



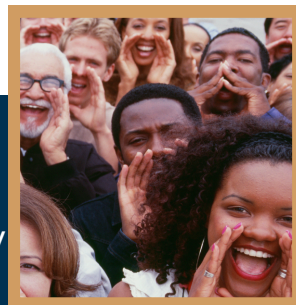
# Educate & Advocate!

Adult Education & Family Literacy Week

## How to Launch a Flood the Hill Event at Your State Capitol

### Overview:

States can mirror COABE's national effort by organizing their own Flood the Hill events at state capitols during AEFL Week to raise awareness and connect with state legislators.



**Why should our state host a Flood the Hill event?**—Because decisions about adult education funding and policy aren't only made in D.C.—they're made in your statehouse, too. Hosting a Flood the Hill event at your capitol is one of the most visible and impactful ways to:



Build relationships  
with state  
legislators



Empower learners  
to become  
powerful advocates



Celebrate the  
success of your  
programs



Put real faces  
behind the numbers



Protect and increase  
state-level funding

# Step-by-Step Guide

Below is an outline of key steps in the process. For more details, click on the headers.

## 1. Form a Planning Team

- ☐ Include learners, educators, and association leaders
- ☐ Assign roles (e.g., scheduler, communications, logistics)

## 2. Pick a Date During AEFL Week

- ☐ Choose a weekday when your state legislature is in session
- ☐ Consider aligning with proclamations or resolutions

## 3. Schedule Meetings with State Legislators

- ☐ Prioritize members of education, workforce, or appropriations committees
- ☐ Include both district reps and key influencers
- ☐ Use COABE's templates or call scripts

## 4. Recruit Advocates

- ☐ Invite students, alumni, & staff from adult ed programs statewide
- ☐ Offer basic advocacy training in advance

## 5. Prepare Materials and Stories

- ☐ Use COABE's AEFL Week toolkit
- ☐ Include local success stories, program stats, and economic impact data
- ☐ Print materials or prepare digital leave-behinds

## 6. Coordinate the Capitol Visit

- ☐ Wear matching shirts or buttons to show unity
- ☐ Arrange a group photo or press opportunity
- ☐ Share live updates on social media with COABE hashtags

## 7. Follow Up

- Send thank-you notes to lawmakers
- Share a post-event recap on social media or in your state newsletter
- Track any outcomes or commitments from the meetings

## 8. Report Back to COABE

- Share highlights, photos, and metrics (e.g., number of meetings)
- Help inspire other states by contributing to national advocacy stories



*Public servants are often contacted for favors, but less often do people remember to follow up and thank them when they made a difference. Showing your gratitude can build deeper relationships with your representatives and give you yet another point of contact with that office.*

# Form a Planning Team

## Bring key voices to the table

Start by gathering a small, committed team to plan the event. Include a mix of adult learners, educators, alumni, and leaders from your state's adult education association. Learners and alumni offer powerful perspectives and stories, while educators and administrators can help with logistics and relationships.

## Assign clear roles

To keep things moving efficiently, assign each team member a clear responsibility. Suggested roles include:

- **Scheduler:** Handles outreach to legislators and confirms appointments.
- **Communications Lead:** Coordinates press releases, media outreach, and social media before, during, and after the event.
- **Logistics Coordinator:** Manages transportation, group organization, materials, and building access.
- **Advocacy Lead:** Prepares talking points, stories, and guidance for advocates.

## Keep it organized

Set up a shared workspace, e.g., a Google Drive folder or messaging group, to store planning documents, appointment trackers, and contact information. Hold regular check-ins to ensure progress.

### PRO TIP

Not sure who to include? Look to your COABE State Advocate for Adult Education Fellow (SAAEF) or LOCAL Advocate. Email [advocacy@coabe.org](mailto:advocacy@coabe.org) to be connected to trained advocates in your state.

# Pick a Date During AEFL Week

## Choose a strategic date

AEFL Week takes place each year in mid-September (September 14–20, 2025). Choose a weekday during this time when your state legislature is in session. You can check the legislative calendar or call the capitol office to confirm availability.

## Align with official observances

Consider requesting a proclamation from the governor or working with a legislator to introduce a resolution recognizing AEFL Week. Aligning your event with these efforts can boost visibility and legitimacy.



## Start early

The best dates and spaces fill up quickly—begin planning at least 2–3 months in advance.

### PRO TIP

Many state capitols will allow you to reserve space in the capitol at no cost. This provides a central meeting point for all advocates and speakers. The best person to contact will be the capitol hill scheduler. Look at your state capitol website to find more information about your options.

# Schedule Meetings with State Legislators

## Identify key targets

Prioritize legislators who serve on the education, workforce, or appropriations committees, as well as those who represent your local districts. If you're unsure where to begin, COABE or your state association may have recommendations.

