

# CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING A LAWMAKER MEETING

## BEFORE THE MEETING

- Designate someone to greet the decision maker and introduce them to the key people at your meeting, (especially important if you are hosting a large event).
- Welcome the decision maker to the space if the meeting is not in their office.
- The person greeting should know what the decision maker looks like. Their webpage will have a picture of them. (See the previous section on looking up a legislator's webpage.)

## DURING THE MEETING

- Begin with introductions of everyone in the room, having each attendee introduce themselves with their name, relevant organizational affiliation, and how they are connected to the lawmaker's district. For example, do you live there and/or work there, and/or serve people there?
- If you do not have a direct connection to the district, identify the particular knowledge or experience that you have about the issue. For example, you study laws that criminalize homelessness.
- Introduce the issue and be sure to ask if the decision maker is familiar with it. This will help you assess how much background information to give. Even if they say they are familiar with the issue, you should make the key points you want to share.
- Briefly and succinctly explain the issue. Explain why it is important and how it impacts you and your family (if relevant).
- Lead with values. For example: "Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home."
- Share anecdotes from those directly affected and direct service providers.
- Share relevant data. See the [County-by-County Fact Sheet on Housing Affordability](#) from the Department of Commerce.

- Share information on cost savings and returns on investments if relevant.
- Create time during the meeting to clarify questions the decision maker might have or if they need more information.
- Remember to stay on-topic and revisit your main goal if necessary to remind yourself/ the decision maker.
- Always** have an ask for the decision maker (best made toward the end of the meeting, after you give background information). Sample asks:
  - A commitment to talk to the key budget writer to ensure the budget item is prioritized.
  - Vote a specific way on a bill.
  - Speak about the issue to other specific decision makers.
  - If the decision maker seems hesitant or opposed to your issue, consider asking them what questions they have and if they would meet again to talk more.
  - Make sure to leave something behind with your contact information.

## **AFTER THE MEETING**

- Debrief with fellow participants (discuss effectiveness of talking points, roles you played).
- Identify next advocacy steps.
- Send decision makers any materials you committed to send.
- Follow up on any questions asked that you did not answer.
- A great way to remind the lawmaker (and any decision maker) about the issues discussed during the meeting is to take a group picture with the lawmaker and include it in a thank you card.