



LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION: ADVICE AND RESOURCES

TASK	ADVICE AND RESOURCES
BEFORE THE MEETING	
Point of contact: With whom do you want to meet? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senator and staff?• Representative and staff?• Individuals involved in NIH or NSF appropriations or authorization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find your representative at: http://www.house.gov/• Find your senators at: http://www.senate.gov/• House Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Education: http://science.house.gov/about/members.htm [NSF authorization]• House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health: http://energycommerce.house.gov/membios/110fullmship.shtml [NIH authorization]• House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies: http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/sub_lhse.shtml [NIH funding]• House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/sub_cjs.shtml [NSF funding]• Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=About.Members [NSF authorization]• Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions: http://help.senate.gov/About.html [NIH authorization]• Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies: http://appropriations.senate.gov/labor.cfm [NIH funding]• Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: http://appropriations.senate.gov/commerce.cfm [NSF funding]
Get to know your legislator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PLEASE NOTE: Double-check with your institution about any applicable protocols for contacting and/or meeting with legislators and/or their staff. For example, the University of Texas system employees are not permitted to request meetings with legislators, but are permitted to request meetings with staff.• Visit your legislator's web site, read his/her biography, learn what s/he has done in support of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and/or health education in the past.• Does your legislator serve on a committee involved in NIH/NSF authorization or appropriations (see sites listed above)?• Is your legislator a member of the House STEM Education Caucus (http://www.stemedcaucus.org/)?• Use this information when you make contact, for example, by thanking him/her for supporting STEM and health education in the past.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which staffer(s) are the best points-of-contact given your interests. You may want to contact them directly and/or cc them on any correspondence. • If you would like to arrange a meeting, determine who makes the legislator’s schedule (the “scheduler”). You may want to contact them directly and/or cc them on any correspondence.
Lay groundwork with district office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senators and Representatives have local offices located in their home states / districts. Find the location and contact information for the office nearest to you by visiting the legislator’s web site. • Call and ask to speak with the staff person / point-of-contact for education (in some districts, these individuals are called “caseworkers”). • Introduce yourself, briefly explain your interest in health / STEM education, and ask for a meeting to tell them about your program(s) and interests. • Alternatively or in addition, invite them to an event or share a recent newspaper article. Consider arranging a “meet & greet” session where the legislator and/or staffers can meet with personnel and participants from your program. • Tell your local contacts if and when you plan to be in Washington, as they may be able to help you arrange a meeting and craft your message. Plus, if the Washington office personnel contact the local office, the local staff can share what they have learned about your program.
Develop relationships with individuals responsible for government relations at your own institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely that there are individuals at your own institution who are responsible for government relations. Consider coordinating aspects of your efforts through their office as they may have existing relationships with legislators and their staff. • Arrange a meeting to tell them about your program and your interest in health / STEM education with the goal of making clear that you are not attempting to compete with your institutions’ efforts but rather that your program can help your institution ‘look good.’”
Make contact with the Washington office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a letter introducing yourself and stating your interests. • Include verbiage about what you would like to see your legislator do, either generally or specifically. • If you would like to arrange a meeting, see NAHSEP meeting request template. • Email or fax the letter. • If you don’t receive a reply, follow up by phone or email. • Try to make contact as early as possible to maximize the chances that you will be able to arrange a meeting.
Plan the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a general script so that you have a good sense of what you are going to say and that you will be able to say it clearly and concisely. • Assemble a limited amount of written materials, handouts, or brochures, etc. that you can leave behind. See SEPA one-pager as an example.

MEETING

- Meeting content and structure:
What to say?
- Keeping in mind the meeting may last only 15-20 minutes:
 - Introduce yourself and your organization or program (i.e., who are you and whom do you represent?)
 - Thank them for taking time to meet with you and/or for past support or action related to your interests.
 - State why you are there and what you want (i.e., the “ask”).
 - BRIEFLY make supporting arguments: Why is this important? Provide information that demonstrates the impact of your program (e.g., how many people do you reach? What are they learning? How is the legislator’s constituency benefiting from your efforts? What is the national impact? etc.).
 - Get a sense of what the legislator / staff thinks – is this something the Congressperson / Senator can support?
 - Ask if there are any questions or if you can provide any additional information or materials.
 - Wrap-up the conversation by repeating the ask, gauging support, and thanking. Offer to be a resource on STEM / health education issues.
 - Leave written materials.
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AFTER THE MEETING

- Follow up
- Write a note to thank them for the meeting and discussion. Include any additional information or materials that were requested. Consider inquiring about any reaction to your ask, remind that you would be happy to serve as a resource, and/or invite them to visit with you and your program when they are in the area.
 - Keep in touch with the staffer.
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GENERAL ADVICE

- Address the individual as Senator / Congresswoman / Congressman or Mr. / Ms., unless you know the individual personally or they have invited you to address them by their first names.
- Do not be put off if you are able to meet with staff but not the legislator – staff are conduits and can be very influential.
- Be succinct.
- Focus on the “big idea” - avoid jargon and details.
- Don’t tell them what they already know or ask them to support something they already support. Rather, give them data that will help them convince others that what you are requesting is worth supporting and/or ask them what would be helpful in building the argument.
- Consider the meeting or initial contact the start of a relationship. Keep in touch!

OTHER REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

The following organizations have assembled and made available a wealth of advice and information regarding advocacy, some of which has been used to compile the information provided above. Please visit their sites for additional resources and advice:

- American Physical Society Advocacy Tools: <http://www.aps.org/policy/tools/index.cfm>
- American Physiological Society Advocacy Resource Kits: <http://www.the-aps.org/pa/advocate/advocate.htm>
- American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Tip Sheet for Meeting with Legislators: <http://www.faseb.org/asbmb/pa/advocacy/Tip.html>
- American Society for Cell Biology Public Policy Scientific Citizenship: <http://www.ascb.org/index.cfm?navid=132>
- Coalition for the Life Sciences: <http://www.coalitionforlifesciences.org/>
- Society for Neuroscience: http://www.sfn.org/index.cfm?pagename=gpa_CongressionalOutreach

We encourage you to visit your own professional organizations' web sites and look for advocacy or public policy resources.