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