

How-to: Office Visits

Purpose: Meeting your Member of Congress or their staff serves the vital function of providing offices with information, building relationships, and gaining insight into how to develop effective advocacy strategies. This can ultimately prove to make the pivotal difference in statements and policy positions regarding issues that concern YOU (ex. civil rights, Islamophobia, etc).

Schedule Your Meeting

Due to the high volume of meeting requests, schedules tend to fill up very quickly— especially for in-district meetings with the member. Reach out as soon as possible.

Step 1: Visit your member's website. There you will find a section for scheduling an in-district or DC meeting.	Step 2: Your request should include your name, address, purpose for the visit, and availability.	Step 3: Receive confirmation from a staffer on the day and time your meeting is scheduled for. Be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes early.
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Learn About Your Member

Do they sit on any committees? What is their voting record on the issue you're visiting them about? Have they made public a statement or written op-eds regarding it?

Organize the Meeting

- **The Facilitator:** If you're with a group, pick one person to start the meeting by introducing the group and explain the purpose of the visit. The Facilitator is also in charge of steering the direction of the conversation. They are the point person in case a staffer wants to follow up.
- **Personal Story:** Ensure someone in your group can provide a personal story how the issue has affected their life while living in the state/district. These stories are recorded by staffers and can be used for the members public statements.
- **Specific Issue Points:** Provide data to back up your claims. (Ex. national data on the rise of hate-crimes directed against Muslim communities). Have these available, along with background information, to leave behind with staffers after the meeting. Your main points should fit on one page.
- **The Ask:** Are there bills currently circulating that directly addresses your area of concern (i.e Freedom of Religion Act)? Would you like the member to introduce one? Now is the time to ask what the member's opinion on those bills or the issue at hand is.

Debrief

After leaving the office, review what you learned: How receptive was the staffer/and or member to our concerns? Did they give any indication that they would champion your cause? Should you tweak your message for the next meeting? Do you need to provide more information?

Follow-up

Immediately after the visit, send an email to the staffer thanking them for their time and provide any additional information they requested. **One week** after the visit, follow up on your specific ask. Continue to stay in touch with the staffer in serving as a resource for that issue.