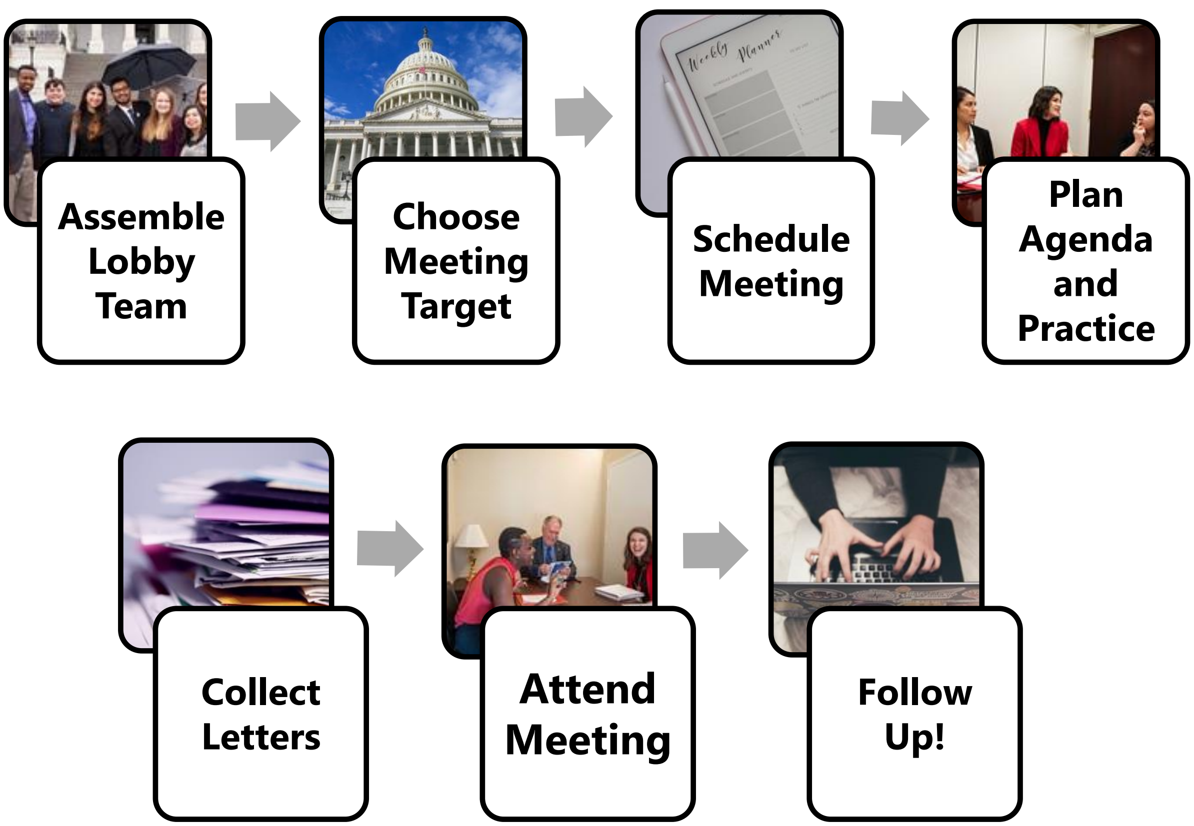
August 2020 | New Advocate Basics

Meet with Congress and Staff

Meetings with members of Congress and their staff lay an essential foundation for your relationship with their office. This relationship is your key to influence. By relating in person, talking about the issues, and telling our powerful stories, we invite them to become champions for the end of poverty.

RESULTS has an entire [section of our website](#) dedicated to lobbying tools and support.

Steps to a Successful Lobby Meeting



Step 1: Assemble your lobby team

This can be your RESULTS group, your friends, members of your faith community, community partners who have a stake in the issue, or anyone else who might care. It can also just be you!

Step 2: Choose your meeting target

You can request a face to face (F2F) meeting with your member of Congress. There are also several staff who work in their DC and local offices that are influential that you can request a meeting with.

Washington D.C. Office Staff

Chief of Staff
- Head Honcho
- Oversee entire office

Legislative Director (LD)
- Senior policy staffer
- Oversee all major policy decisions

Legislative Assistant (LA)
- Primary expert on specific issues
- Advises MoC

Legislative Correspondent (LC)
- Drafts mail responses
- Typically less experience than LA

Local / Regional Office Staff

Regional / District Director
- Chief of Staff of local offices
- Close relationship with Moc, high influence

Constituent Services / Field Rep
- Provide casework
- Meet with constituents

The life of a congressional staffer can be difficult. They often work overtime in a fast-paced environment with low pay and frequent calls from angry and rude constituents. They are generally eager to hear from you (and it's their job!) Remember when communicating with the congressional office to be:

1. Respectful of the staffer's time: Be prepared, organized, and focused.
2. Respectful of the staffer's humanity: Be kind, even if you disagree with them! Cultivate a relationship that makes them want to hear from you.
3. Patient: It's important to be persistent and follow-up with the office but do understand the limitations of staff in DC and in-district.

