Legislative Visits

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Keys to a Successful Legislative Visit

1. Find Your Members of Congress
2. Organize Your Meeting
3. Make it Personal
4. Do Your Homework
5. Offer Solutions
6. Keep it Short
7. Make Your Ask
8. Follow Up!
Find Your Members of Congress

Every Citizen has three Members of Congress:

- **One U.S. Representative**
- **Two U.S. Senators**

*Note: residents of Washington, D.C. and U.S. territories are represented by non-voting delegates*
Find Your Members of Congress

1. Visit: aidschicago.org/advocacy to find out who represents you in Washington D.C.  
   (Direct link: [http://hq-wf.c.wiredforchange.com/o/8810/getLocal.jsp](http://hq-wf.c.wiredforchange.com/o/8810/getLocal.jsp))

2. Enter your full zip code

3. Write down your congressional elected officials contact information

4. Ask for help!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Your Senators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sen. Dick Durbin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSOB- Hart Senate Office Building, Room 711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 Constitution Avenue, NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC 20510-1304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (202) 224-2152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax (202) 228-0400</td>
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| Sen. Mark Kirk |
| HSOE, Hart Senate Office Building, Room 524 |
| 120 Constitution Avenue, NE |
| Washington DC 20510-1308 |
| Phone (202) 224-2854 |
| Fax (202) 228-4611 |

<table>
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<th>Your Representatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Adam Kinzinger</td>
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<tr>
<td>District: IL-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>LHOB- Longworth House Office Building, Room 1221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Independence Avenue, SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC 20515-1316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (202) 225-3635</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax (202) 225-3621</td>
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Organize Your Meeting

Call

• Call the office to schedule a meeting.
• Ask to speak to the scheduler.
• Be sure to get the email address of the person to follow up with.
• You may need to call a couple of times!
• The office may want you to submit a written request to schedule a meeting.
Make It Personal

Introductions:
• Give your name
• Where you are from
• Relevant background information about yourself

Talk about the expertise you bring:
• As a person living with HIV
• Someone working in the field
• As a concerned community member
• **YOU** know HIV/AIDS issues
• **YOU** are an expert on how HIV impacts your life
  - As a person living with HIV
  - As a person providing services to people living with HIV
• Your personal experiences provide perspective and impact beyond statistics
• Lawmakers need the human story and face to understand importance of policies
Make It Personal

Talk about:

• The issues and programs that matter to you and why

• How those programs help/ed you or the people you serve

• What would happen to you and others people living with and at risk of HIV without these programs or if new programs were developed
Do Your Homework

• Gather the necessary data, develop factsheets and use them!

You can find HIV/AIDS statistics, funding, programs, and related policy issues specific to your state here:

http://cqrcengage.com/aidsunited/HIVbystate

• Think about how the policy asks relate to your life and experiences. To organize your thoughts write out:
  • your personal story,
  • your connection to the policy issue
  • your ‘ask’ for elected officials.
Offer Solutions

This is not the place to complain, but to offer viable solutions to problems and challenges

• Talk about what is working and why
• Talk about where policies and programs can be improved
Keep It Short

• You may have only a few minutes
• Make sure you and your group are well organized so you can deliver your message and ask clearly and concisely
• Stay on your issue
• If the conversation veers, bring it back!
Directly ask if you can count on the policy maker’s support

...Wait and listen for a response.

“Can I count on your to protect Ryan White Part D services in the 2015 budget?”
The Introduction:

My name is Debbie Smith, and I am a resident of your district. I am 29 years old and have been living with HIV for five years. I have two children and receive Ryan White services to help me and my family stay healthy.
Putting It All Together

The Issue:

I am here to talk to you about the importance of maintaining Ryan White Part D funding, which provides family-centered medical care and supportive services to women, infants, children and youth living with HIV.
The Personal Story:

Thanks to Ryan White Part D services my family is healthy and I am employed.

Ryan White provides me with transportation services for doctor’s appointments and childcare services for my family so that I am able to work.

In addition, my Ryan White Part D case-manager assisted me with perinatal care to prevent the transmission of HIV to my children.
Putting It All Together

The Concern:

I’m afraid that without services like these women and children will not get the specialty care they need that is crucial for families living with HIV.

The Consequences:

If Ryan White Part D is not fully funded or combined with other services, women and children living with HIV will greatly suffer from the lack of supportive services, and the risk of HIV transmission from mother to child will increase.
Putting It All Together

The Ask

“Can I count on your to protect Ryan White Part D services in the 2015 budget?”
Other Tips

If conducting meetings with other advocates, determine who will cover which issues.
  • Practice delivering them together.

Arrive at your meeting early.
  • If you can’t avoid being late, call to notify the member’s office.

Be polite and courteous.

Take note of any questions or requests for additional information.
Other Tips

• Hand over materials or fact sheets at end of meeting
• Be gracious, attentive and organized
• Stay on your issue – don’t stray
• Say “I don’t know” if you don’t know the answer to a question
• Thank them for support (if appropriate) and time
• Follow up!
Follow Up!

- Thank the policy maker or staffer for their time
- Tell them you will follow up with them soon
- Send a thank you card to reiterate your ask and show your appreciation
- Send them the additional information they requested and/or answers to their questions
- Keep track of their support or opposition to your asks and call or write to say thank you or to keep pushing them.
Other ways to advocate

• **Invite.**
  Ask an elected official to visit your HIV/AIDS organization or view a program.

• **Write.**
  Write an email, letter or postcard to elected officials, candidates or a newspaper about the need for HIV/AIDS services that support save lives and keep people healthy.

• **Call.**
  A 30-second phone call to an elected official’s office can make an impact. Make a clear “ask” for support of your issue—or thank your representative for supporting your issue.

• **Vote.**
  One of the most important ways you can make a difference is to exercise your right to vote.