First 100 Days Campaign

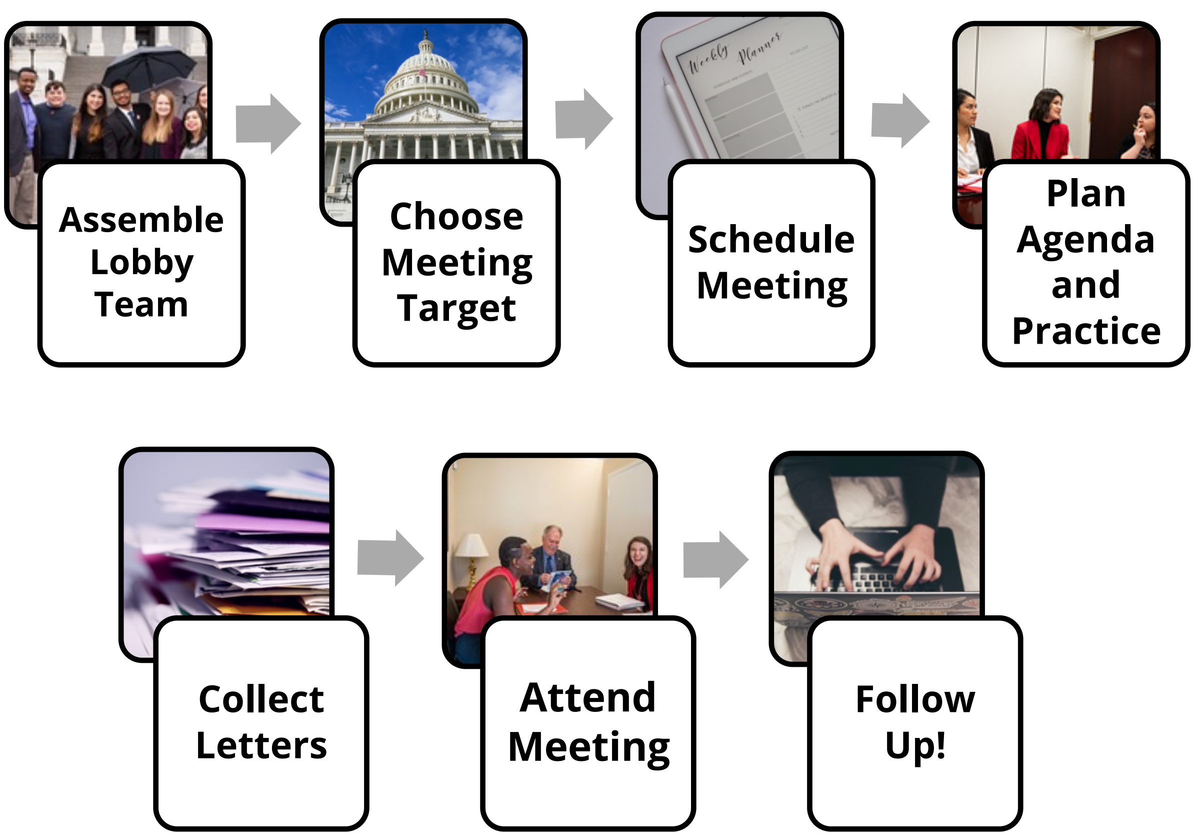
Meeting with Congress 101

Meetings with members of Congress and their staff lay an essential foundation for a relationship with their offices. This relationship is your key to influence. And the first 100 days of a new Congress and administration helps set the agenda for the entire term, which is why we want to meet with every member of Congress we cover in these critical first 100 days of 2021.

Never met with a congressional office before? First, make sure you're connected to any other RESULTS advocates in your area. If you're new and looking to get connected or have other questions, reach out to Alicia on the RESULTS staff (astromberg@results.org).

Then you're ready to dive in! This is a guide to the process for meeting with Congress. For more information and our latest policy requests, RESULTS has an entire section of our website dedicated to lobbying tools and support.

