

A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

Tips during meeting:

1. Introduce yourself (name and where you live) and explain that you're an American Lung Association volunteer. Tell why you volunteer with American Lung Association (connection to mission).
2. Be polite, non-confrontational, factual and persuasive. Give council members time to respond to your statements and questions.
3. Keep it brief, two to three minutes. Make your points quickly and move on. Practice your story beforehand and time yourself.
4. Pay attention to elected official's body language and their comments to you. Write them down if you can.
5. Ask a question toward them regarding our issue. For example, "How has secondhand smoke affected you and those around you?"
6. If they are not in favor of our bill, ordinance, issue, ask, "What are your main concerns about this?" Then address those concerns, if you have the information.
7. Don't make up answers – defer to staff person, if they're with you. If you don't know, say you don't, but that you'll get the answer to them.
8. Avoid debating a point that's not valid, or a sidetracking conversation. Our focus is to discuss the topic at hand (reducing exposure of secondhand smoke, increased tax on tobacco products, healthy air to breathe).
9. Do NOT read your notes or testimony. Using note cards that summarize points is better than referring to a written speech. Summarize your points – be prepared to provide a copy of your testimony to elected official. Sometimes they quote their constituent's perspective or story during discussion with colleagues or during a vote debate or prior to vote. Your story will paint a visual picture.

At the end of the meeting:

- Thank elected official for their time and outline what you understand their position to be.
- Let them know you'll be following up soon (with information they asked for or to confirm their position).

FOLLOW UP

- **Elected Official:** Following up to thank them for their time is important. Email is fast and convenient, and when dealing with Congress it is vital because regular mail doesn't work well. For others (state and local elected officials), hand written thank you notes go a long way. If there is additional information that was requested during the meeting, this can be an opportunity to educate them again on the issue.
- **ALA Staff Person:** Please send your notes via email, or call the staff person if they didn't get to attend with you.