Step 3: Schedule your meeting

You'll need to share the date(s) you had in mind, issues you want to discuss, and number of people attending. You may have to call and follow up several times to get your meeting confirmed. Be persistent! Find sample meeting requests in our Lobbying Resources: results.org/volunteers/lobbying/

Type of Meeting	How to Schedule
Face to Face with member of Congress	• Call the DC office and ask to speak with the Scheduler • Send an email to the Scheduler • It does not hurt to do both!
Meeting with local aide at local office	• Call the local office and schedule directly with an aide • Email the local office with your request and issues you'd like to discuss

Step 4: Plan your agenda, assign roles, and practice

Start by researching your member of Congress. Look them up on the RESULTS website using the Legislator Lookup Get an idea of their voting history on the RESULTS Congressional Scorecard. What can you thank them for? Where can you find common ground? What policies do they need to be lobbied on?

Decide the goals of your meeting. Goals should include:

- Build Relationship
- Introduce Group as Resource
- Prove Community Cares
- Educate on Issues
- Gather Intel about Office
- Get Commitment

Assign meeting roles:

Role	Responsibility
Facilitator	• Kick meeting off. Lead introductions, thank-you's, and meeting overview. Keep meeting on track
Story-Teller	• Share a personal story about the issue or solution
Issue Educator	• Educate about the broader issue, problem, solution. Share facts about how it shows up in your local community
Requestor	• Make a yes or no request of the congressperson
Note Taker	• Note any important info from the meeting: What question did the person raise? Concerns that need to be addressed in future meetings? Member's response? What follow up is needed?
Leave Behinds	• Ensure letters, media, request sheets, and other supportive materials delivered. . Find leave behinds in our Lobbying Resources.

Plan your agenda based on current RESULTS campaigns, laser talks, and meeting roles Find a lobby meeting planning form in our Lobbying Resources to assist in creating your agenda.

Sample Lobby Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions and Thank you (Facilitator)
    a. Thank the representative for something
    b. Introduce RESULTS and your chapter
    c. Facilitate individual team member intros.
    d. Provide a summary of issues/asks to be discussed
2. Share a Personal Story to illustrate the issue (Story-teller)
    a. Make sure this relates directly to one of the requests being made
3. Overview of Issue (Issue Educator)
    a. State the problem, inform on a solution
4. Call to Action (Requestor)
    a. Deliver a direct request (that has a yes or no answer) to the representative
5. Listen for response and engage in a dialogue
6. Closing the meeting (Facilitator)
    a. Make follow-up plans with the office
    b. Ask when you can follow-up
    c. Thank them for their time

Step 5: Collect Letters from your Community

Ask friends, family, and others in the community who care about your issue to write a letter to your member of Congress that can be delivered as a leave behind in your meeting. This will be a strong reminder to the congressperson that more people in the community care about the issue which can influence their willingness to act.

Step 6: Go to Your Meeting & Report Back to RESULTS

You can do it! It's normal to be nervous! It is literally their job to listen to you. They want you to be there (they do!) Let us know what happened by filling out a Lobby Report form.

Step 7: Follow up, follow up, follow up

After your meeting, send a follow up message to the aide you met with. Thank them! Provide answers to questions they raised in the meeting. Restate your ask. Most likely, you did not get a firm yes or no response in the meeting, especially if you met with an aide and not the member directly. The follow up is where commitments happen! Use the sample email to get started:

Hi Kate,

Hope you're well! I'm following up on the requests we made during the meeting with our team from RESULTS Georgia last week.

We are grateful that Senator Loeffler is thinking about the global issues associated with this pandemic. Would you continue urging her to speak with leadership about the need for the U.S. to invest in our wellbeing by supporting existing global health programs during this pandemic? As we discussed, if these programs do not have the support to continue, we face additional global health disasters that will threaten the health and economy of people all over the world, the U.S. not exempted.

In particular, since the latest HEROES Act did not contain any funding for global support, we want to urge leadership to include at least $20 billion for international development in any upcoming supplemental Covid-19 bill, with a suggested breakdown as we had discussed:

- *$4 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria over 2 years*
- *$4 billion for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance*
- *$2 billion for Anti-hunger efforts, with at least $500 million for Nutrition*

Please see the Global Response Needed for Global Pandemic sheet for additional details.

Thank you so much for your time! Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.