



Taking Steps to Prepare for NLS

The following items should be completed in preparation for NLS. We suggest coordinating with your college and state delegation to complete these tasks and have included a recommended timeline.

Timeline	Action
Late October/November	<p>Register and assemble your team – Decide who will represent your college in Washington. This group should include a combination of trustees, the president, senior government relations staff, and students (such as student trustee, student government leader, or students who participate in federally funded programs such as Pell Grants). Consider inviting community and industry partners who can speak on workforce development and local partnerships.</p>
December	<p>Learn all you can about your college – Institution's mission, key programs offered, facts about the student population, the business community served by the college, and the economic impact of college programs (one-page summary*).</p> <p>Ask your community – What are the needs of the community, how is your community changing, and how is the college responding to these changes?</p>
Early January	<p>Schedule Hill meetings – Contact your Senators and Representative(s) in December or early January to request a meeting during NLS. (Where applicable, please contact your state association or state system because in many situations the state association will schedule meetings for the state's delegation.)</p>

Mid-January	Prepare for the Meeting - Your college team should also consider what your “asks” of your elected official will be. These can include introducing legislation on a key priority, support of or opposition to a specific bill, advocacy for federally funded programs that support your school and students, a campus speaking engagement or visit/tour, or funding through Congressionally Directed Spending (Senate) or Community Project Funding (House), formerly known as earmarks.
Late-January	Complete federal funds worksheet – Sharing the impact of these programs on your colleges demonstrates to members and their staff the importance of the federal investment in education and training programs.
Late January	Know your legislators – Do some research into their backgrounds; doing so helps you make a connection and helps you communicate in a way that gets your point across most effectively.
Early February	Group visits – <i>Before</i> the meeting, choose one person to be the spokesperson and start the meeting, decide the key points that should be covered, and who will raise what points.
Mid to late-February	Follow Up – The follow-up email is an important opportunity to continue building your relationship after visits during the NLS. It allows you not only to say thank you for their time, but also to share materials electronically, put any specific questions in writing, and provide any additional information relevant to the meeting discussion. Also be sure to follow up with ACCT by filling out our Congressional Contact Form with a summary of your meeting and expected outcomes or next steps.

* A one-page summary about your college is more likely to be saved in a file and referred to than a bulky packet with the college catalog, numerous program brochures, and financial reports. Bring business cards and let congressional staff know that you can answer any questions they have or provide more information about items on the one-pager upon request. This will be much preferred to an overabundance of information.