

Lobbying Tips

A r r a n g i n g t h e M e e t i n g

- For DC Congressional visits, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected with your Member's office. Other officials should have contact information on their websites.
- Ask to speak to the scheduler for the official.
- When you speak to the scheduler, explain that you are a constituent, the purpose of the meeting you are requesting, and who will be attending.
- If the official is unavailable, ask to meet with the staff member who deals with the issue you wish to speak about.

P r e p a r i n g f o r t h e M e e t i n g

- Do your homework and know your facts! Prior to the meeting, make sure you understand the issues and are aware of the positions that your officials have taken. Have your predetermined goal for the meeting in mind (e.g., to persuade your official to take a particular stance). Carefully review your message. Know the counter-arguments and be ready to respectfully answer any questions or respond to disagreements.
- If you are attending the meeting with a number of other people, determine who will be the lead, the role each participant will take, and the order in which participants will speak.
- Personalize your pitch. Prepare case examples that illustrate how the issues impact the official's area of jurisdiction.

P R E S E N T A T I O N

- There is not a second chance for a first impression. Make sure your presentation is professional. Arrive on time. Be polite and positive – not confrontational.
- Begin by thanking the official and/or aide for the meeting and taking the time to meet with you.
- Introduce yourselves and remember to exchange business cards.
- Ensure your conversation includes the following key ingredients: 1) background information: do not assume they have basic knowledge; 2) impact assessment: explain how the issue impacts you and your community; 3) specific recommendations: have a concrete outcome to request, such as voting for or against particular legislation.

- Present your concerns succinctly and avoid dominating the dialogue. Find out the concerns of your elected officials and their staff. Remember, the purpose of the meeting is 1) to find out where your elected official stands on your issue; 2) to explain your position; and 3) determine how you might be able to sway your official to take a different course of action or move a piece of legislation.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, and promise to respond with an answer at a later date. Be sure to follow-up with the answer as quickly as possible after the meeting.
- Take notes of the most important points of the meeting and be sure to write down any follow-up assignments.
- Remember that Members of Congress and others do not have eyes and ears in the community the way that you do, but that they rely upon you to express your concerns and help them to form their positions.

F o l l o w i n g - u p o n t h e M e e t i n g

- Write a brief thank you note to the official, thanking the official and any staff for meeting with you. Express your interest in continuing to discuss the topic and others.
- Complete follow-up assignments, such as research, meetings or calls.
- Share relevant information with those with whom you work to enable them to help you persuade the elected official.