Scheduling a Meeting with your Member of Congress

How do I find out who represents me in Congress?

You may use the Congressional Look-Up Tool located on our website: www.neuac.org/resources.

How do I find their local addresses and phone numbers?

Finding the district and local information for your representative and senators can be easily accessed by visiting their personal webpage via NEUAC’s Congressional Look-up Tool. Depending on the size of your district, your representative may have more than one district office. Begin the scheduling process by contacting the office that is most convenient to you. Senators have multiple offices across their states.

Before Calling to Schedule a Meeting...

Before making your initial phone call to request a meeting, make sure you have all the necessary information gathered. Information should include:

- At least two dates and times in mind for a meeting;
- Who will be attending, where they live, why you want to meet, and what you want to discuss.

Making the Scheduling Request

Each office has a different system for scheduling meetings. Some members require meeting requests to be in writing and submitted via fax or e-mail. Others require a web form be filled out, while some are fine with phone requests.

- Tell the receptionist that you are a constituent, you live in [city, state], and you would like to meet with Representative X or Senator Y to discuss issues related to LIHEAP.
- The receptionist will either give you instructions on how to submit your formal meeting request or will put you in touch with the member’s scheduler.

**SAMPLE LANGUAGE TO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT BY EMAIL:**

Hello, I would like to request an appointment to discuss the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) with your office. This program is very important to customers served by ____________, providing critical heating and cooling assistance. The National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) is hosting a fly-in advocacy day on February 26 for stakeholders concerned about energy affordability. Please respond if there is a time on that day when we can talk about LIHEAP in your district.
KEY: Follow-up!

After filing your formal meeting request, the key to successfully scheduling a meeting is follow-up. Be persistent but don’t pester. Ask the scheduler or staffer when you can follow up. Most schedules are not made up more than one week in advance, so it is important for you to remain flexible. You will be successful if you are persistent and friendly.

What about Town Halls?

Sometimes Members and Senators will hold “Town Hall” meetings, in public places, where they invite constituents to hear them speak and allow them to ask questions on pertinent issues. Check your Member and Senator’s websites for Town Hall dates. Show up and thank them for their support of LIHEAP funding or ask that they support the program in the future. Ask for the name of the staff member handling LIHEAP and follow up with more information.

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**Preparing for Face-to-Face Meetings with Members of Congress**

**Quick Takes**
- Advocates can leverage face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress and their staff to communicate their positions and build enduring relationships with their representatives.
- However, meetings are brief and Members are busy; advocates should keep the tips below in mind to get the most of their meetings.

**What to Keep in Mind When Conducting a Meeting with a Member of Congress**

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<tr>
<th>Be on Time</th>
<th>Stay on Topic</th>
<th>Leave Behind Brief Information</th>
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<td>• Arrive no more than 5 minutes before the meeting; Members are rarely available to meet earlier and Hill offices are too small to accommodate lingering constituents.</td>
<td>• Raise only the issue you scheduled to discuss with the Member and the Member’s staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive.</td>
<td>• Leave behind a 1-2 page briefing with data points on the issue discussed with the Member’s office; the document should serve as a helpful resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress.</td>
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<td>• Inform the Scheduler if you are going to be late in case another meeting time must be arranged.</td>
<td>• Do not discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting; it intimates that the Member is “for sale”.</td>
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<td>Be flexible</td>
<td>Keep Politics Out of It</td>
<td>Respect the Member’s political views and relationships outside of the issue at hand.</td>
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<td>• Prepare to meet with either the Member or the Member’s staff; treat both with equal respect.</td>
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