policymaker Leader and GII Advocacy Leader award winners.

Do I have to attend the full Spring Conference?

While public policy and advocacy content is woven into the entire conference, and there are many great sessions, you don't have to attend the full event. In fact, if you attend for the Advocacy Day portion only which includes training on Monday, April 16 and Hill visits on Tuesday, April 17 – the event is **FREE!** Just pay for your hotel and transportation.

How are my visits made?

GII works with Soapbox consulting to make all of your visits on your behalf. Meetings will take place up until 5:00pm on Tuesday, April 17th so please make your travel arrangements accordingly.

When do I get my schedule?

Meeting times can and will change often, therefore we do not distribute the schedules until the training on Monday, April 16th.

Who will be in the meetings?

Most likely, you will be meeting with all of the Congressional and Senate offices for each of the states/districts where your Goodwill has territory. (Ex: Goodwill of Greater Washington meets with representatives from DC, Virginia, and Maryland). While we request meetings with the elected official, scheduling conflicts and votes often requires you to meet with staff. Remember that staffers are just as important. They do most of the work and tell the Congressman and Senator what's important.

Should your agency "share" a district or state with other agencies, the other Goodwill representatives will be in the meeting with you. (Ex: one meeting with the Senator from Iowa for all of the agencies serving Iowa in attendance).

What policy issues will be discussed? Can I talk about other issues?

Generally we ask that you talk about GII's public policy priorities. As the conference gets closer, the team narrows down the issues to 3 or 4 areas which are most relevant for the timing of the conference. They usually come from GII's [Level A priorities](#). While the Advocacy Day serves as a way for Goodwill advocates to represent the Goodwill enterprise with a unified voice, you can certainly talk about issues specific to your agency if appropriate and as time allows. You can also bring material specific to your agency to include in the Hill leave-behind packets.

Can I bring a program participant?

Yes! We even have a program participant scholarship to cover expenses for a program participant and Goodwill staffer to attend. No one tells the story our mission better than someone who has benefited from Goodwill's services. [Click here](#) for the scholarship application and details. While the Spring Conference is for Goodwill employees, we encourage agencies to send program participants and local board members to advocate on behalf of the enterprise.

I already have a great relationship with my lawmaker. Why should I attend?

It's great that you have an established relationship! GII and your local supporters rely on your advocacy to help strengthen the influence of the Goodwill enterprise. Attending the GII Spring Conference with other Goodwill advocates allows you to be a part of a greater grassroots movement. There will always be issues to discuss with the lawmaker as the work is never done. Furthermore, lawmakers can change their mind. Having ongoing conversations will remind him/her that you are a trusted resource and are paying attention to the issues at hand.

I disagree with my lawmaker's politics. Why should I go?

If your lawmaker won't listen, that's all the more reason to attend and educate him/her. One of the keys to good advocacy is conveying your message. Constituent pressure is respected and lawmakers change opinions/positions.

Who is the reception for?

An open reception is being held on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, April 17 in between Hill visits from 10:30 – 11:30AM. We will honor winners of the GII Advocacy Leader Award (for Goodwill agencies) and the GII Policymaker Award (for U.S. Representatives and Senators). The [GII Advocacy Leader Award](#) recognizes local Goodwill agencies that have led the way with advocacy efforts and continually strive to build relationships with members of Congress. The [GII Policymaker Leader Award](#) honors elected officials who show support for Goodwill's public policy and legislative agenda.

Still have questions? Contact Laura Walling, GII Director of Advocacy & Legislative Affairs at laura.walling@goodwill.org or 240-333-5378