



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead

"You must do the things you think you cannot do."

--Eleanor Roosevelt

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS

A Planning Guide for Chapters & Regions

PREFACE

FEW has developed and maintained a dynamic Legislative program at the national, state, and local levels which works in concert with the organizational mission and goal of representing federally employed women's concerns and interests before legislative and judicial bodies. FEW's Legislative Program seeks to both pro actively and defensively monitor urgent legislative proposals in order to assess the effect on federally employed women and establish close communication with Members of Congress and the Administration to promote the needs and concerns of women in the federal service. FEW has developed a strong network at the national, regional, and chapter levels of the organization to encourage active participation in the legislative process. Finally, FEW joins forces with other organizations within the women's civil rights, labor, and professional communities with similar goals and objectives to strengthen its lobbying efforts.

FEW's Board of Directors adopts a national legislative agenda to coincide with each two-year Congressional session. Designed to be the guiding force behind the organization's public policy activities, the agenda is basically divided into a three-tier structure.

Tier I issues are considered of utmost importance to female federal workers today and include downsizing of civilian and military personnel, equal employment opportunity, family member care, retirement, and issues affecting women in the military.

Tier II issues have an impact on all federal employees, regardless of gender and include compensation, employee benefits, Hatch Act reform, the National Performance Review, and safety and health.

Tier III issues affect women as a class and include economic empowerment, health care, and violence against women. The Equal Rights Amendment and voter education and registration activities are given Overall Priority status as they permeate each and every issue above.

**If you don't like the way the world is, you change it.
You have an obligation to change it.
You just do it one step at a time.
You really *can* change the world if you care enough.
–Marian Wright Edelman**

SAMPLE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM WITH GUEST SPEAKER

Types of Speakers for Legislative Program:

- ▶ Politician (federal, state or local)
- ▶ Employee from Agency's Congressional Affairs Office
- ▶ Agency Legal Counsel

Possible Topics:

- ▶ The Legislative Process
- ▶ Discussion on legislation that impacts women/agency
- ▶ Hatch Act and/or Ethics

Benefit: Attendees will receive a better understanding on various legislative issues, pending legislation, and the legislative process. The Chapter, through its outreach efforts, will form relationships and improve its visibility both within and outside of the agency.

Determine the Purpose and Theme of the Program

Contact Guest Speaker (s) - (3 months prior to the event):

- ▶ Letters of Invitation (3 months prior to event)
Include date, time, theme and location if known, and ask for bio.

- ▶ Letter of Confirmation (1 month prior to event)
Include directions, expected time of arrival (if there is a protocol meeting have the speaker arrive 15 to 20 minutes earlier), length of presentation, and point of contact. Cover any agency security issues that are in place for guest speakers outside of the agency. Ask if he/she has special needs, handouts or equipment.

Set Up the Location - (3 months prior to the event):

- ▶ Select a physical setting that is comfortable and large enough to accommodate the guest
- ▶ Schedule an interpreter for the hearing impaired if required.
- ▶ Make sure that the sound system is working.
- ▶ Arrange for audio and visual equipment if necessary.
- ▶ Schedule photographers.
- ▶ Arrange for appropriate refreshments.

Publicity:

Start 1 month before the program.

- ▶ Flyers
- ▶ Posters
- ▶ Advise local newspapers (provide them with biography and photo of the speaker, if applicable)

- ▶ Letter of invitation to state and city offices (optional),
- ▶ Advertise on agency's daily update system.

Program:

Create your program (1 month before the event – need to be thinking about the outline when you start planning the program [3 months out])

- ▶ Decide on the order of the program.
- ▶ Determine the start and stop time for each participant.
- ▶ Make sure each participant knows what is expected of her/ him.
- ▶ Keep the program focused and moving.

Ticket Sales

- ▶ If tickets are being sold for this event, start sales at the time you start advertising.

NOTE: If you are using your agency's graphics department or sign shop, make sure you allow enough time to complete before your scheduled start date.

*Original plan developed by Barbara Massey, Federal Women's Program Manager,
Equalitarian Chapter, Columbus, Ohio.*

PROGRAM FEATURING A MOVIE *

This can be done as a free program or fundraiser.

Possible Topics:

- ▶ Formulation of a bill
- ▶ How Congress operates
- ▶ Iron Jawed Angels (details the struggle for the passage by Congress of the national suffrage [19th] amendment enfranchising women, led by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, assisted by members of the National Women's Party)*
- ▶ Videos covering political speeches

Possible Sources:

- ▶ CSPAN
- ▶ Movie Rentals
- ▶ Library
- ▶ Personal collection

Benefit: This is a great learning opportunity on a particular subject matter as well as a fun and relaxed way for the chapter members to interact in a less formal atmosphere.

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**The Denver Federal Chapter hosted this program as a fundraiser which was a success, and everyone had a great time. There was little up-front investment with big profits. The chapter charged \$5.00 as a donation to their scholarship program. The fundraiser included a demonstration of quick and easy to prepare food by Tastefully Simple, which donated 20% of the sales from the FEW members and guests. For the ticket price, those in attendance were treated to samples of the Tastefully Simple offerings, popcorn and soda. The event was attended by 46 people and raised over \$700.00 for the chapter after deducting \$42.00 spent on supplies. Thanks for sharing this idea with us!*

CQEngage PRESENTATION

Possible Presenters:

- ▶ VP Congressional Relations
- ▶ FEW Washington Representative
- ▶ Chapter Legislative Chair

Subject:

- ▶ CQEngage presentation

Benefit: Inform the membership about the benefits of using this interactive legislative tool. Discuss the available options, such as the ability to research both legislation and legislators, election races, and the ability to send letters to Congressman about legislation.

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