

Advocacy Meeting with Elected Officials (or their staff)

CLEAR OBJECTIVES

- what is your ask and why? **ELEVATOR SPEECH is CRITICAL**
- strategize what you hope to get out of the meeting - ideally and at a minimum
- recognize their perspective, past positions or their caucus positions - or personal connection to the issue or you
- establish connections early - then move on to your objective, avoid too much distraction, but allow for some personal dialogue (helping to create a memory!)

FOCUSED

- 1-3 things ONLY- don't give them a huge laundry list

ACCURATE - get it right

- know how "it works" and talk to practitioners/experts; REAL people are credible be fully informed
- don't leave yourself vulnerable to "that isn't really the way it works"

MATERIALS

- have good materials - one pagers are standard practice; no "wall of words" don't be afraid to ask scheduler or LA what is best for their boss and team
- avoid LOTS of paper - and sending electronic versions is good too. Powerpoint presentations are often NOT desirable.
- Offer to provide talking points or additional information

HONEST

- be honest and straightforward - don't tell half-truths or hide things
- they will get the other side of an issue from someone else - it is better to acknowledge the arguments AGAINST your position - NO SURPRISES. TRUST is critical. Don't put others DOWN

SINCERE

- don't be afraid to show your commitment to something, passion is OK - JUST NOT EMOTIONAL

ORGANIZED

- have a lead speaker/ facilitator. Practice the pitch, refer to handout (or not) and have clear handoffs with your team and prepare for questions
- also recognize SETTING or circumstances- at event, in a local office or in Washington office (distractions or impending votes draw them away). Just be prepared and **don't take it personally** if it doesn't go as you expect

VALIDATE

- "Third party verification" is best – business or similar but different organizations or join with regional partners or like organizations (teachers, researchers). Survey partners that have special connection with those you want to advocate with - e.g., chamber of commerce with a business-friendly elected leader