



*Together our voices are stronger,
advocating for greater access to
addiction prevention, treatment and
recovery support in Texas.*

Recovery Day at the Capitol 2025

To Register:

<https://recoverypeople.org/advocates/recovery-day-at-the-capitol/>

Date: February 25, @ 7:45 AM



Today's Objectives:

- Preparing for Recovery Day at the Capitol
- Etiquette and Office Visits
- Policy Priorities for SUD



Be Prepared!

- Check the weather
- Dress for success, but wear comfortable shoes
- Pack business cards, if you have them
- If you are not early, you are late!
- Account for Austin traffic
- Self care
 - ◆ Dietary needs!



What will the morning entail?

7:30 AM - Capitol Visitors Parking Garage

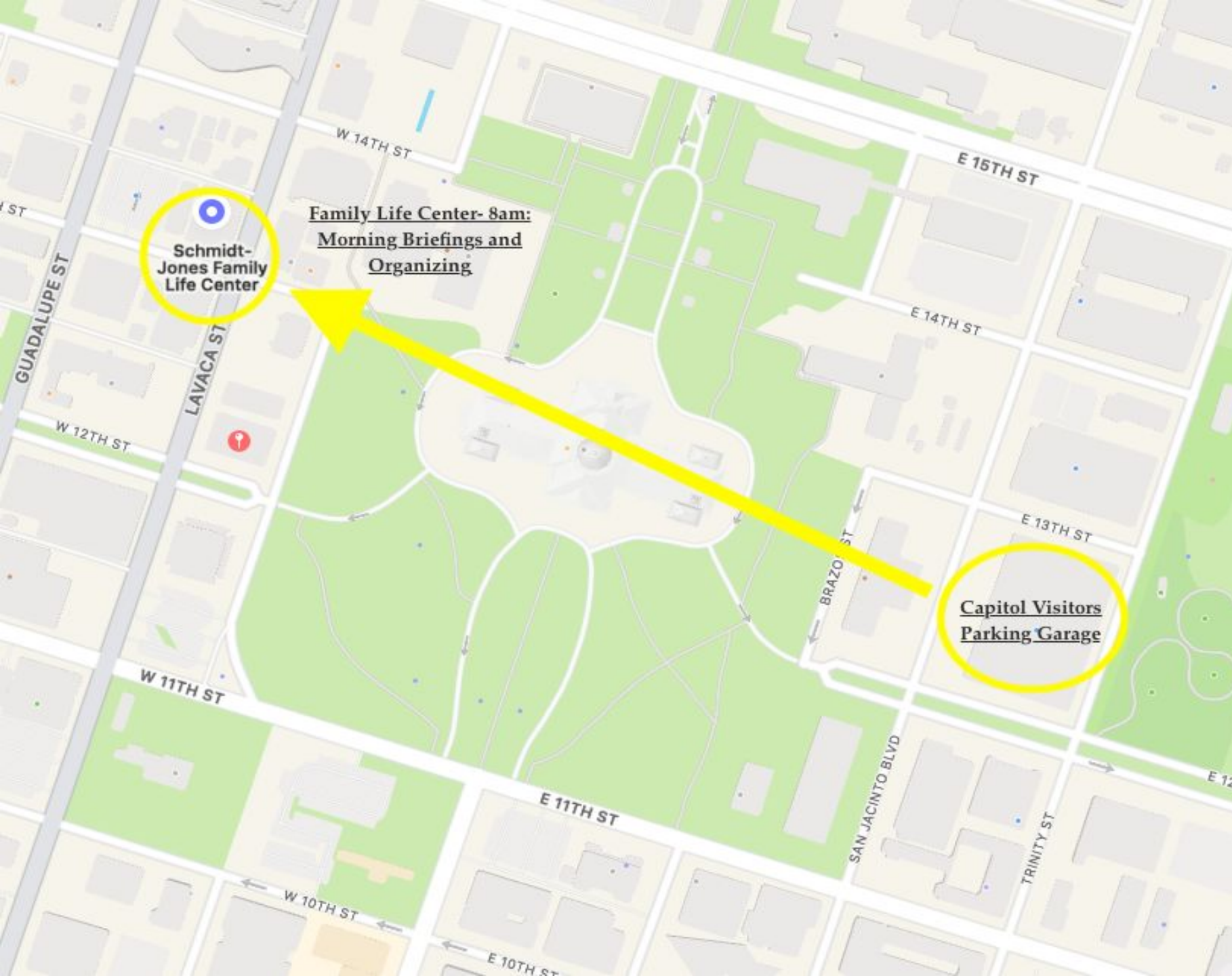
7:45 AM - Check in opens; light breakfast

Location: Schmidt-Jones Family Life Center

1300 Lavaca St., Austin, TX 78701

8:00 AM - Briefing begins

10:00 AM - Leave for the Capitol





Morning Agenda:

Location: Schmidt-Jones Family Life Center
1300 Lavaca St., Austin, TX 78701

8:00 AM - What is the morning agenda?

- Call to order
- Welcome to Capitol
- Logistics and overview of the day
- Bill review

10:00 AM - Leave for the Capitol

Legislative Visits

The Reason You Came to the Capitol!

