



SENIORS COUNT 2017

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY VISIT

Scheduling a Meeting

- Find your Legislators (State Senator and Assembly Member) and their office phone number here: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>
- Call the Legislator's office, ask for the scheduler, identify yourself as a constituent and state the name of the organization(s) you represent. You have the best chance of meeting directly with a Legislator in the District Office (vs. the Capitol Office). Many Legislators have only one scheduler who schedules for both the Capitol and the District Offices.
- Ask for 20 minutes of the Legislator's time to discuss aging and long-term care issues. State how many people you will be bringing to the meeting.
- If the Legislator is not available, request a meeting with the staff member responsible for seniors, aging and long-term care, or budget issues. If you do meet with a Legislator, they will likely also have a staffer in the meeting.
- Do not be offended if you are scheduled to meet with a staff person only. This will likely enable you to go into greater depth on the policy issues.
- If meeting in the State Capitol, make sure the advocacy team includes at least one person from the Legislator's district and tell that to the scheduler.

Preparing for the Meeting

- The advocacy team should select a leader to facilitate introductions and the discussion and a note-taker to record how the Legislator/staffer responded to the issues and any follow-up required.
- All advocacy team members should read and be familiar with the documents in the packet. (*Bring two copies per meeting to hand out*).
- The leader and team members should also peruse the Legislator's website to see what committees they sit on and what kind of legislation they are carrying. You can also research their votes on key legislation. You can find all of this information through Assembly.ca.gov and Senate.ca.gov.

The Meeting

- The leader opens by thanking the Legislator/staffer for the opportunity to meet. Members of the advocacy team should then introduce themselves and state the organization they represent.
- The leader explains that the group is part of a coordinated, statewide movement, known as Seniors Count Coalition, to make sure elected officials are aware of the issues affecting seniors and the serious implications the growth of this population has, not only for human well-being, but also for the California State budget and economy.
- The leader gives the legislator or staffer the packet, quickly explains the documents and **clearly** articulates that the group is asking for their commitment and support on senior issues (*see list of issues*).
- Each team member should speak on a topic using the relevant document. (*Do not read the document verbatim, just touch on the highlights. Practice this in advance*).
- The Leader or any appropriate team member should reply to any questions they can.
- If the team doesn't have the answer, write the question down and say "we'll get back to you."
- If the Legislator/staffer expresses support, thank them and offer to be a resource for any further information or assistance they may need including:
 - Letters of support for their senior-related legislation
 - Testifying as a witness in support of their legislation
 - More detailed information
 - Access to experts on aging and long-term care
- If the Legislator/staffer expresses disagreement on any of the issues, politely ask what other information they need to reconsider their position. Don't be demanding or rude.
- At the end of the meeting, thank the Legislator/staffer for their time.
- Give the Legislator/staffer a business card or information for any further contact. Ask for the staffer's card.
- A day or two after the meeting, email the scheduler or the staffer with whom you met and thank them for the visit.