

Keys to a Successful Hill Meeting

The key to a successful meeting on the Hill is to keep in mind the purpose. Any visit should not be a one-shot meeting. Rather the primary objective should be to establish rapport, with other objectives being to make a request, obtain information, and to provide material. The following suggestions will help you in achieving your objectives. If you have any questions or would like more material, please contact ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson: pierson@amstat.org; 703.302.1841.

Consider the Audience-

1. Most likely not a scientist.
 - a. Stick to broad themes.
 - b. Avoid scientific details.
2. Most likely to meet with staffer.
 - a. Don't misjudge influence of young staffers. They are your conduit to the Member and it may help if you acknowledge that.
 - b. Spend a minute or two breaking the ice. (Determine science/statistics background, if any. Where he/she grew up or went to college. ...)
 - c. Avoid lecturing; ask, listen.
3. Review the Member's bio, press releases and sponsored legislation at their website to look for "hooks" for your meeting.

Meeting Structure

1. Introductions:
 - a. State who you are or represent to establish why they should listen to you.
 - b. Thank:
 - i. Staffer for taking time to meet. (They have hectic schedules.)
 - ii. Member for past support or action.
2. Make the "Ask".
3. Make supporting arguments. Suggestions for effective and interactive meeting:
 - **Always include local angle.**
 - Be succinct. (Most meetings run 20-25 minutes.)
 - Take pulse to decide where to take meeting. (e.g., "Is this something the Congresswoman can support?")
 - Ask if the staffer has any questions.
 - If the Member has not been supportive in past, ask the staffer how to gain Member's support.
4. Wrap-up (Repeat "Ask", Gauge support, Thank again)

Follow-up

After the meeting,

1. Send an email (or fax) to:
 - a. Thank them for the meeting and discussion.
 - b. Send additional materials that they may have requested.
 - c. Ask about reaction to your "ask".
 - d. Offer to be a resource (you may already have done this in the meeting).
2. Keep in touch with the staffer.