

## Tips for Scheduling In-District Meetings

Meeting in-district with your member of Congress or state legislator and/or their staff is a great way to build a relationship and ensure your priorities are being heard.

Before you get started, make sure you are clear about the issues and piece(s) of legislation you want to discuss and who will be accompanying you to the meeting. Your request will be much more powerful if you are requesting the meeting not only for yourself, but for a group from your congregation, an interfaith group, and/or a coalition of people concerned about a specific issue. A good guideline is to try to keep the meeting to about five participants if you are looking for everyone to have a chance to speak. Check out the [RAC's Tips for a Successful Legislative Visit](#) for more information on planning the meeting once it has been scheduled!

Here are some tips for successfully scheduling an in-district meeting:

### Step 1: Find the Right Person to Contact

To request a meeting, you first need to find the right person who can help you schedule the meeting.

Start by finding the office location closest to you. Members of the U.S. House will often only have one office location in their home state, while members of the Senate will have two or more, depending on the size of the district and state. You can find each office location on the legislator's website, which can be found at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), or by finding the main website for your state legislature.

Call the office closest to you and ask for the name and email address of the scheduler – this is the person you want to be in touch with.

### Step 2: Email the Scheduler

Once you have their name and contact information, email the scheduler with your request. Here's a sample email:

SUBJECT: Meeting request on *(insert issue or bill here)*

Dear *(insert scheduler name)*,

My name is *(your name)*. I am a constituent and a Reform Jew from *(congregation name)* in *(town/city)*.

Along with others from my congregation and community, I would like to schedule an in-district meeting with Senator/Representative *(insert name)* to speak about *(insert issue and/or bill name and number)*. We are hoping to schedule a meeting in *(insert month)*. We have availability on *(insert approximately three dates and times that work for your group)*.

Please let me know if any of these times work, and if not, please let me know when there is availability.

Thank you,

*(your name)*

A couple of notes:

**Make sure you have a constituent connection to the district, and be clear and honest about where that comes from.** For state or U.S. House members, if you are not a constituent, do not claim to be. If you don't live in the district but your congregation is in the district, you can tell them that. If you will be bringing along additional members of your community that are their constituents, you can also tell them that.

You will have a better chance of meeting with your state or federal Representative or Senators themselves if you request dates and times when the legislature or Congress are in recess, meaning the member will be back home instead of in the state capital or Washington. For Congress, the schedule is always subject to change, but [this resource from Roll Call](#) is a great place to start when looking for when they will be in session. Check the website of your state legislature to learn more about their schedule.

If the scheduler gets back and offers a meeting with a staffer, accept it! That's the next best thing. Ask to meet with the head of the office, often called the district director, and/or a legislative staffer who handles the issue you will be discussing.

### **Step 3: Follow Up**

Legislators and their staff are busy, and often won't get back to you right away. Don't get discouraged! If two or three days go by and you don't hear back, forward the original request to the scheduler with a short message letting them know you want to follow up on your previous request. If two or three more days go by, call the office and ask to speak to the scheduler by name. Leave a message or voicemail if that's the option that's given. Keep calling and emailing until they get back to you.

If the office asks for information on the meeting, like who will be attending the meeting, send them the information you have. If you're still waiting to confirm participants or other pieces of the meeting, let them know that you'll send a full list closer to the meeting date.

### **Step 4: Reconfirm Your Meeting**

This is especially important if you scheduled your meeting far in advance – a week or more. One or two days before your meeting, send a note to the scheduler or other staffer to confirm the meeting, reminding them of the topic, the participants, and any other information you want them to have in advance.

***Have questions or need advice? Contact Allison Grossman, Legislative Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, at [agrossman@rac.org](mailto:agrossman@rac.org).***