- During the morning briefing, you will be given information about your legislative visits.
- You will make visits as a group by Senator and Representative Districts.
- A team lead has/will schedule appointments for your group (if there is more than one constituent).
- You will have one appointment with offices of your Representative and another with your Senator.
- Meetings with staff are just as effective as meeting with Legislators.



Etiquette for Office Visits

- Go to your scheduled appointments
- Don't be late- you have 15 mins
- Be respectful of their time
- Be mindful of "dropping in"
- Don't crowd the office (too many people); you may need to wait outside the office.
- Singleness of purpose- we advocate for SUD prevention, treatment and recovery on RDC
- Be prepared with your written materials
- Allow the staffer time to speak and ask questions
- Start with general introductions- this isn't a marketing call!



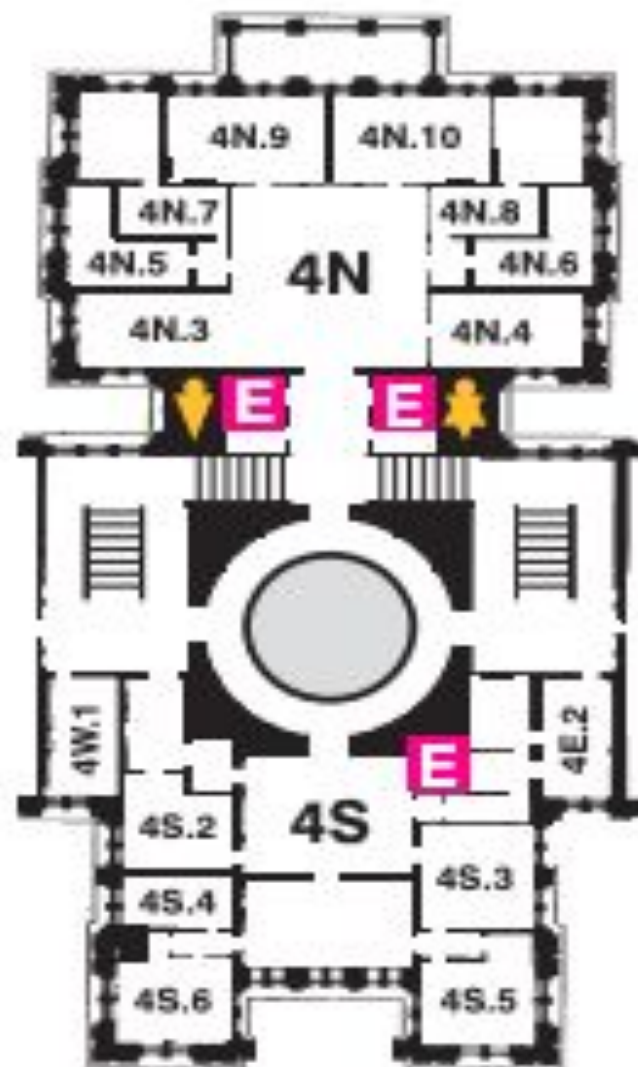
Legislative Visits

How to get to your appointments

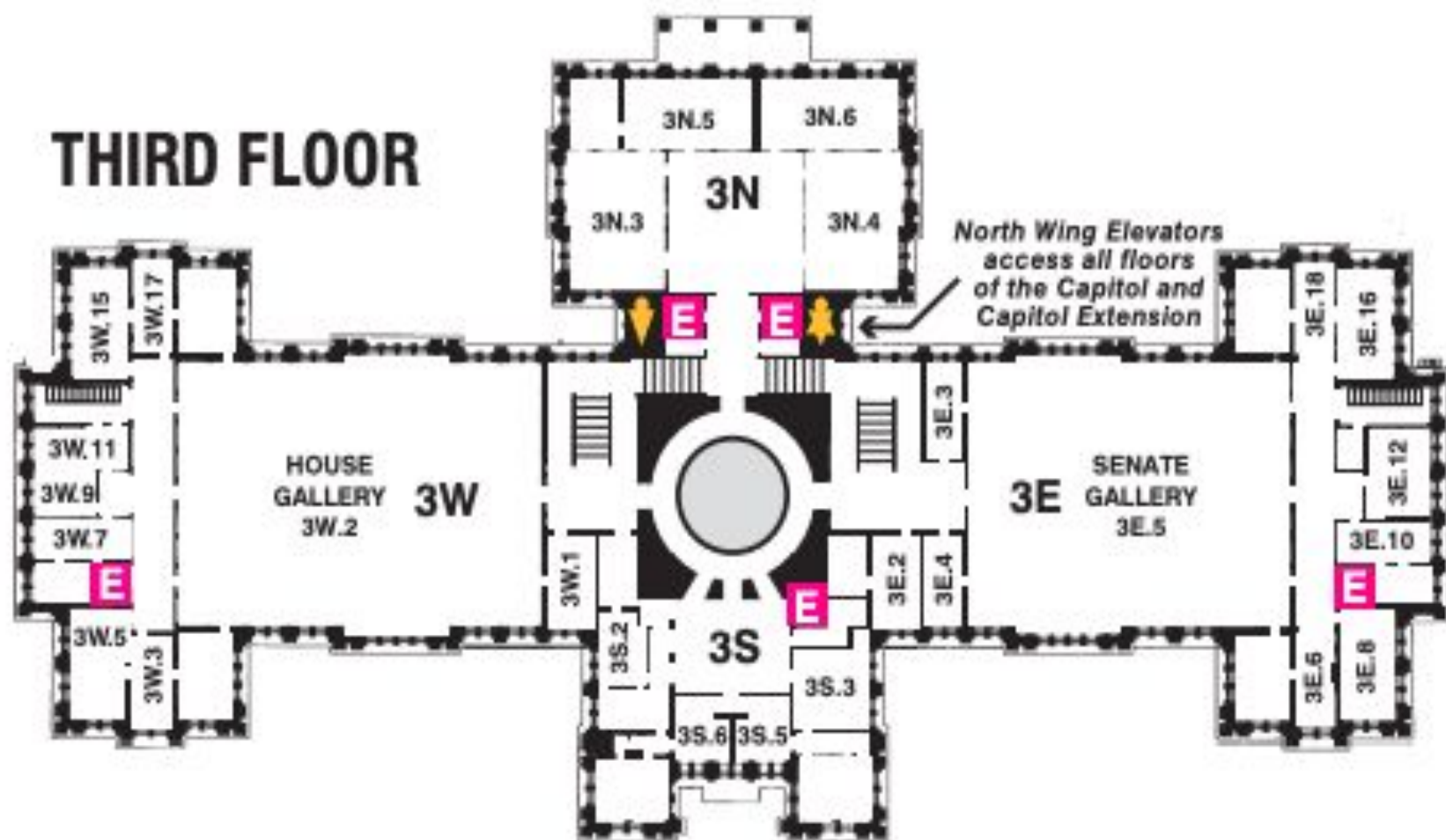
- Offices are located across 7 different floors, some above ground and some below.
- You may want to take the stairs, when the elevators are too busy.
- Appointments may be in the office. If not enough room in the office, may have scheduled an alternative room or may meet in the hallway.
 - ◆ When scheduling, communicate size of your group.

Floor	Room Number Example
4th floor	4N.10
3rd floor	3S.15
2nd floor	2W.12
1st floor	1E.20
Ground (basement) Sub 0	GW.4
Extension Sub 1	E1.234
Extension Sub 2	E2.502

