

# ADVOCACY

EAT SMART MOVE MORE SOUTH CAROLINA



## STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

### BEFORE THE MEETING

#### 1. IDENTIFY YOUR CORRECT REPRESENTATIVE

Search for your representatives with your home address:

- State and Federal: <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/legislatorssearch.php>
- Local: Search for your County or City website. You can find information on councils, council members, districts, and contact information.

#### 2. IDENTIFY PEOPLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING

- Include a coalition member, youth, individuals potentially affected by decisions the officials are making, or constituents.
- Include up to 4 individuals at the meeting. You want to communicate all angles of your position, but try not to overwhelm the representative or their staff.

#### 3. COORDINATE MEETING WITH ELECTED OFFICIAL AND/OR THEIR STAFF

Once you've identified your representative, you can now schedule a time to meet with them.

- Contact your representative by email. Follow-up with a phone call if a response hasn't been received or meeting scheduled.

- Explain the reason you'd like to meet and provide a few times your team is available.
- Designate one person for the official or staff to contact. Include all contact information.
- If you are corresponding with staff, remember that they can be a key ally as they are essential for many elected officials.
- Plan for enough time between your outreach and suggested meeting dates. Elected officials are extremely busy and it will be important to get on their schedules early.
- One week to 10 days prior to the meeting, call to confirm the meeting and share any documents or handouts so the meeting can be as fruitful as possible.

#### 4. HAVE AND REVIEW TALKING POINTS

Your team should be using the same language and terminology. Having prepared messages or important facts easily accessible and distributed will assist in this effort. Keep your message to three points.

## AT THE MEETING .....

### 1. BE EARLY

- Arrive no later than 15 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Use this time to prepare and review or practice your talking points. This will also be the right time to confirm team roles in the meeting:
  - ✓ Greeter
  - ✓ Data Provider
  - ✓ Storyteller/Personal Experience

### 2. TAKE OR USE HANDOUTS

- Provide staff and the elected official with written, pertinent information that they can keep. They will be able to refer back to this information at a later time.
- Condense the information to one page or less. If more details are needed as an attachment, provide them as such.
- Focus on information that is of interest to the official if you have indication of such.

### 3. ABOVE ALL BE COURTEOUS

- Elected officials and activists will not always agree. That's okay. However, you do not want to create an unnecessary opponent or roadblock for yourself.

## AFTER THE MEETING .....

### 1. THANK THEM AND THEIR STAFF

- Send a thank you card to their office.
- Take a photo with the elected official and post it on social media with a thank you and relevant information about your position. Be sure to tag the elected official in the post.

### 2. LET OTHERS KNOW ABOUT THE MEETING

- Communicate with partners via email, social media, and in-person to let them know your meeting's results and suggest they schedule a meeting with their elected officials, as well.

