

Guide to Setting up a Legislative Meeting

Things to consider:

- Set a morning meeting – because even if a legislator can't make it a staff person or Legislative Aide probably can be available.
- Set the meeting on Thursday or Friday since legislators are usually in the 'home districts' on these days (check with their offices to confirm dates ahead of time).
- Gather other people to attend but remember that you may never get everyone to be available on particular dates that you choose.
- Set a tight agenda for the meeting.
- Study and review your facts ahead of time. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
 - Don't ramble on and on – stick with the facts.
 - State your case clearly and concisely

What to do:

- Pick a tentative date and call a legislative office to confirm that the date is available and that there is no other legislative conflict.
- Decide what type of meeting you want it to be:
 - An individual meeting with you and the Legislator.
 - A group meeting with you and others who have the same interest.
 - A continental breakfast with tables or chairs set up classroom style. Cake and coffee
 - A Legislative brunch or lunch.
 - In a school, church, the local Arc, public building, etc.
- Set a time.
 - One hour for an individual meeting
 - 2 hours for a larger gathering such as a Legislative Breakfast or Lunch.
- Find and confirm meeting place that is convenient:
 - Individual or small meetings can be held directly at the Legislators office or at your home.
 - Legislative Breakfasts or Lunches can be held at a local community center, the Arcs, UCP, CIL, school or church auditoriums, public buildings, etc.
- Consider contacting a local Arc, UCP, CIL or community group to assist you with preparing materials and sponsoring the vent.

NEXT:

For individual meetings at Legislative offices or your home:

- Phone legislative offices to set up personal meeting at a date that is convenient for you and them. If legislator has commitments, request a legislative aide to be present.
- Send a follow up letter to legislator confirming their attendance with all pertinent info. (Time, date, place.)

For group meetings or Legislative Breakfasts or Lunches in the Community:

- Phone legislative offices to set up meeting, Legislative Breakfast or Lunch at a date that is convenient for you and them. If legislator has commitments, request a legislative aide to be present.
- Send a follow up letter to legislator confirming their attendance with all pertinent info. (Time, date, place.)

For group meetings, Legislative Breakfast's or Lunches Advertise one month before event:

- Send out information flyer to families in your area with details about the event
- Write a short article or press announcement about the event with the date, time, location and purpose of the event – make sure to have a phone number listed where people can register.
- Contact your local newspaper to advertise in the community section.
- Call your local TV station and ask them to advertise on their community calendar.
- Make sure all notices contain an RSVP or you could run into a space/chair problem.
- Canvass families in your area and find at least four people in the area who would be willing to tell their personal stories.
- Contact families who can assist at the meeting to Register and hand out materials

Two weeks before the public meeting:

- Contact legislators who have not responded and remind them about the event. Encourage them to attend.
- Decide on menu or food and who will make/bring/cater the event.
- Call/email PAWL Campaign (1-877-372-WAIT or sstasko@pawaitinglistcampaign.org) with number of legislators and anticipated number of people so material can be mailed.

One week before meeting:

- Call/email PAWL Campaign (1-877-372-WAIT or sstasko@pawaitinglistcampaign.org) Sheila with final numbers if numbers are greater than anticipated.
- Contact media (newspaper/TV) and let them know about your event. Send or fax them a Press announcement. Request a reporter/TV interview. (Always take the name of the person you are speaking to so you will have established a contact for this and future events.)
- Call the place where you are having your meeting. Confirm.
- Check if they have a screen, power-point projector and computer.
- Confirm with families and self advocates that they can assist with set up, registration and handing out materials

Day before event:

- Prepare packets for distribution
- Gather equipment needed for presentation and make sure it is in working order
- Gather CD/DVD's, camera for pictures, sign in sheet and other handouts
- Fax and or email press release about event
- Call press, media, etc. to encourage them to attend

Day of the meeting:

- Arrive 15 minutes early for the individual meetings
- Arrive an hour earlier for the public meetings such as Legislative Breakfasts, lunches or community meetings so that you have the time to organize properly
- Set up sign in sheets and bulk materials.
- It is often handy to place material on seats for larger gatherings.
- Keep Legislative folders aside and hand them individually to legislators when they arrive.
- Check for placement podium, tables, and microphones if needed. Make sure they work.
- Make sure screen, projector, microphone and computer are working.

Program:

- Introductions
 - Legislators
 - Important guests (mayor, county execs, etc.)
 - People and their families
 - Small group have a go around and introduce themselves
- Outline what the meeting is about - go over agenda, facts and taking points
- Share your county numbers

- Show the DVD on the Waiting List.
- Have a panel of 3 or 4 (more if possible) Self-Advocates/families who are on the Waiting List share their stories.
- Tell people how important the proposed budget is to people's lives and ask them to vote for it the way it was written by the Administration.
- Tell the legislators how much we need the funding and how much we appreciate their concern.
- Tell the people in the audience to take a few minutes to meet and talk with their legislators personally and that they should set up individual meetings at their local offices to discuss their individual issues.
- Thank everyone for coming.
- Remind them to stay a while to network and talk with Legislators and other self advocates and family members.

After event:

- Send out thank you letters to the Legislators who attended
- Write up a story and send story and pictures to local papers, if you didn't have press coverage
- Send the Waiting List Campaign a note about the event, who attended, the numbers of people, what the outcome was and what follow up is needed

Call/email PAWL Campaign (1-877-372-WAIT or sstasko@pawaitinglistcampaign.org) if you need additional help or information.