



What to Do During a Meeting

Whether a meeting with your member of Congress occurs on Capitol Hill or in your home state, your visit provides an opportunity for you to effectively communicate your message and build a relationship with your member of Congress and his or her staff. The tips below will assist you in conducting a successful meeting.

1. Begin with a Personal Story

- Sharing a personal story helps illustrate your connection to the issue.
- Telling personal stories is an important way to connect with members of Congress and demonstrate why your issues are important.

2. Clearly Identify your “Ask”

- Determine in advance what your ‘ask’ will be so that you can clearly communicate what you want your member of Congress to do.
- Don’t stray away from your ‘ask’ and the message you want to deliver.
- As a constituent, you are very important to your members of Congress. Make sure to explain how your ‘ask’ will effect you and other constituents.

3. Take Notes

- Meetings can go by quickly, by taking notes you are able to keep track of questions you could not answer so you can follow up after the meeting.
- Take note of any response you get from a member of Congress or staff. When you have multiple meetings it can be difficult to remember who said what.

4. Be Flexible

- Do not be offended if you are unable to meet with the member of Congress. You may meet with his or her staff. This is not unusual.
- Meetings can get cut short, always walk into a meeting ready to give a 5 minute pitch that includes your “ask.”
- Congressional offices are small; meetings can take place in the office, but may occur in the hallway or even the cafeteria.

5. Stay Positive and Courteous

- Be honest, candid and relaxed. Use a conversational tone in your presentation.
- Expect a neutral reaction as you will rarely get a firm commitment on the spot. A typical response is that the member of Congress will consider the proposal.
- Never respond to a member of Congress or staff by being argumentative or defensive.
- Express thanks for the opportunity to meet and discuss your issues.

6. Exchange Contact Information

- Make sure to get a business card from congressional staff; you may want to contact them directly in the future or follow up on questions raised during the meeting.
- Make sure to leave your contact information and urge staff to contact you if they have further questions.