

Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials

Here are some tips for making your case with elected officials and their staff members.

Find additional advocacy resources on the Alliance website (aam-us.org/advocacy/resources).

- **Be informed and do your homework.** Read newsletters and legislative & advocacy alerts about issues carefully. Understand both sides of the issues. Whenever possible, know when a bill is in committee, when hearings will be held and who the cosponsors are.
- **Be concise.** The more simply and clearly your position can be explained, the better chance you have of elected officials and their staff members to listening and responding.
- **Be specific.** Know your “ask” and be ready to make it. Do you want the legislator to draft legislation, propose an amendment, vote for a specific bill, comment on an issue?
- **Be honest.** Do not exaggerate to make a point or answer a question, even if you are not sure of the facts. Make plans to follow up later with answers to specific questions.
- **Share personal examples.** Your passion is your advocacy super-power. Your stories about your work puts the issues at hand in memorable, human terms. Personal letters and stories from constituents have a profound impact on legislators and their staff members.
- **Practice your visit.** Practice makes perfect and each meeting is unique. Hone your message by practicing with friends or colleagues before you meet with a legislator or their staff.
- **Be courteous, but firm and confident.** Remember you have a right and duty to communicate with your elected officials. Your passion and conviction for your work and your cause is an asset in your advocacy.
- **Do not argue with legislators or make threats.** If it is clear that they will not support your position, just share the facts and ask them to consider your viewpoint. Even if you disagree, you always want to keep the lines of communication open for discussing future issues.
- **Follow up.** After you meet with an elected official, write a thank you note and remind them of the issues you discussed, share an invitation to an upcoming event, provide any follow-up material you promised during the meeting and reaffirm that you are a resource to them in the community.