

Meeting Planner for Meeting with Your Member of Congress at Home

This planner is designed to help you organize and conduct effective meetings with your member of Congress or their staff. It will help you consider the elements of each of your meetings and how you will organize your conversation with the legislator or their staff person. Effective meetings with members of Congress require planning, role assignments (if more than one advocate), and impactful personal stories. By following the steps below, advocates can maximize their influence and support legislative change.

Organizing the Meeting

- **Preparation:** Plan the meeting agenda, ensuring it is concise and focused. Familiarize yourself with the issues and asks.
- **Scheduling:** Coordinate a time that accommodates all participants and the legislator.
- **Materials:** Prepare and bring necessary documents, factsheets, and visuals to support your cause.

Greeting and Introductions

Begin by introducing yourself and your group members. Mention that you are constituents and provide a brief personal background.

Example: “Good Morning Senator Smith. Thanks for meeting with us. We’re here from [state or area] to discuss why diabetes funding is crucial for [state] residents and all Americans with diabetes. We’d like to introduce ourselves and then share some brief stories to highlight why this issue matters to us.”

- **Make quick introductions without delving into personal stories at this stage.**

Sharing Stories and Making Asks

Personal stories are a powerful tool in advocacy. They help illustrate the real-world impact of policies and funding decisions. In larger groups, decide which stories to share to most effectively communicate your message. There are two main approaches for this section:

- **Sequential Approach:** Share a story related to an ask, and then make the ask. Repeat for each ask.
 - Story and Ask 1
 - Story and Ask 2
 - Story and Ask 3

OR

- **Combined Approach:** Share multiple stories first, then collectively state why these stories necessitate specific federal policies and funding.
 - Share stories
 - Present Asks 1, 2, and 3 based on the collective stories.

Securing a Commitment

- **From the Legislator:** "Can we count on your support?"
- **From the Staffer:** "What's your boss' position on this?" or "Can we follow up with you to find out the legislator's position?"

Closing

- Leave behind an issues one-pager.
- Express gratitude: “Thank you for your time.”