

Guide to Meeting With Elected Officials

Meeting with your elected officials and sharing personal stories is critically important to help them understand how decisions about policy and funding affect our community.

It may seem scary and overwhelming to connect with your elected officials, but it is so important because YOU are the expert on issues affecting your life and your story needs to be heard!

How to Schedule a Meeting

First you'll want to find out who represents you - in Congress in Washington D.C. or at the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul. Google "Who Represents Me MN" and use the District Finder tool. Just enter your address, and it will show information about your elected officials.

There, you'll find phone numbers and email addresses for your state Representative and Senator, as well as your U.S. Representative and Senator.

When you reach out by phone or email, specifically ask for a meeting in-district or at their office - whichever is more convenient.

You could offer some dates and times that work for you, but be flexible and work with their schedule, too.

How to Prepare

Elected officials are very busy, so you may not have much time to meet with them – especially if your meeting is at the Minnesota State Capitol during the legislative session! That is why it's important to be prepared ahead of time with any information or a personal story you want to share.

It is always a good idea to practice your story before the meeting, so you feel prepared and can share your story clearly and confidently.

Tips During the Meeting

- Be confident about sharing your story and your experience! YOU are the expert on your life.
- Begin by introducing yourself. Share your name and where you live to let them know that you're a constituent – someone who lives in their district.
- Tell them why you scheduled a meeting, and briefly share an issue or problem you'd like to discuss. Be sure to stay focused, and only talk about one issue at a time.
- Help them understand how they can address your problem or issue, and share ideas for a solution. Ask the legislator for a specific commitment, whether that's for a visit in their district or support for a specific bill.
- If an elected official asks a question that you can't answer, don't worry! After the meeting, you can connect with an advocacy organization like The Arc Minnesota, and then follow-up with more information. This is a good way to keep the conversation going, and to build a relationship with the elected officials!
- Keep in mind the importance of building positive, supportive relationships with our elected officials – even if we disagree on an issue.
- Always thank the legislator at the end of the meeting. It is important for elected officials to know that we appreciate their time and their work on behalf of our communities.
- Keep notes about what happened in the visit – the elected official you met with, the issues discussed, and any comments that the legislator made. Then share that information with our policy team at The Arc Minnesota; it helps inform our outreach to that elected official in the future!

With questions or for help preparing for a meeting with your elected official, contact Public Policy Director Alicia Munson at aliciamunson@arcminnesota.org.

