



## How to Conduct an Effective Meeting with Congressional Offices

There are a few things to be aware of when meeting with a Member of Congress (MC) or Congressional staff in the district or in Washington, DC.

### Before your meeting

- If you are bringing a group with you, decide who should deliver your message. Spend a little time before the meeting to plan who will make each point, such as sustainability.
- Know your message! Be ready to discuss the issue, rather than reading directly from talking points. Don't feel compelled to cover "everything" – concentrate on a few key points that you think might resonate with the Member of Congress or staff.
- In particular, if your group is small, or you're on your own, you may want to only highlight a few issues rather than presenting a laundry list.
- Plan to arrive early. Staffers in some offices have meetings every 30 minutes. If you're late, you'll cut your time short. This is especially important if you are scheduled to meet directly with the MC.
- Dress appropriately. These are professional settings and appearances can impact your perceived credibility.

### In your meeting

- Be cognizant of your representative's time limitations. Many staffers cover several issues and have high demands on their time.
- Some staffers are experts on water and sanitation, others are not. Be prepared to meet with either type and adjust your message accordingly.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, offer to provide the answer later – and do it!
- Engage the Member or staffer in a conversation, soliciting their thoughts and positions on water and sanitation policy issues. If you're reading talking points from a piece of paper, they're much less likely to be engaged. Remember, they have dozens or hundreds of constituent meetings each month—make this one interesting and concise.
- Tell the person you're meeting with why you care about water and sanitation!
- Consider ways to create an ongoing dialogue with staff about water and sanitation, rather than a one-time meeting. Suggest that you would like to follow up with them in a few weeks or months, by email or phone.
- Leave behind the World Water Day advocacy materials, as well as your own contact information.

### After the meeting

- Send a thank you email or letter to the staff.
- Remind the staff of the importance of WASH.
- Provide any additional material that is appropriate.
- Send your completed meeting feedback forms to [advocacy@waterday.org](mailto:advocacy@waterday.org) so that we can build on the great work you've done!