FOURTH FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



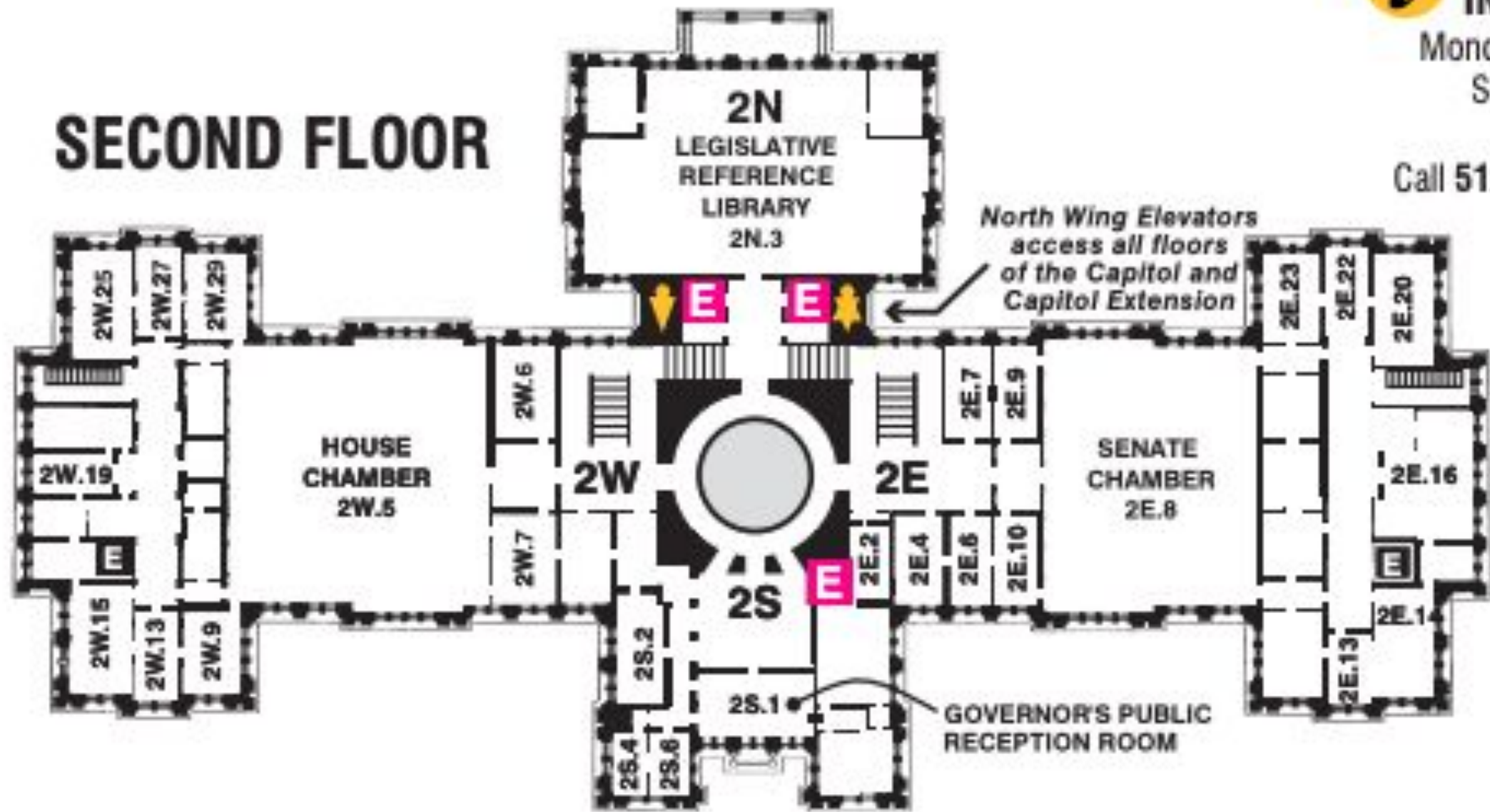
INFORM

Monday - Fr

Saturday

Sunda

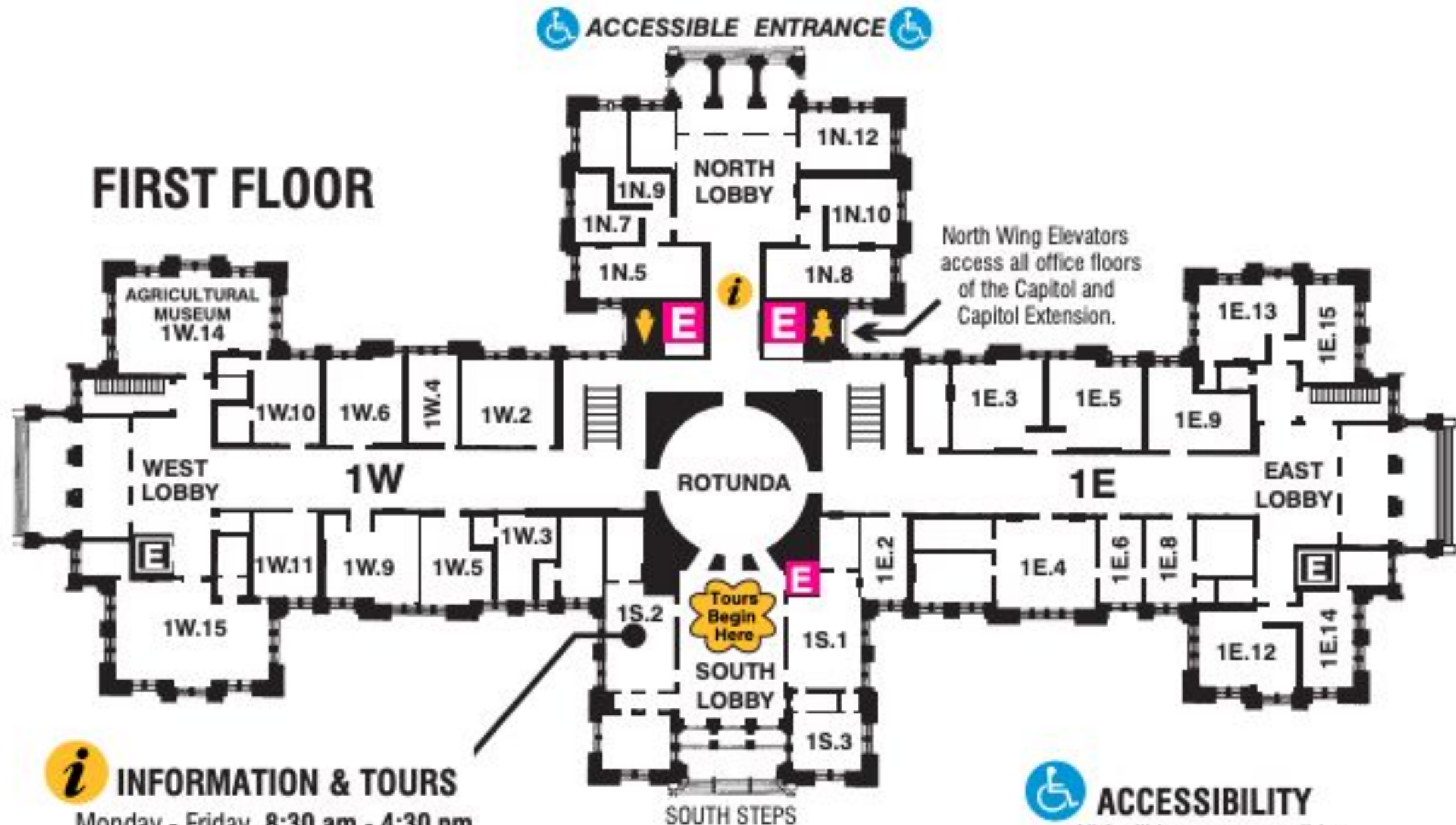
Call 512.463.1





North Wing Elevators
access all floors
of the Capitol and
Capitol Extension


GOVERNOR'S PUBLIC
RECEPTION ROOM

FIRST FLOOR



 ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE 

North Wing Elevators access all office floors of the Capitol and Capitol Extension.

