



ADVOCACY DAY 2009

How to Prepare for Meetings with Members of Congress

The chance to meet face-to-face with your U.S. Representative and Senators is an exciting and important part of the Women Work!/NAPE National Conference. Make the most of your meeting time by being prepared. Use this guide to help make your meeting a success.

1. Do your homework.

Make sure to visit your Senators' and Representative's websites and be able to answer the following questions about them:

- What committees do they serve on? The following committees have jurisdiction over education, job training, and other economic security issues.

Senate Finance Committee
Senate HELP Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

House Ways and Means Committee
House Education and Labor Committee
House Appropriations Committee
House Budget Committee

- Do they hold other key leadership positions (e.g. Majority or Minority leader, Speaker of the House)?
- Have they supported programs similar to yours in the past?
- How have they voted on women's economic equity issues in the past? (To view vote information compiled by the American Association of University Women visit http://www.aauw.org/advocacy/issue_advocacy/voter_ed/votingrecord.cfm.)
- Do they have "pet" issues that might be relevant to your cause (i.e. education, equity, poverty, economic development)?

2. Plan your message.

Know what you are going to say and how you are going to present it. If applicable, consider using our worksheet on Telling Your Program's Story, available at <http://www.womenwork.org/network/conferences/advocacy/TellYourStory.pdf>.

Some tips to remember:

- *Be concise.* Meetings do not usually last for more than 20-30 minutes, so plan to get all your points across in this amount of time.
- *Make it personal.* This is the most important thing that you can do in a lobby visit.
- At the briefing before your meetings, Women Work! and NAPE will provide you with talking points and a specific "ask" that you can make of your Senators and Representatives.

3. Develop and organize materials about your program to leave behind.

Plan to bring information about your program with you to Arlington for the conference. Examples include newsletters, annual reports, brochures, and press releases. The most powerful literature will show how effective you are at helping prepare your clients for high-skill, high-wage careers. And remember:

- Bring at least three copies for each meeting you have.
- Congressional staff and especially Members of Congress are unlikely to read anything that is too long or involved. Be sure that the material is concise and well organized.
- During the Professional Development Institute, Women Work! and NAPE will provide information, fact sheets, and other materials for you to leave on key policy issues.