

Tips on Meeting with Legislators

1. **Be on time.** Though legislators or their staff might not be able to see you at the appointed time because their schedules are unpredictable during session, they will expect you to be punctual.
2. **Talking with a legislator's staff is helpful.** If your legislator is not available, it is always worth your time to talk with their legislative assistant (LA).
3. **Introduce yourself as a constituent.** Thank the legislator for taking the time to meet with you. Identify the organization you are affiliated with. Tell a little about your agency's mission and if you know, how many domestic violence victims and children are served.
4. **State your purpose.** Be clear about what legislation you are supporting or opposing. Mention the legislation by bill number and topic. Let the legislator know your position and why you are asking her/him to vote for that position.
5. When asking legislators to support legislation that requires continuing funding, they want to know two things:
 - a. **How the money was successfully spent in the past, and**
 - b. **Why you need continued funding.**Tell stories, indicating how the funding supported services, or where gaps in funding resulted in a shortfall of services in their district.
6. **Bring local data to support your arguments.** The data should be relevant to your legislator's district and key constituencies. Let her/him know you are available as a resource.
7. **Tell constituent stories.** A personal story about how a bill could resolve a problem faced by a battered woman, or a story about how your program has helped a woman or women in the legislator's district, can go a long way in winning support. It personalizes the issue.
8. **Give them a chance to talk** about their perspective on your issue and listen carefully.
9. **Try to draw out specific answers to your questions.** Legislators often speak generally, and may avoid the issues. Ask for their vote and try to get a commitment at the meeting.
10. **If you don't have an answer, find out.** A legislator may ask you detailed questions about a particular bill that you can't answer. Offer to have someone follow up with them, and let WSCADV know about their question.
11. **Send a "thank you" note to your legislator** (or their staff) to follow up with your meeting. Summarize your understanding of what the legislator has agreed to do. Remind her/him that you are available as a resource.
12. **Keep WSCADV informed** of your lobbying efforts. Contact us at action@wscadv.org.