 **INFORMATION & TOURS**
Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

 **ACCESSIBILITY**
All facilities are accessible

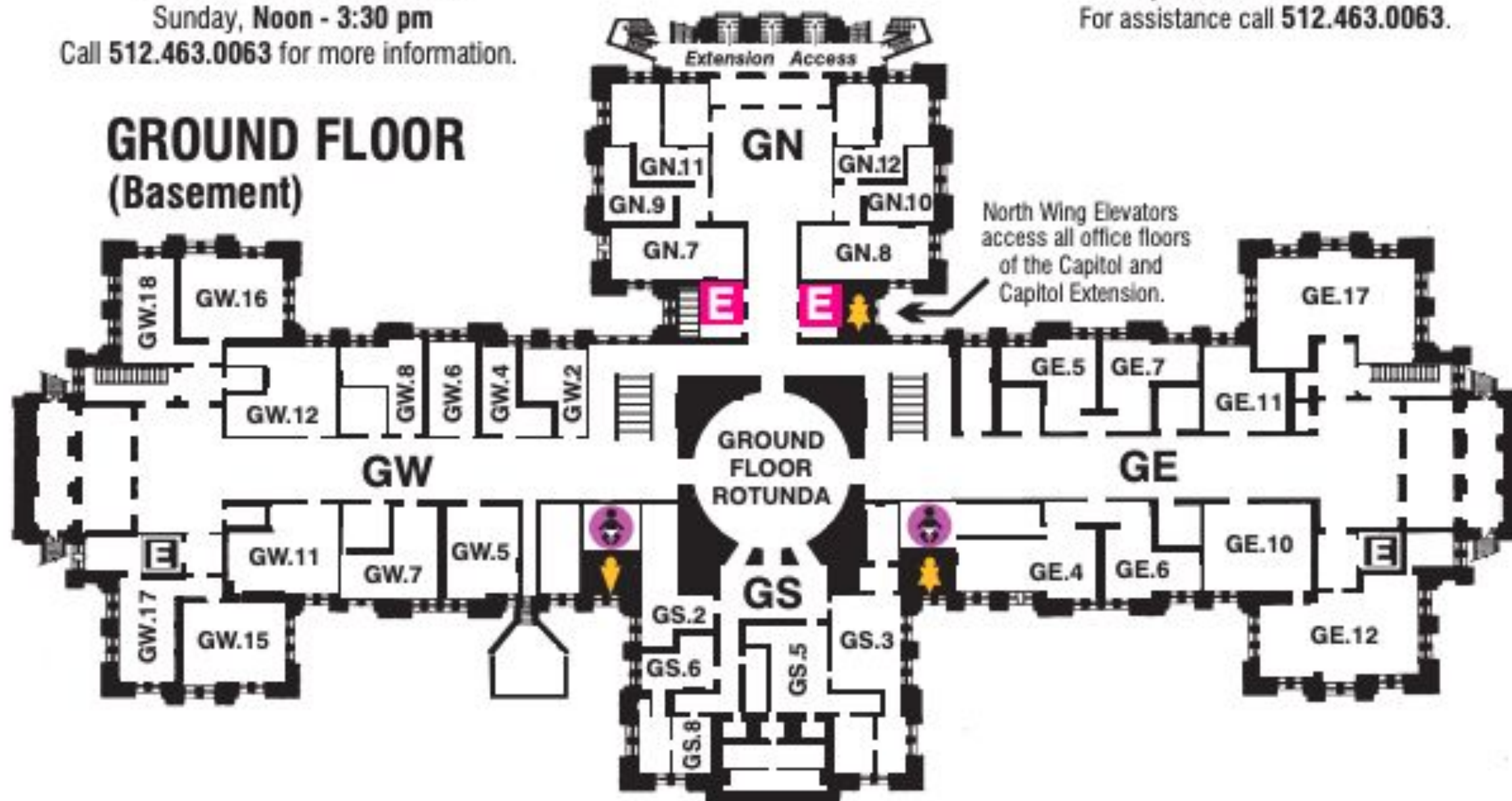
Saturday, 9:00 am - 9:00 pm

