



In-Person Advocacy Meeting Guide

Before the Meeting



Find Your Representative

- Decide which elected official you need to meet with. If you're pushing for a
 - City level initiative: Mayor
 - State-wide initiative: Governor
 - Federal initiative: [State Senators](#) or your [District House Representative](#)



Gather Information

- Based on which elected official suits your cause, do some research on them.
- What are their main areas of interest? Is child nutrition or early childhood development one of them?
- Are they likely to support your initiative?
- If they aren't likely to support your initiative, do they have an area of interest that may overlap with yours?



Determine what your ONE ask will be. An elected official is more likely to support a single initiative rather than multiple at once. Be precise: what feasible action are you asking your elected official to take?



Schedule a Meeting

- Send an email to your elected official, or a member of their staff, requesting a meeting and specifying what your agenda for the meeting (the initiative or problem you wish to discuss).
 - Use our Advocacy Email Templates for [sponsors](#) and [providers](#) as a starting point to get you going.
- You may have to send a message through their website, as their emails are not always publicly available.
- You can also choose to make a quick call instead, as their office phone numbers can typically be found on their websites.



Prepare your Talking Points

Collect your Supporting Materials

- Print out multiple copies of our [CACFP Fact Sheet](#) to give to your elected official and staff during the meeting. Or prepare your own fact sheet that supports your request.
- You may also want to provide a short bio of who you are, how long your organization has been around, and how many children and families you have impacted.

During the Meeting

- Re-introduce yourself and thank your elected official for their time.
- Give everyone in the meeting a fact sheet to reference during the meeting.
- Have your talking points memorized, but not scripted, and get to it. Government officials usually have very tight schedules so you will likely only have 15-30 minutes and your time may be cut short.
- Leave breaks in the conversation for any questions or comments from your elected official.
- End with your ask, emphasizing how it will impact your elected official's constituents.
 - Try to secure a commitment from your official.
- Thank them for their time and ask if you can provide any additional information to help them with their decision.

After the Meeting

- Send an email thanking your elected official for their time and providing any additional information your official asked for.
- If they make a commitment to support your initiative, share it on social media.

FAQs

1) What if my elected official asks a question that I don't have the answer to?

Thank them for their question but tell them that you don't know the answer off the top of your head. Tell them you will provide them with an answer in a follow-up email.

2) What if my elected official doesn't support my cause?

Do not argue with your elected official. Even if you disagree, you always want to keep the lines of communication open for discussing future issues with them. Respond politely and calmly with something like:

I understand your position on this position. However, I and many of your constituents are impacted by this issue. As our elected officials, we are relying on you to support our needs in the fight against childhood hunger and to improve nutrition security. We could really use your support.

I appreciate your time and hope to have future discussions with you. I hope that we can find some common ground on this issue. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need more information or have questions about this issue or upcoming initiatives.