



TIPS FOR MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

The following are suggestions for meeting with your state legislators. The same principles apply for meetings with local or federal officials.

Making the appointment

If you do not have contact information for your Senator or Representative, this web site will provide you with that information (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>).

Make the contact with the office staff person who schedules appointments. A phone call is preferable, although some offices may also schedule via email. One or two weeks in advance are appropriate, but it is sometimes possible to make an appointment only a day or two before you wish to meet with the legislator. You also need to be aware that a legislator's schedules may suddenly change resulting in a last-minute cancellation, or possibly meeting with the legislative aide.

When you make the appointment, briefly and clearly state your purpose.

Example: Hello, My name is... .. from... .. and I work with in the area of... .. I would like to meet briefly with Representative (Senator)... ..while I am in Olympia next Thursday to talk to her about some of my concerns about....

Expect that the appointment will be 15 minutes in length, although sometimes a conversation will last longer or an appointment may be shortened because of a sudden caucus or committee meeting.

If you are unable to schedule a meeting with the legislator at the time you are available, ask if you can speak with a staff member. If this is not possible, at least make a point of stopping by the office during your time in Olympia. This will give you an opportunity to at least meet someone in the office.

Preparing for the meeting

Familiarize yourself concerning the background and interests of the policymaker. What are his or her interests? What are the committee assignments? What kind of contact has this person related to your organization, business or interests?

If you are meeting to discuss a specific concern, try to compile a very brief written summary to leave with the policymaker (and particularly with the legislative staff members.)

During the meeting

Introduce yourself with a one or two sentence statement, briefly summarizing what you do and why this issue is important to you.

Be prepared to explain your concern briefly and clearly. Don't argue or criticize opponents. Concentrate on how the issue affects you,

After the meeting

Be sure to follow up after your appointments. Send a thank you note either via USPS or email and include any material that seems pertinent. A brief note with suggestions for further interaction and/or with information about additional information can be very appropriate.