



STATE-LED MEDIA TOURS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACTE



BACKGROUND INFO

- Media tours can be anywhere from 2-4 days, depending on how many schools you'd like to visit – be sure to include all levels and as many content areas as possible – middle and high schools, area CTE centers, community colleges, possibly even work-based learning sites. Typically, you will visit two sites per day (one in the morning and one after lunch), and most states have done a full four-day visit, Monday-Thursday.
- Sites need to be close enough together to ensure adequate travel time, particularly within the day. Longer distances can be traveled in the evening between sites, but still should be reasonable. In larger states, you may want to pick one geographic area to focus on for the media tour.
- The majority of the planning responsibility is on the state ACTE affiliate – it's quite a bit of work, but the state affiliate has the closest relationships with the sites and schools to be visited and they are best able to identify potential tour stops and arrange logistics.
- The state should designate a coordinator for the tour to be the point person for all logistics. This could be the state executive director or another state leader. Some states form a committee with additional members as well to divide the work.
- The state coordinator can then work with ACTE Media Relations and Advocacy Associate Jori Houck, jhouck@acteonline.org, to coordinate media activities.
- The tour can work in a number of ways, but at each stop you should be sure to incorporate visits to several programs so that guests can see students in action, and time for questions from attendees. Two of the more common visit structures include:
 - Beginning with a short presentation or panel discussion to provide an overview of the school, CTE programs and purpose of the tour, then escorting guests on a tour of the selected programs.
 - Only touring programs, but building in time for informal conversations with guests and opportunities for them to interact with teachers and students in each program.
- If a presentation is offered, it could involve school administrators, state and national ACTE leaders, students, teachers, business partners or other community leaders, either speaking individually or as a panel. Regardless of structure, this part should be kept to no more than an hour – and shorter if possible, so that there is still time for in-depth classroom visits. One drawback of this approach is that if there are only a few guests in attendance, it can be a bit awkward to go through the whole process. If more focus is placed on touring programs, you can have more informal conversations with policymakers and press throughout the visit. They can still ask questions and get the material they need for their story (if no press attend, you can still tour and take photos for the blog and social media). This option often allows for more time to visit programs, is a more relaxed environment, and allows for better dialogue between the press and policymakers that do attend.
- If you are visiting multiple schools or programs, try to break up the day with a lunch or coffee break. Even better if lunch is prepared by one of the schools!

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STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Set the schedule:** This includes planning the logistics of the tour, coordinating what schools/programs to visit, and determining what will be seen at each school. It involves working closely with each actual school to see what their program offerings are on a given day, when classes are scheduled, etc. It is a good idea to also connect with your state CTE agency staff for recommendations and support as you start planning the tour, as well as consulting with your state ACTE leadership.
- **Make travel plans:** The state is responsible for planning the route for the visit, booking any necessary hotel rooms, renting a car or arranging for individuals to drive between sites, etc.
- **Work with the schools to try and recruit media attendance:** ACTE will send out press releases and try to contact local media, but often individual schools have the best contacts with local media, and the schools are most effective in recruiting media to the event.
- **Invite local/state policymakers:** Invites should also be sent to state and local officials who represent the given area of each tour location. Individual schools may also help with this, particularly around local policymakers, such as their school board members, workforce or economic development agency leaders, etc.
- **Attend visits:** States normally have at least one, but often two, official representatives attending the entire tour (generally the people that were most involved in organizing it), and also may identify other state leaders, such as ACTE board members, who live in the area of specific visits to attend as well.
- **Dedicate resources:** States should be prepared to cover expenses for their own leadership traveling on the tour, including any necessary hotels, costs of a rental car and gas or mileage reimbursement, and meals during the time of the tour. If you would like someone from national ACTE to attend, the state association is responsible for their flight, hotel accommodations, and meals as well.

ACTE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide guidance and advice on scheduling and program selection.
- Review any materials prepared by the state, such as agendas.
- Create press lists based on the area of each tour location. While it's still best for the local schools to reach out to their media contacts, ACTE will use our media software to send press releases and try to recruit local media.
- Prepare media advisory for the tour and distribute to national press lists.
- Follow-up with reporters after media advisory to try to secure attendance.
- Give remarks at any events, if the school/state ACTE would like, given the format of the visit.
- Speak to any reporters or policymakers present about federal CTE policy and any national trends.
- Write a series of blogs for ACTE's CTE Policy Watch blog about the tour, featuring information from each location and photos.
- Post photos on ACTE's public policy Twitter accounts throughout the tour.
- Potentially write an article for Techniques magazine to recap the tour.

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CHOOSING DATES

- It is important to consider a number of factors when choosing dates for the tour, such as the academic calendar in your state (schools must be in session!), previously scheduled state association events, public events that will draw away media attention (such as election day or the opening of your state legislature – even a big local festival or rivalry football game), weather, and your leaderships' capacity to participate.
- We have had good luck with tours in late September to late October, or in the Spring (but avoiding spring break and CTSO events).
 - With the fall dates in particular, federal and state legislators are often back in their states and districts and able to attend themselves or send local representatives.
 - Note: In an election year, it can be challenging to have policymakers in attendance if the tour is scheduled during the campaign season.

SO WHY DO IT?

- Media tours get members excited about showcasing their programs.
- Media tours help elected officials to understand more about CTE in your state and nationwide.
- Media tours are great media exposure for CTE and your state ACTE affiliate!



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