



## 10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill

Members of Congress receive thousands of meeting requests from constituents and interest groups every year. Most of these requests are delegated to staff members who manage the subject, while a select few, typically those of particular relevance to the Member's district or legislative priorities, may be granted a meeting with the Member directly. During a typical week when Congress is in Session, staffers will attend dozens of meetings covering a wide range of issues, including with veteran service organizations like The American Legion.

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**To have an effective meeting and ensure that you stand out from the crowd, follow these 10 Steps:**

**Step 1: Research Your Members of Congress:** Know their educational and professional background, committee assignments, and key legislation. Understand what matters to their district and identify shared interests. **Read their official bio.**

**Step 2: Be Organized & Assign a Primary Speaker:** Limit your group to 2–3 people; congressional offices are smaller than expected. Include constituents when possible. Choose one person to lead. Consider optics, for example: bring a woman veteran when discussing women veterans issues.

**Step 3: Develop Your Meeting Plan:** Who is telling the pertinent facts and issues? Decide on a clear request that makes sense for this Member of Congress. Do they need to support an existing bill? Or write new legislation? Have your “ask” ready, and ensure it’s something realistic that they can do.

**Step 4: Arrive on Time:** Arrive no more than 15 minutes early. Do not knock, just walk in and let the staffer at the front desk know who you are and who you are there to see. If your meeting leader has a business card, present it (only one) to the staffer at the front desk.

**Step 5: Remain Flexible:** Remember that Members of Congress do not control the Floor schedule, thus your meeting time might shift. **Be flexible and professional.** Sometimes, in order to still meet with you, they may move your meeting to a new location/time, such as a hallway or committee room.

**Step 6: Build Rapport:** Building a relationship with your Member of Congress is vital to your success. Ensuring you meet with your Members of Congress at least once a quarter, particularly back home, is a great way to establish a professional relationship.

**Step 7: Focus on Two or Three Issues:** Our Legislative Agenda covers many topics. Choose 2–3 you’re passionate about. Don’t overwhelm the meeting. Bonus: Give the agenda or point paper at the end of the meeting, so they focus on you, not the paper.

**Step 8: Make Your Ask Personal:** When delivering your “ask” make it personal by telling your Member of Congress how it will help veterans in their district.

**Step 9: Thank Them for Their Time:** Make sure you thank them for your time, even if you do not end with an agreed upon action. Respect goes a long way; remember, you represent The American Legion.

**Step 10: Take a picture!** Share it on social media and tag your Member of Congress. Don’t forget to submit your Contact Report to [www.Legion.org/Action](http://www.Legion.org/Action)