

# Top 10 Guidelines for Meeting with Policy Makers

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## 1. Prepare for the meeting

- Get ready to meet with the policy maker by choosing the budget line items and bills that are your priority.

## 2. Beware of Filibusters

- Don't be sidetracked by long introductions and chitchat because before you know it, the meeting will be over.
- Goal is to control agenda (policy maker would prefer to chitchat about mutual friends in district and you prefer to accomplish your agenda)

## 3. Describe Purpose of Meeting/Topic Area

- Limit time period for introductions, but use the opportunity to demonstrate the status of participants (e.g., part of an agency with over 500 members, which has a newsletter, etc.)
- Limit agenda items
- Explain the subject matter of the meeting

## 4. Share Personal Stories and Explain How Personal Stories Relate to Policy Objectives and Policy Options

- Strategically select who will make the presentations
- Get to policy maker's heart before getting to his/her head
- After getting to policy maker's heart, get to his/her head
- Frame the issue – explain why personal story is important by explaining how it impacts others
- Share policy options
- Share support for your position by opinion leaders the policy maker trusts/respects
- Explain the research basis for position
- Offer to provide additional information to staff

## 5. Make Specific Requests of Policy Maker

- Explain why it is important for the policy maker to get involved

- Request specific action by the policy maker (such as: co-sponsor a bill, oppose a certain amendment, speak in support of or in opposition to an amendment, visit a program, give a speech)

## **6. Ask Policy Maker to Articulate His/Her Position and Suggest Follow-Up Activities**

- Ask for the policy maker's position
- Solicit reasons/rationale for position
- Be aware of non-verbal communication of policy maker and staff
- Offer to provide additional information
- Propose a meeting or visit a program in home district

## **7. Ask for a Picture**

- With advance notice, legislators can arrange for a photo – request to take advantage of this perk
- Compose a press release and send it along with photos to local media outlets

## **8. Provide Feedback to Government Affairs Staff (The Arc of Massachusetts, or agency GA Committee)**

- What you said to the policy maker
- The policy maker's response/reaction/concerns
- The response/reaction/concerns of the policymaker's staff
- The non-verbal communications of the policy maker and staff
- What you promised to provide to policy maker and/or staff in response to issues raised

## **9. Write a Thank-You**

- Use thank-you as excuse for summarizing the themes and major points raised at the meeting and your understanding of the policy maker's position or needs (e.g., more information)

## **10. Follow Up**

- Ask Arc Mass. government affairs staff what follow-up is appropriate (781) 891-6270
- Take responsibility to carry out agreed-on tasks