

LOBBY 101

PAINLESS ADVOCACY: The Art of Successfully Engaging with Your Elected officials

PRESENTED BY

Ellen Teller, Food Research & Action Center

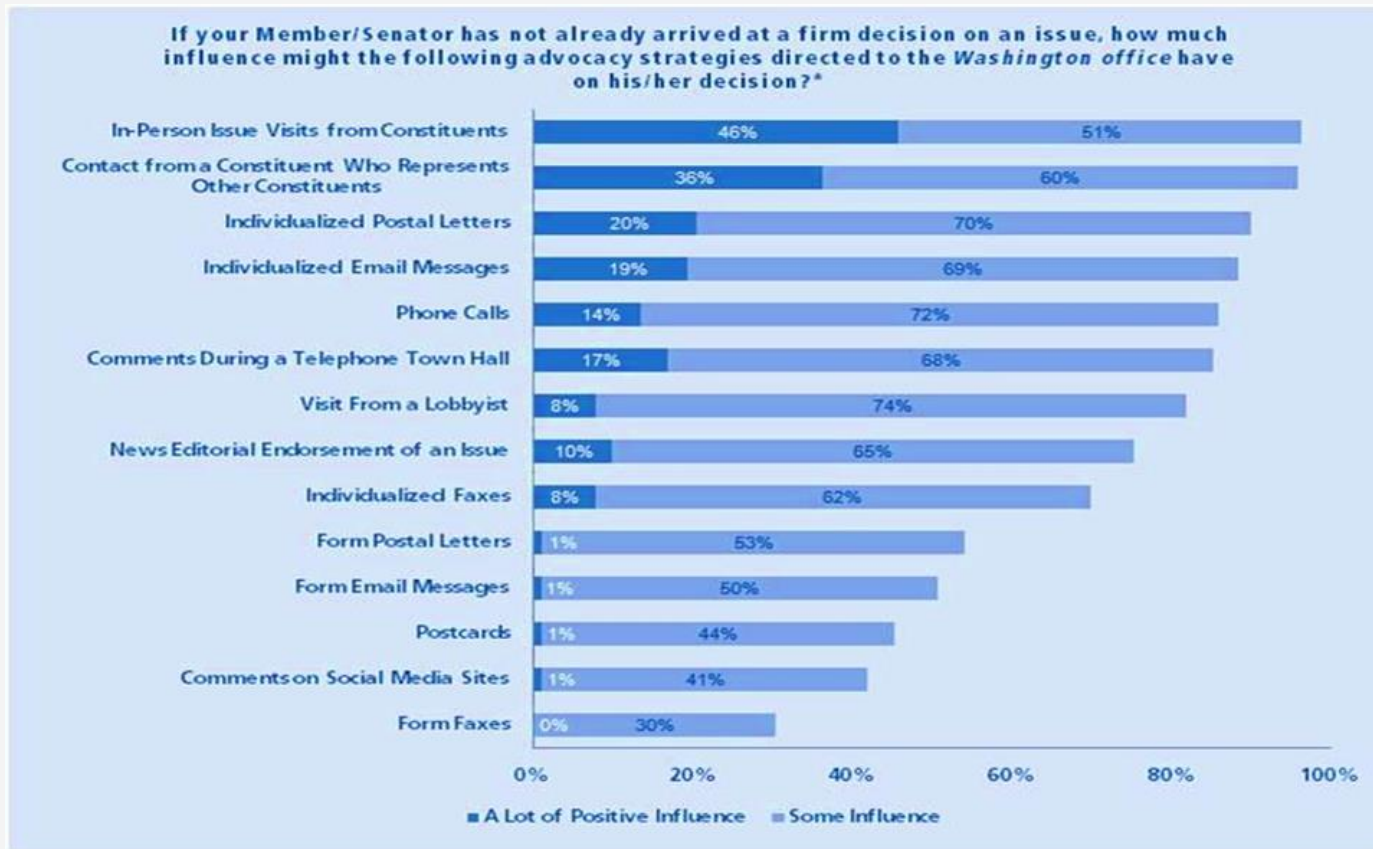
Kate Leone, Feeding America

February 6, 2018, 1:00 PM EST

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Local Voices Matter!



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PREPARING FOR YOUR VISITS TO CAPITOL HILL

STEP ONE:

Schedule appointments with your Members of Congress (MOC) and their staff before you arrive in Washington, DC.

Call or e-mail the staff handling food/nutrition issues.

Call the Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121, and they will direct you to your Member's office.

Check your Member's website, www.house.gov & www.senate.gov.

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POWER IN NUMBERS!

STEP TWO:

Collaborate. Schedule appointments with representatives from other organizations attending the conference from your state. It's the best way to guarantee a meeting with your Member (staff will be there, too).

You can contact FRAC or Feeding America to access a list of conference attendees from your state.

You are part of a larger movement: **Over 1,000 registered!**

Wear your conference buttons on your Capitol Hill visits.

You will receive buttons at the conference.