Steps to a Successful Lobby Meeting



1101 15th St. NW, Suite 1200 | Washington, DC 20005
P: (202) 783-4800 | www.results.org | @RESULTS_Tweets

<u>Step 1</u>: 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!

<u>Step 2</u>: Choose your meeting target

RESULTS focuses on advocacy at the federal level of government. There are two chambers of Congress (Senate, House of Representatives) which we can influence. Through these two chambers, we can also exercise influence on decisions made by the president.

Senate	House of Representatives
• Everyone has 2 senators that represent their state • Each state has equal representation	• Everyone has 1 representative of a specific congressional district • Districts are defined by population size, with borders set by state authorities

All lawmakers in the Senate and House can be collectively referred to as 'legislators' 'lawmakers' or 'members of Congress (MOCs)'. Individual senators are addressed as "Senator <last name>" and members of the House of Representatives are addressed as "Representative <last name>" or "Congresswoman/Congressman <last name>."

Who should advocates contact?

Members of Congress have offices in Washington, DC and in your local community. It's important to be in touch with both, but there are a few differences in the role each office plays.

You can request a face-to-face meeting with your member of Congress or with key staff. During the first 100 days, all these meetings will happen virtually over Zoom, conference call, or another system – by now, congressional offices all have a good system for doing this! RESULTS also has trainings on using Zoom for advocacy meetings.

Washington, DC Office	District Offices
• Congressional offices in D.C. are staffed with aides who have expertise on policy. Aides follow specific issues and legislation and advise your member of Congress on those issues. Building strong relationships with congressional staff is an essential part of moving the member of Congress into action.	• Members of Congress have local district offices set up across their congressional district (or for senators, across the state). Congressional staff connect with the local community, represent the member of Congress at home while they are in D.C., provide case management services to constituents, and, most important, listen to YOU.
• RESULTS volunteers work with congressional staff focused on foreign policy, housing, tax or other issues related to our campaigns.	• There are usually multiple offices located throughout your state or district.
• Each member of Congress has one physical office with staff in D.C., but legislators themselves are only there when Congress is “in session.”	• District offices are a powerful link between you and your member of Congress.

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

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/

You can look up congressional staff information here. After finding your specific member of Congress, click on the "Staff" tab for a list of aides, including both issue staff and the scheduler. You can also call the congressional office and ask or reach out to RESULTS staff for help.

Type of Meeting	How to Schedule
Face-to-face with member of Congress	• Call the DC office and ask to speak with the Send an email to the scheduler • Call the DC office and ask to speak with the scheduler • It does not hurt to do both! Then keep politely following up as needed until you get a clear answer.
Meeting with aide at local or DC office	• Call the local or D.C. office and schedule directly with an aide (first decide who you want to meet with based on their focus) • Email the office with your request and issues you'd like to discuss

For the First 100 Days campaign, start by requesting a meeting with the member of Congress themselves. If they aren't available, you can always then proceed to a meeting with staff.

When talking or e-mailing with the scheduler, remember to set up how you will do the meeting virtually (e.g., Zoom, conference call). Make sure to save this information and share it with those who plan to attend.

Life as a staffer

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 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?

You can also always reach out to RESULTS staff for lobby coaching and support to prepare for your meeting.

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

And for every meeting, we always have at least one "ask" – a yes or no question for the member of Congress that will help advance our issues!

Assign meeting roles:

Role	Responsibility
Facilitator	• Kick meeting off. Lead introductions, thank-you's, and meeting overview. Keep meeting on track
Storyteller	• 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 member of Congress
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. And then don't be shy about practicing what you want to say and rehearsing your laser talk at home!

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 (Storyteller)
    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)
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 that more people in the community care about the issue, which can influence their willingness to act. Use this time also to collect any media you or other RESULTS volunteers have had published locally on the issues, to share as back up in your meeting.

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 last week.

We are grateful that Senator Murkowski 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 wellbeing of people all over the world.

In particular, we want to urge leadership to include at least $20 billion for international development in a supplemental Covid-19 bill, including at least $4 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria.

Please see the one pager attached for additional details.

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