



Planning Your Meeting

Important Points

- Make it local – you are the constituent.
- Make it personal – tell your story or the story of others with DD
- Remember to ask for support. Do not assume they will help.
- You are likely to meet with staff and not Members.
- Be flexible about where your meeting is held. It could be in the hall or the cafeteria.
- Be flexible about time, especially if the meeting is directly with your Member.
- Meetings can last just 15 minutes. **Rehearse so you can make your points quickly if necessary.**

Meeting Details

- Introduce yourself and share where you are from in their district/state.
- Give a brief background on the DD Councils (you could share DD Council Hill handout)
- Share 2-3 stories of what your own state DD Council has done
 - At least one or two real people who have benefitted from your Councils work and how
 - At least one major accomplishment of your Council – a program, some systems change your Council has effectuated etc.
- Ask for their support of the DD Councils
- Leave behind a packet of information
 - Share the DD Council Hill handout
 - Remember the NACDD website has the Council Accomplishments/Fact Sheets of most State DD Councils at <http://www.nacdd.org/about-nacdd/councils-on-developmental-disabilities.aspx>

Print out your own state DD Council's piece and include it in the packet.

- Include your business card with the materials. If you do not have a business card, make sure your name, street address including zip code, phone number and email are clearly included in your materials.
- Thank them for their time and invite them to contact you with any questions.

Do's

- Do arrive on time.
- Do begin by thanking the Member and/or staff for meeting with you.
- Do state your home town – to establish that you are a constituent.
- Do keep your message short, relevant and to the point.
- Do make your ASK! Don't just go over your points. Ask for your Member to support the DD Councils (or ask your Member to support or oppose a particular bill).
- Do justify your request, but Don't overwhelm staff with too much information.
- Do leave suggested letters, fact sheets, or other materials.
- Do thank them.
- Do follow up!

Don'ts

- Don't be afraid. You are a constituent, they need your vote, and you have a good story to tell.
- Don't be argumentative. It's OK to disagree. Be polite but persistent as you make your points.
- Don't claim to be an expert. If you do not know an answer to a question, offer to find out and contact them soon after your meeting.
- Don't assume that Members of Congress or their staff understand the issue and avoid acronyms (e.g. use Developmental Disabilities Council – not DD Council).

Guidance to Council Members and Staff

- NACDD may and does ask for support for certain appropriations levels for the DD Councils.
- DD Council members may ask for support for certain appropriations levels for the DD Councils.
- DD Council employees may and should describe the good work that Councils do but should not ask specifically for federal financial support.

Follow-Up

- Make sure to get a card from the staffer during your meeting so you can contact him or her directly.
- Right after the meeting, jot down any questions raised, and your impressions about the Member's or staff's position on your issues
- Follow-up your visit with a personal letter (e-mail is best) thanking the Member and their staff for meeting with you.
- Send the note directly to the staffer, using this as an opportunity to establish an on-going relationship.