



Citizen Lobbying to Make An Impact

PREPARING-BEFORE THE MEETING

Find out who your representatives are and their contact information. You can go to the Duval County Supervisor of Elections website. <https://www.duvalelections.com/Home> or call them at 630 - 1414. They actually answer the phone! Contact information through the city of Jacksonville is on coj.net - Duval Legislative Delegation.

Make an Appointment: Call or email the office to schedule the appointment. Explain the purpose of your visit and identify the organization (if any) you are with. Let the legislator know that you are a constituent. It may take repeated attempts to schedule, don't give up.

Know the Legislator: Find out the legislator's voting record or background. For the Florida legislature go to <https://progressflorida.actionkit.com>, a selection of progressive bills and each FL Representative and Senator's grade and vote are listed there.

Develop Talking Points and Bring Materials: Begin with an area of agreement with the legislator. Meetings will be short though, so focus on specific legislation or issue(s). Have printed information to leave behind including facts about your priority issue(s), contact information and the organization you are representing. Practice a 30 second speech, including a summary of the important points, the goal of your visit and the "ask".

Decide on Who You Will Go With You: Small groups of 2 to 4 people can have more impact. It is helpful to talk beforehand about who will cover what points.

DURING THE MEETING

Be Prompt: Arrive 5 minutes early. Be prepared to wait. Be patient.

Be Responsive: Listen to the concerns of the legislator. If they have a question, answer it in your own words. If you don't know an answer, be honest and tell them you will get back to them. Brief, personal stories or questions that are relevant can be impactful. Talk about what you know. Share facts about the issue.

Be Strategic: Explain the connection between your request and the best interests of those who live in the legislators district. Share information that demonstrates your familiarity with the district (your neighborhood).

Close the Deal: Finish the visit with an Ask - Stress what you want the legislator to support, oppose and/or vote for or sponsor.

AFTER THE MEETING

Follow Up: Send a letter/ email to the legislator reminding her/him of your position and of the Ask. Thank the legislator for meeting with you. Ask others who share your interest in the issue(s) to contact the legislator urging her/him to follow through with your Ask (i.e. voting Yes on a bill), and to provide more information, facts about the issue.