

101 GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY GUIDE



HOW TO MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

1. Research

- First, be sure you know who represents you in both the House and Senate. You should only seek a meeting with your own Congressional offices
- Take some time to research your members—how long have they served in Congress? What did they do before entering elected office? What committees do they serve on? Have they made any statements or taken any votes related to Israel/Palestine?

2. Schedule

- Whether trying for a remote or in person meeting, be persistent, but polite!
- If you're able to meet in person, be clear whether you are seeking a meeting in your state/district or DC. Check the following website to see when Congress is in session in DC.
- Check your member of Congress' website to see if they have a form to fill out to request a meeting.
- If you can't find a form, call the office (either DC or district/state) and ask the preferred way to schedule a meeting
- Be as specific as possible in your request-reference current legislation or a particular policy topic
- If you've sent in a request—either via form or email—and you haven't heard back within a week, you can try to send another email or call the office.
- If the meeting is virtual, ask if they would prefer for you to set up a video/phone conference call or if they will.

3. Prepare

- Take the time to read up on the issue and know how your member has voted or statements they have made about the topic.
- Identify key statistics/facts regarding the topic. Think of some personal stories to share about why this issue is important to you.
- Have a concrete ask: whether it's to support/oppose a particular bill, sign on to a letter to the State Department or White House, make a public statement, etc.
- If the meeting is with others, plan ahead of time to assign roles (group leader, note-taker, person(s) to make the ask) try to role play as a group a few days before the meeting.

4. Meet

- If you are meeting via Zoom or a video format try get on 10 -15 minutes before the meeting starts.
- Group leader should start by thanking the office for meeting, have everyone briefly introduce themselves.
- Go through the meeting with your pre-assigned roles. Make sure to tell your stories and make the ask at least three times.
- Let the staffer or member of Congress ask any questions; offer to get back to them if you don't know the answer to any of their questions.
- Thank the office again for taking the time to meet

5. Follow up

- Send a thank you e-mail within a week of meeting to the staffer you met with
- Be sure to follow up if you promised to get back to them about a question you were not able to answer during the meeting

6. Maintain the Relationship

- Your advocacy is more effective if you build a relationship with your congressional offices over time. Don't inundate them with emails, but reach out periodically—especially if there is new legislation or letter you would like them to support.
- Consider inviting staff to attend a virtual event you're hosting with speakers from Israel/Palestine or the Middle East.