



Community College NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

Successful Meeting Tips

- ★ **Be on time, flexible, friendly, and brief:** Arrive early and be willing to wait. **Meeting with staff can be as productive as seeing the Member.** *Flexibility* is important because Members' schedules get re-prioritized at a moment's notice. Stick to the issues and the facts. Congressional staff are friendly and open to meeting with constituents.
- ★ **Have a plan for the structure of the meeting:** Coordinate with others to determine who will start and close out the meeting, order of introductions, speaking roles, and topics of discussion. Designating a note taker will aid in your meeting follow-up.
- ★ **Have college specific information on hand to share:** Institution specific information, including student demographics, enrollment trends, and examples of existing partnerships will help inform Members of Congress and their staff on policy implications. To further familiarize your lawmaker with your college, you can offer to facilitate a tour of your campus (if feasible).
- ★ **Ask about your Member's priorities:** As with any good relationship, it is important to have give and take. Ask your Member what their priorities are—doing so presents an excellent opportunity to find out more about their interests and possible collaboration.
- ★ **Ask for support:** Your representative, your senator, or their staff should be able to give you an indication of the member's level of support for community college priorities.
- ★ **ACCT and AACC:** Remind Members and their staff that ACCT and AACC are two national associations that represent community college trustees and CEOs, respectively. They are available and always willing to provide information on community college issues.
- ★ **Photo Op:** Be sure to ask for a photo opportunity with the Member of Congress or their staff before you leave the meeting. You can use the photo to thank the Member and their staff on social media or to accompany a news release for your local newspaper to show you are working on behalf of your community.
- ★ **Exchange Follow Up Information and Share Leave Behind Materials:** Towards the end of the meeting, ask the staffer for their email address and let them know to expect a follow up email. The email should include contact information for all meeting attendees as well as any leave-behinds you would like to share (especially a one-sheet overview of your college). Remember to start the email with a thank you!