## Use COABE resources

Use COABE's sample meeting request letters, email templates, and phone call scripts to make outreach easier (see [AEFL Week Toolkit](#)). Be respectful, concise, and clear about your reason for the visit.

## Clarify your goals

When requesting meetings, explain that you are organizing a group of adult learners, educators, and supporters to raise awareness about the importance and impact of adult education. Let them know what issues or policies you'll be discussing and offer a few time options for scheduling.

## Track appointments

Use a simple spreadsheet to track who has been contacted, meeting times, room numbers, and any confirmations. This will help avoid confusion on the day of the visit.

### PRO TIP

Gather information from attendees so you can ensure that there is someone from the legislator's district in the meeting. Legislators are more willing to meet with constituents because they have the power to vote for that legislator. Additionally, that attendee can speak to the local issues affecting the legislator's district.

# Recruit Advocates

## Reach across your state

Invite adult learners, graduates, instructors, tutors, and staff from programs across the state. Use email, social media, newsletters, and partner networks to spread the word.

## Offer preparation and encouragement

Many participants may be advocating for the first time. Provide a short virtual or in-person training ahead of the event to go over:

- What to expect at the Capitol
- How to share a personal story in 1–2 minutes
- Advocacy basics and respectful engagement with lawmakers

## Coordinate attendance

If participants are traveling from different areas, help coordinate carpools, buses, or meet-up times to ensure everyone arrives together and on time.

### PRO TIP

Did you know that COABE can send a message for you to all COABE members in your state? We are happy to partner with state associations to amplify marketing efforts and make your event a success! Ask your state association leadership to email [advocacy@coabe.org](mailto:advocacy@coabe.org) with wording, images, and logo for the outreach email.

# Prepare Materials and Stories

## Use strong, simple messages

Leverage [COABE's AEFL Week Toolkit](#) to create materials that speak to the power and outcomes of adult education. Keep your core message clear:

Adult education changes lives and communities—and it needs support.

## Include local impact

Equip each team or participant with:

- A short handout with local program statistics, success stories, and economic data.
- A personalized student or alumni story that legislators will remember.
- A clear ask, such as continued or increased state investment in adult education.

## Plan for access

Print materials in advance or prepare digital leave-behinds with QR codes to online documents. Make sure each legislator receives something they can keep and review later.

### PRO TIP

At each office, pick up a business card (legislator or staffer) so you have a direct email address. Follow up on the meeting by sending a summary of what was discussed, answers to any questions that couldn't be answered at the time, and digital versions of all printed materials.



# Coordinate the Capitol Visit



## Dress for unity

Have participants wear matching shirts, buttons, or lanyards that represent your state association or adult education programs. This visual unity reinforces the message that adult education is a strong, organized movement.

## Assign team leaders

Divide advocates into small teams for each legislator meeting. Assign a leader to keep track of schedules, help guide conversation, and ensure each participant has a chance to speak if they want to.

## Plan visibility moments

Schedule a group photo on the Capitol steps or in the rotunda. If possible, invite a lawmaker to join. Consider notifying local press or submitting a short media advisory in advance.

## Use social media

Encourage attendees to post during the event using COABE's hashtags, such as #AEFLWeek and #AdultEdMatters. Share photos, quotes, and reflections to show the impact of your visit in real time.

## PRO TIP

Contact local businesses to see if they will sponsor your shirts. Some print shops may offer nonprofit discounts for state associations. Leverage your networks to minimize the cost to participants and your state association.

# Follow Up

## Close the loop

Send thank-you notes or emails to all the lawmakers and staff you met with. Personalize them with a reference to your conversation or story.

This follow-up can build lasting relationships with legislators.

## Share your event

Post a recap in your program newsletter, association website, or social media channels. Include photos, key highlights, and outcomes. This shows your network that the event had value and encourages future participation.

## Document next steps

Did any legislators commit to visiting a local program or joining a caucus? Did you identify any new champions? Record outcomes so your team can build on them in the future.

### PRO TIP

Know your next step. Are you looking for an adult education champion? Are you focusing on members of certain committees? Identifying a strategy will help you make the greatest impact. If you need help strategizing, email [advocacy@coabe.org](mailto:advocacy@coabe.org) to request a consultation meeting with COABE staff.

# Report Back to COABE

## Be part of the national story

COABE collects stories, data, and images from advocacy events nationwide to amplify the impact of AEFL Week and to support ongoing advocacy efforts at the federal level.

### What to share:

- Number of meetings and participants
- Highlights, quotes, or media coverage
- Photos of your group in action
- Any legislative follow-up or commitments



### Where to send it

Share your recap, stories, and images with COABE at [advocacy@coabe.org](mailto:advocacy@coabe.org). We would love to feature your event in an upcoming Public Policy Pulse newsletter and amplify in our many advocacy communities.

## PRO TIP

Add your event to our national 2025 Padlet to showcase what your state has accomplished! You can add the event yourself or email [padlet@coabe.org](mailto:padlet@coabe.org).