

The **Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter** is launching a **Virginia State Alzheimer's Ambassador Program**. This initiative is designed to enhance the Chapter's government relations efforts through personal contact with members of the Virginia legislature who serve residents of the Chapter's service territory. Ambassadors will build relationships with elected officials and their staff and encourage their support of policies which address improved support for individuals with Alzheimer's and those impacted by this devastating disease.

Virginia State Alzheimer's Ambassadors

Virginia State Alzheimer's Ambassadors are grassroots volunteers selected to serve as the main point of in-district contact for their state senator or state delegate within the Virginia General Assembly.

State Ambassadors play a critical role in helping the Alzheimer's Association meet its state legislative goals in Virginia. They work directly with Association staff to implement state advocacy activities at the community level. State Ambassadors may be asked to provide additional support to our national Alzheimer's Association Ambassadors, who are volunteers doing similar work with members of Congress from Virginia.

This experience is deeply rewarding and educational. Contributing skills and energy to this important local task will have statewide implications as we work toward our vision of a world without Alzheimer's.

STATE ALZHEIMER'S AMBASSADOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Establish and maintain relationships with assigned state legislators and their staff

State Ambassadors are responsible for scheduling regular in-district meetings with their member (or staff) to build rapport and request action on the Association's legislative priorities. These meetings are a critical step in strengthening the Association's relationship with state legislators. State Ambassadors will be given talking points on key issues and preparation in advance of these activities.

Sample Actions

- Send letter of introduction to assigned elected officials
- Request to be included in district mailings to constituents and to receive notices of local meetings/hearings conducted by member
- Participate in district office visits (four visits minimum per year)
- Track and attend members' town hall meetings and other open community events

II. Serve as a volunteer spokesperson for public meetings and media opportunities

Communicating our message to the public is a critical tool in promoting our advocacy issues. Messages carried by State Ambassadors can influence the legislators and the public to support our issues. As an advocacy spokesperson, the State Ambassador will, under guidance from the National Capital Area Chapter's Director of Communications, participate in opportunities to speak at public meetings and with local media in their community. Communications training and message points will be provided by the Director of Communications.

Sample Actions

- Speak at town halls and other community meetings and events
- Submit letters-to-the-editor to local media
- Participate in media interviews as needed
- Post comments on local media websites

III. Recruit other constituents from within the targeted district to engage in grassroots advocacy efforts

The State Ambassador's role is not to do everything, but is often to facilitate the advocacy work of others interested in supporting our priorities. Encouraging others to participate in local advocacy activities demonstrates to legislators the diverse faces of Alzheimer's, the needs of the local community and the political power of our advocates.

Sample Actions

- Respond to and share all Action Alerts with others during Association-sponsored activities (Support Groups, Speaker's Bureau, Education and/or Fundraising events) or at work, with neighbors, family and friends, etc.
- Recruit and train additional volunteers to attend at least four in-district visits per year
- Attend at least two Association-sponsored advocacy events per year, including at least two hours as an advocacy recruitment volunteer at a Walk To End Alzheimer's event

IV. Report district activities and outcomes to National Public Policy and Advocacy staff

State Ambassadors are a pivotal link in the Association's chain of communication with state legislators. Reports of real constituent interactions in-district can provide the key to open conversations with and/or compel action by members. State Ambassadors will maintain a log of district activities, staff contacts, and member commitments and share data upon request by Chapter staff.

Sample Actions

- Participate in State Ambassador trainings and conference calls
- Inform Chapter staff of requests for clarification/information from legislators and or their staff within 48 hours of contact

TERM & TIME COMMITMENT

State Ambassadors must be able to commit to a one year term. Terms are renewable through an annual application process.

State Ambassadors should expect to spend an average of two hours per month working in this role, more during the state legislative session and fewer when the legislature is not in session.

CHAPTER OFFICE SUPPORT

The Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter's State Ambassador Program is managed by the Association's Virginia Public Policy Director and the Chapter's public policy and communications staff. These individuals will provide relevant information, trainings and ongoing updates to support the work of deputies and empower them to make a significant difference in their community.

Chapter trainings/services include:

- Individualized orientation to the Association's relationship to/knowledge of target and on-going updates of relevant contacts.
- Continuous professional development – regular teleconference calls to update State Ambassadors on state policy progress and advocacy tasks. In-person training at least once annually.
- Ongoing direct phone, email, and in-person support (when possible)
- District media/community outreach advocacy support, including written materials as needed, e.g. sample letters to the editor.
- Access to Association materials and information pertaining to all aspects of Alzheimer's disease