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ADVANCE PREP

STEP THREE:

Get to know your Members of Congress

- Check out the websites of your Members for biographical information, committee assignments, caucus memberships, recent press statements & other useful information.
- Google your Members for the latest on their priorities and activities.
- New to your organization? Make sure you know his/her history with your organization and issues. This is especially important with new Capitol Hill staff.
- Study his/her voting records.
- Follow your Member on Twitter.



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WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

STEP FOUR:

Create your own “Leave Behind” Packets

- FRAC/Feeding America “Leave Behinds” – will be emailed to you in advance of the conference and will be available at the conference and at the Tuesday morning Breakfast on Capitol Hill
- Information about your organization (including Board Members, and local support – e.g., key donors)
- Any recent media “hits”
- Newsletters, reports, studies, or any special analyses
- And yes – also bring comfortable shoes!



Farm Bill: Congress Must Protect and Strengthen SNAP and Other Anti-Hunger Programs
March 2017

SNAP/Food Stamps:

SNAP is the cornerstone of the nation's nutrition and food security safety net, helping to put food on the table for 43 million low-income participants each month. When the number of families struggling to make ends meet increases, SNAP responds quickly and effectively to meet that need.

SNAP Action Needed: Congress should protect SNAP from harmful policy proposals to alter its structure or cut its funding, which would undermine its efficacy. Instead, Congress should strengthen SNAP, including basing SNAP benefit allotments on the low-cost food plan and ameliorating the harsh time limits on benefits for certain jobless adults who are willing to work, but are unable to find sufficient hours.

For more than four decades, SNAP has enjoyed strong bipartisan support and has helped ensure vulnerable low-income people in our nation can put food on the table. The program serves as the nation's first line of defense against hunger. If it is weakened, many millions of older Americans, people with disabilities, children, veterans, struggling parents — working and unemployed — and others will be harmed, and the nation will see more hunger and food insecurity, worse health and educational outcomes, and higher health costs.

SNAP has extraordinary strengths:

- When the national economy or a regional, state, or local economy is in trouble, SNAP is there to help. SNAP's responsiveness to unemployment proved it to be one of the most effective safety net programs during the recent recession, providing struggling families with a stable source of food. As conditions improve, SNAP caseloads fall. In November 2016, SNAP helped put food on the table for 43 million people, over 2 million fewer people than the prior November.
- Because SNAP benefits are so urgently needed by families, they are spent quickly — 80 percent of benefits are redeemed within the first half of the month of issuance, bolstering local economies. A 2011 study from the Economic Research Service found that every \$5 in SNAP benefits generates as much as \$9 in economic activity.
- SNAP is targeted to reach the neediest and most vulnerable people in our country. Eighty-two percent of all benefits go to households with a child, senior, or person with disabilities and the average household has an income of only 59 percent of the federal poverty line.
- SNAP lifted 4.6 million Americans above the poverty line in 2015, including 2 million children and 366,000 seniors. SNAP is as effective as the Earned Income Tax Credit in lifting families above the poverty line.
- More than half of SNAP households with at least one working-age, non-disabled adult work while on SNAP; more than 80 percent work in the year before or after receiving SNAP. For many of these families, SNAP is an important support while they are between jobs and looking for work.
- Extensive research shows that SNAP plays a critical role, not just in alleviating poverty and food insecurity, but also in improving dietary intake and health, especially among children. One more recent study found that receipt of SNAP in early childhood improved high school graduation rates, adult earnings, and adult health. National food consumption data (as measured by USDA's Healthy Eating Index) show that each additional SNAP dollar increased a household's score for overall dietary quality.
- Still, benefits are less than optimal. SNAP benefits average less than \$1.39 per person per meal, making it difficult for recipients to afford an adequate and nutritious diet.

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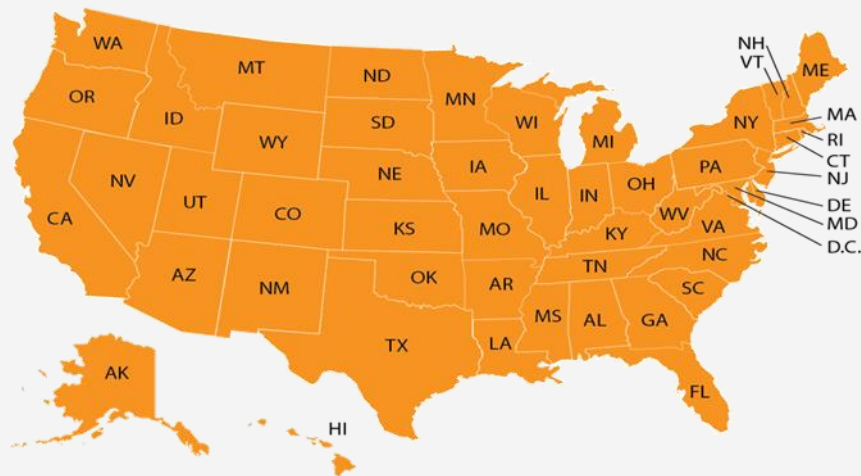
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All Politics *IS* Local

Always emphasize what is happening in your District and State

- Give local examples and the impact your programs have in alleviating hunger and poverty in your state and community. You can also compare it to the national stats.
- Relate a specific incident or story that puts a face on the issue/proposal that you are discussing.

