

Legislative Advocacy Guide

DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL MEETING WITH YOUR LAWMAKER

1. **You delivered your message.** Your message should include the following:
 - the specific harm the budget impasse is causing (or will cause), and
 - the solution (put non-budget items aside and choose revenue over more cuts)
2. **You made a concrete ask.** Examples:
 - “Will you co-sponsor HR 922, The Responsible Budget Resolution?”
 - “Will you take this local impact summary we made about the harm we’re seeing in our community and give it to Leader [NAME] and the Governor?”)
3. **You held your lawmaker accountable in a constructive way.** Example:
 - “Will you let us know by next Friday if you are going to co-sponsor HR 922?”
 - “Will you let us know by next Friday the response from Leader [NAME] and the Governor when you delivered our impact sheet?”

TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY MEETING

- **Know what you want your 2-3 main points to be.** Don’t let the conversation get derailed. Know how much time you have and be sure to deliver your message.
- **Give specific examples of how people are being impacted in the legislator’s district.** Use examples such as personal stories and data. Be specific and concrete.
- **Be prepared to answer tough questions.** Think of questions the legislator may ask and how to answer them. It is okay to get the information to them later if you don’t know.
- **Be ready to ask tough questions (see opposite page).** This is your chance to advocate for your program and the cause that you believe in. Be prepared to push back and put tension in the room – tension creates movement.

BEFORE THE MEETING

1. Decide each person’s role: Impact statement, making the “ask,” follow-up, etc.
2. Schedule the meeting – Be flexible and persistent. Ask how much time you will have.
3. Have a pre-meeting to review roles and practice what each person will say.

DURING THE MEETING

1. Introduce yourself - Say your name and what organization you represent.
2. Tell them the reason you are speaking with them right away.
3. Give them examples of specific impact in their district.
4. Make an ask – Will you speak to leadership, across the aisle, to the press/in public supporting adequate revenue to fully fund services and prioritize a budget over non-budget items? When will you give us a report back?

AFTER THE MEETING

1. Send a thank you to the legislator and provide any materials or answer questions that you said you would.
2. Follow-up with them as agreed in the meeting for them to report back on your ask. Be persistent until you get a report back.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR YOUR LEGISLATORS

It is important to have questions prepared to ask of the legislator during the meeting. Some suggestions are below.

- Cost-effective programs are closing, families are losing services and workers are losing their jobs. [GIVE SOME EXAMPLES. Some are [here.](#)] What are you doing to push for a solution?
- Have you advocated with leadership on our behalf? Will you talk to them and report back to us?
- Have you spoken publically about revenue solutions? Will you say publically that we have had enough cuts, it's time to talk about revenue? [GIVE "AVOID CUTS, CHOOSE REVENUE" 1-PAGE REVENUE "MENU"]
- Who have you spoken to across the aisle about ending the impasse? Who will you speak to?
- **END WITH THIS QUESTION:** When will you report back to us on what you are doing to push for an end to budget impasse and passage of a budget with revenue to fully fund services?

Lawmakers may make certain statements to deflect your advocacy efforts. Don't accept these responses – push back!

Statement: I support your program.

Response: They only way to show support is by supporting adequate revenue and prioritizing the budget over non-budget issues. Will you support (your program/issue area) by co-sponsoring HR 922?

Statement: We need some cuts to (your program) or cuts to something else.

Response: We have already had many cuts. There are many options to raise adequate revenue to stop the harm that cuts are causing. [GIVE "AVOID CUTS, CHOOSE REVENUE" 1-PAGE REVENUE "MENU"]

Statement: We need "reforms" or "turnaround" agenda first before we can pass a budget.

Response: Non-budget items are not relevant. We're here asking you to support a budget that invests in our families and communities. People are hurting right now and our social service infrastructure is falling apart. Let's worry about non-budget items later.

Give example of harm in their district. Isn't it time to give up these non-budget issues? Do you think these issues are worth risking our families and communities and damaging our economy?

Statement: I have no power - you need to talk to someone else (Rauner, Madigan, democrats, republicans, etc.).

Response: As your constituents we need you to represent us and advocate for us. Will you talk to those leaders and advocate on our behalf?