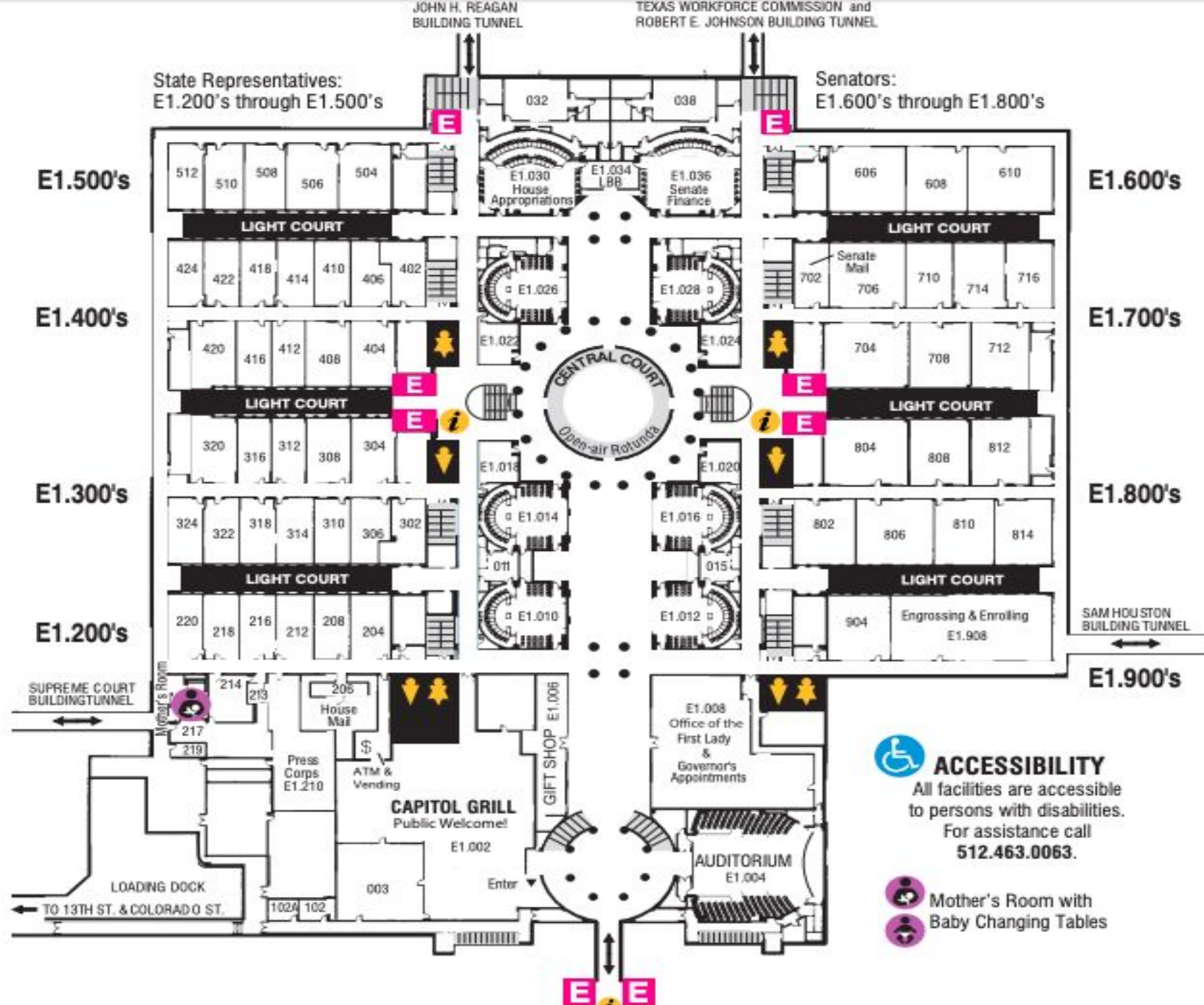
Sunday, Noon - 3:30 pm

Call 512.463.0063 for more information.

to persons with disabilities.
For assistance call 512.463.0063.

GROUND FLOOR (Basement)



