



Four Easy Steps to a Successful Legislative Site Visit

1. Extend the Invitation

Call the district office of your Congressperson or State Legislator, and ask for a meeting via the Scheduling Secretary, who will want a written request. *A list of representatives by district and local WIC agency and by breastfeeding coalition, and a sample invitation letter are available for download on the “WIC and Breastfeeding Ambassador” web page.* Request a visit to your WIC site or event; however, staff may prefer that you come in to the district office. Be patient and persistent: it may take over a year before you finally get a visit.

2. Invite Key Stakeholders

Don't forget your executive director or CEO, WIC moms, breastfeeding moms, dads and grads, hunger advocates, church advocates, state agency representatives, and staff.

3. Plan an Agenda and Prepare a Packet

Plan a simple agenda that includes give and take with your Congressperson or State Legislator. Always include written material so you don't have to say it all. You might want to include: a fact sheet on your organization, the relevant briefing papers from CWA and NWA (available on line) and contact information for follow-up. Have coffee/refreshments ready. Stick to your agenda. Answer questions as best you can, but if you don't know an answer, say you'll get back to him/her. Relax and tell your story!

4. Send a Thank You Note

Members of the House of Representatives typically receive over 1,000 phone calls, postcards, letters and visits per day, but only about 20 of these will offer thanks. Thus, a thank you note is a great way to distinguish yourself for your Congressperson or State Legislator and give you a chance to restate the main points of your meeting.

Isn't this lobbying, and am I allowed to do it?

Non-profits are allowed to lobby, and many counties employ lobbyists. Simply inviting public officials to visit and chatting with them about key WIC and Breastfeeding issues is not lobbying, it's "public issues education." Even if you were to support a specific piece of legislation, which is technically lobbying, it's usually fine with most nonprofits (check with your boss). You can always go on lunch hour or break and exercise your free speech rights as a private citizen, as well! **For more details on lobbying rights and responsibilities, go to the Alliance for Justice website at www.afj.org, or the IRS at www.irs.gov.**