State and District Specific Data



**Don't Forget to Include District and State
Specific Data**

FRAC's [Resource Library](#) and [Interactive Data Tools](#)

[Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap](#)

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PICTURES AND STORIES

STEP FIVE:

Share pictures and stories from back home

- Organize an advocacy campaign from the District/State and share the results with your Members during your visits (you might want to paste messages on paper plates to emphasize messages).
- Create and bring a photo album illustrating your work in your community.
- Create and bring a storybook with personal stories from clients, success stories from your organization, and other stories you want to share.



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ORGANIZE YOUR MEETING

STEP SIX:

Be Organized- Arrange a “prep” call before coming to Washington, DC.

- 1. Agree on an outline, agenda and handouts for the meeting**
 - All participants must agree on the core issues to be discussed during the meeting (and what shouldn't be discussed).
 - Make sure everyone in the group has a role in the meeting.
- 2. Appoint a meeting facilitator**
 - One person from the group should make introductory remarks, organize introductions, and keep things flowing and on topic.
- 3. Agree on ‘the ASK’ – and make sure this happens at the meeting – regardless of the amount of time you have with your Member.**
- 4. Take a picture with your Member/Staff and post on #hungerpc18.**

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“THE ASK”

STEP SEVEN:

Make Your ASK

Be *very* specific about what you want your Member to do - e.g., sign letter, cosponsor legislation, speak out and vote against/for a bill/proposal, join the House Hunger Caucus.

Make sure your Member knows exactly what you expect from him or her and that you will be following up!

Do not leave the meeting without asking your member or staff to do SOMETHING. Even in a difficult meeting, you can always ask your member to agree to a site visit when they are home.

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MEETING TIPS

- Be on time. Allow time to get through security (metal detectors in every House and Senate building) and time to walk between offices. Once in a building- whether on the House or Senate side- you can travel through tunnels to each of the three Senate buildings and to each of the three House buildings. You cannot travel underground between the House and Senate – through the Capitol - without a Member or staff.
- Be patient. Members and Aides are often running late. Make sure you give yourself some additional time between meetings.
- Determine the amount of time you have for the meeting at the onset.
- Stay on topic – your Member will stray – you need to bring the conversation back to YOUR issue. It's your meeting!
- Be specific- bill numbers, written proposals that you want to discuss.



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“ELEVATOR SPEECH”

STEP EIGHT:

Know Your Elevator Speech

If there is one thing you should take away from this webinar is that you need to be prepared if your appointment gets cut short.

Make sure you have your “60-second and/or 2-minute elevator ask.” This is your “quick” pitch – summarizes your arguments and “ask” in the short time allotted. It also prepares you when you run into your Member on the elevator – you need to have your quick pitch ready.



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ALWAYS INVITE MEMBERS TO A SITE VISIT



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Social Media - #hungerpc18, #EndHungerNow, #talkpoverty, #snapmatters



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CHECK LIST OF WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

- Never be partisan.
- Work collaboratively with others in your community/state in your dealings with your elected officials – agree on your collective ask.
- Avoid disagreements within your group – that just gives your Member an excuse to “sit this one out.”
- Members may get side-tracked to other issues during your meeting. You have limited time, so try to politely get back to your issue. Your facilitator should be tasked with keeping the meeting on track and on message.
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, simply say, “I’ll have to get back to you on that.” Never “wing” it.
- When you get back home, follow up with any materials or information that was promised during the meeting or simply to say “thank you.”

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2018 Anti-Hunger Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill

Quick tips:

1. Take the metro. The red line Metro station (Woodley Park) is one block from Omni Shoreham and will take you directly to Union Station Metro station. The Washington Court Hotel is a nine minute walk from Union Station.
2. If possible, schedule your first meetings on the Senate side.
3. When walking among the House buildings and the Senate buildings go to the basement and walk through the tunnels. That avoids going through security for each building. **Note: You cannot travel to the Capitol underground without a Member/Aide with you.**
4. Baggage storage at the Omni or Union Station

Tuesday, February 27: Breakfast begins at 8 AM at the Washington Court Hotel.

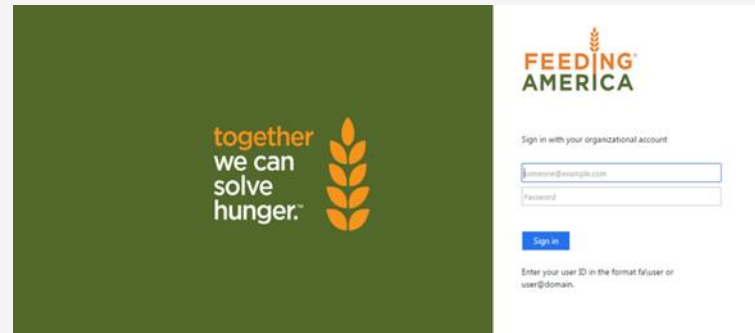


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NEED MORE TECH SUPPORT?

Check out FRAC's Legislative Action Center, www.frac.org/action

Feeding America network member? Check out HungerNet.



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QUESTIONS?

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