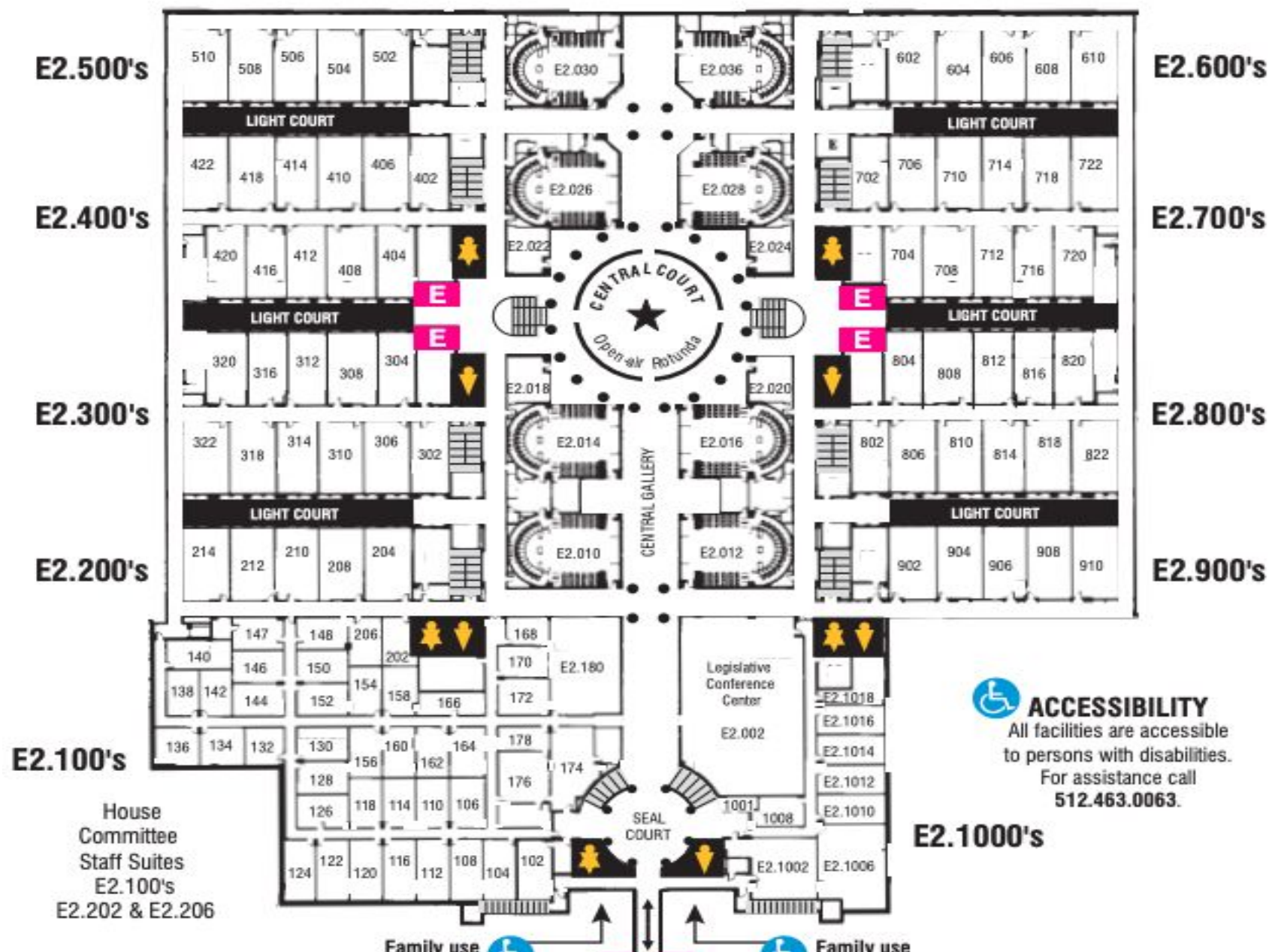


 **ACCESSIBILITY**
 All facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. For assistance call 512.463.0063.

 Mother's Room with Baby Changing Tables

EXTENSION SECOND FLOOR (E2)

State Representatives Offices
E2.200 through E2.900's



 **ACCESSIBILITY**
All facilities are accessible
to persons with disabilities.
For assistance call
512.463.0063.

House
Committee
Staff Suites
E2.100's
E2.202 & E2.206

Family use  Family use 

Legislative Visits

Be prepared, Be intentional

- Before stepping into the appointment, identify who in your group is responsible for delivering each of the talking points.
 - ◆ Prevention
 - ◆ Treatment
 - ◆ Recovery services
- Expect 15 min - be brief, be smart, be gone!
- Make the **ASK**. Ask them to support or oppose legislation.
- Make the offer to:
 - ◆ Be a resource
 - ◆ Connect them with answers
 - ◆ Stay connected after Session



Legislative Priorities

89th Legislative Session



Appropriations- (background)

The state budget is the only bill the Legislature must pass each session. Texas prepares and passes a 2-year (biennium) budget which follows a detailed 2-yr preparation process. Work on the next biennial budget begins shortly after the current budget is passed.

- “Safety-net” SUD prevention treatment & recovery support services are funded through the Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) budget.
- Approximately 80% of HHSC’s SUD funds are from federal dollars. 20% are general revenue (state) dollars
- Each state agency submits a budget, Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR), in August before the Session begins.
- The LAR has two components: (1) base-level request; and (2) requests for Exceptional Items (budget increases) in addition to the baseline request.
- Agency budgets are developed into an appropriations bill which is divided into 10 Titles. HHSC’s budget resides in Title II. Health and Human Services accounts for 32% of state expenditures

Appropriations

To secure increased funding, must go through Exceptional Item (EI) process in an agency's Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR).

- November 2023, stakeholders urged HHSC to prioritize expanding SUD for FY 26-27 LAR.
- No SUD-related Exceptional Items were included.
- Next step is through legislative recommendations in the Appropriations Bill, Budget Riders, or passing legislation with a fiscal note.

Recommendations:

- Increase Residential Treatment Rates by 30%
- Additional prevention funds to support increased demand for school & community fentanyl education programs. (\$16 million total for the biennium)
- Allocate \$4.3 million over the biennium to implement and administer recovery housing accreditation programs

Recovery Housing Expansion Funding

Texas offers limited start-up support, training, and technical assistance for recovery homes, restricting access to accredited recovery housing. HB 299 (88R) established voluntary accreditation criteria to prevent overregulation and predatory practices while ensuring quality and informed choice. Expanding accredited recovery housing could save millions in public spending while providing safe, supportive environments. The Substance Use Block Grant (SUBG) funds 70% of all SUD programs in Texas, but since 2012, SUBG and TTOR funds have primarily supported the expansion of level I recovery homes, leaving level II and III recovery housing underfunded.

