



Guide to Meeting with Your Members of Congress

STEP 1: SCHEDULE YOUR MEETING

- Go to House.gov or Senate.gov to look up your Representative and Senators and find their webpage.
- Generally, there is a section on each Member's page providing instructions for how to schedule a meeting as well as contact information.
- Remember there is equal value to meetings in the district or Washington, D.C.

STEP 2: HAVE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

- Remember you're an expert on your work, and Members and their staff value your opinion to understand how policy affects it.
- Your goal is to create an ongoing relationship with the office to help with outreach on future matters that effect alcohol research. Make yourself a resource!
- BE ON TIME! There is nothing worse than being late.

DO Your Homework

- Read the Member's bio and issue statements on their website.
- Think about any unique issues in your community.

DO Keep It Simple

- Most Members and staff are not scientists, so you'll want to avoid overly technical language especially without explaining it first
- Use the RSA White Paper and other GAAC resources to guide your conversation.

DO Create a Dialogue

- Allow time for the Members and their staff to ask you questions.
- The dialogue is a great way to learn what issues may be most important to that office.

DON'T Talk Fundraising/Politics

- There is a very strict wall between a Member's congressional office and their campaign. Stay away from any mention of fundraisers and elections.

DON'T Stray Off Topic

- You will only have 15-20 minutes for a meeting; don't waste that time discussing something else.
- Using data and real-life examples will really stick with people. It will also help you stay on track.

DON'T Underestimate Staff

- Your meeting is still valuable even if you only meet with staff, as is often the case.
- Staff is responsible for tracking issues, briefing the Member, and drafting legislation.

STEP 3: Thank You & Follow-Up

- After your meeting, send a thank you email to the Member and staff you met with, include the RSA White Paper and one-pager as well as any of the issue papers that might be relevant.
- If you said you would follow up with more information, make sure you do it!
- Remember to be a resource! If new information arises after the meeting, forward it to the Member and staff.