Recommendation:

- Request \$4.3 million in General Revenue over the biennium for HHSC to implement and administer accreditation programs for Level II-III recovery homes, as authorized by HB 299 (88R). Support a budget rider directing HHSC to allocate these funds based on best practice standards.
- Includes:
 - financial assistance for accreditation,
 - rental assistance for residents,
 - expansion stipends for underserved populations (exp. parents with children, veterans, rural areas).

Expand Access to Drug Checking Supplies

In 2023, Texas reported 5,093 drug-related deaths, with 43% linked to fentanyl poisoning and the growing presence of Xylazine increasing fatal risks. As the illicit drug supply evolves, drug checking tools like testing strips are proven, lifesaving overdose prevention measures. However, Texas law classifies these supplies as paraphernalia, making their possession and distribution illegal. The 89th Legislature should remove drug testing equipment from this definition, allowing individuals and communities to detect multiple contaminants and enhance harm reduction efforts.

Bills filed:

- SB 540 (Johnson)- Relating to the use, possession, delivery, or manufacture of testing equipment that identifies the presence of a substance listed in Penalty Group 1-B. (Identical: SB 362-Eckhardt, HB 253- Talarico)
- HB 2567 (Goodwin)- Relating to equipment used or intended for use in testing or analyzing a controlled substance.

Parity

Federal laws require SUD and MH conditions be treated “at parity” (no different from) other medical and surgical conditions.

Insurance companies continue to impose restrictions on coverage for individuals.

Bills filed draw on the *Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Strategic Plan*

HB 1142 (Turner) – Relating to health benefit plan coverage for treatment of chemical dependency.

- Would require state employee health plans to comply with federal parity law (state government, UT & TAMU employees, retired teachers, and teachers)
- Brings state law into better compliance with federal law.

HB 2528 (Bucy) - Relating to health benefit plan coverage of prescription drugs for opioid and SUD

- Prohibits commercial health plans from requiring prior authorization on prescriptions for OUD/SUD medications

Abuse Neglect and Exploitation Training

Passed in 1993, SB 210 (73R) requires residential mental health facilities, treatment centers, and hospitals providing comprehensive medical rehabilitation to conduct at least **eight hours of annual in-service training** on identifying patient abuse, neglect, and unethical or illegal conduct. The training topics are strictly outlined in the MOU and rarely change.

Recommendation:

SB 626 (Flores) - relating to inservice training on identifying abuse, neglect, and illegal, unprofessional, and unethical conduct in certain healthcare facilities.

- Update requirements by maintaining the initial eight-hour training for new employees while reducing the annual refresher to three hours, ensuring continued education while reducing unnecessary burden.

Patient Solicitation

Legislation passed in the 1990s (SB 205 & SB 210, 73R) prohibits any type of remuneration for patient referrals but, since then, the marketplace has changed, and laws have become outdated and forgotten and a new wave of patient brokering has arisen across the nation and in Texas.

Texas needs to update current statute to broaden application, reflect new technologies, and implement a formalized reporting mechanism.

Recommendation:

Working to have our bill from last 2 sessions refiled. Will update with bill number.

- Updates types of facilities to include current day language
- Updates types of marketing mechanisms to include current technology (internet)
- Establish a task force to study and make recommendations to prevent and stop patient exploitation and deceptive business practices
- Requires mental health and substance use treatment facilities to clearly distinguish between the marketing activities of the facility and its clinical functions
- Increases fines and penalties for engaging in brokering, deceptive and fraudulent business practices

Establish Language for Peer Recovery Organizations

A Peer Recovery Organization is a non-profit organization that is managed and governed by members of the local community who identify as recovering from a substance use disorder or mental health condition. Their central focus is on the delivery of peer support services, and they provide resources inside and outside the local community to increase the prevalence and quality of long term recovery for people with substance use and mental health challenges.

Recommendation: establish a definition and parameters of peer recovery organizations (PRO's)

- Define peer recovery organization in statute
- PRO's are non-profit organizations that:
 - 51% governed and operated by persons recovering from a substance use disorder or mental health condition or affected family members;
 - deliver peer support services and provide resources inside and outside the local community
- Direct state agencies to identify and submit a report regarding potential funding sources in September of even numbered years.

Note:

The last day for filing is March 14th, so we still have more to come!

Between now and RDC

- Look up your district map
- Why do these issues matter in your district?
 - ◆ What do you relate to?
 - ◆ What examples do you can bring to discussion?
- If you haven't scheduled your appointment, do it ASAP!
- Send appointment information to Sherri Layton. Email: slayton@lahacienda.com



Thinking beyond RDC

- Stay connected!
- Track bills through the process.
- Make calls or send emails in support or opposition.
- Hearings:
 - ◆ Watch online
 - ◆ Register in support or opposition
 - ◆ Submit written testimony
 - ◆ Provide oral testimony



Questions?



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