



AAUW PROGRAM IN A BOX

MEETING WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL: IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS

AT A GLANCE

MEETING WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL: IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Use this program to schedule and conduct a successful meeting with a federal, state, or local public official.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

AAUW members and branches

PROGRAM FORMAT

Meeting

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Time frame: Dependent on public official's schedule

Estimated planning time: One hour

Estimated meeting time: 20 minutes to one hour

Estimated follow-up time: One hour

RESOURCES NEEDED

Supplies: Pen, paper, badges

Handouts: AAUW public policy brochures, printout of AAUW's position on the issue

Budget considerations: Travel

BENEFITS TO YOUR STATE, BRANCH, OR COMMUNITY

- Publicizes AAUW's priorities and stances on issues
- Demonstrates that AAUW members are an active part of a legislator's constituency and are willing to work to influence the position the legislator takes on issues that are important to AAUW
- Expands the role of activism to include working more directly with policy makers
- Creates more opportunities for women to voice their opinions in the legislative process
- Creates a stronger relationship between AAUW members and their legislators

PROGRAM DETAILS

MEETING WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL: IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS

Meeting with federal, state, or local legislators is one of the most effective tools in the activist's toolbox. These meetings are a great opportunity to speak with your elected officials about AAUW issues of concern and ensure that your voice is heard.

For information about expanding activism by setting up a state Lobby Corps, see the [Statehouse Lobby Corps Program in a Box](#).

GETTING STARTED

Before the meeting, gather a small group of AAUW members and coalition partners to plan. Thinking ahead greatly increases your chances of meeting with public officials, and putting together a detailed agenda helps you decide how much time you need for the meeting.

Contact the legislators with whom you wish to meet. If you haven't had prior contact with them, simply call their offices to inquire about the best way to meet with them. Some offices require a written request; others require you to contact the scheduler.

Most members of Congress regularly return to their districts and hold meetings with their constituents. Get in touch with the legislator's local office to learn her or his schedule and set up a meeting.

Be sure to meet as a group for at least 30 minutes before the scheduled meeting. The person leading the group should summarize the issue and give specific, simple talking points for reasons the legislator should support your position. Be sure to leave time for questions, and let everyone know that if they do not have answers to any question they are asked, it is perfectly acceptable to offer to get back to the legislator.

When you meet with your legislator, keep the meeting time limit in mind. It's easy to use a lot of time on pleasantries, so be sure you leave sufficient room to discuss the issue or legislation that has prompted your visit.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

In addition to the resources listed below, [AAUW's Federal Policy Agenda](#) and [Two-Minute Activist](#) can provide you with background information, statistics, and details on legislation, executive actions, or positions that AAUW supports for attaining equity for women and girls.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Briefly introduce yourself and anyone else at the meeting. Make sure to identify yourself as an AAUW member and leader, if appropriate.
2. Briefly introduce AAUW, keeping the meeting time limit in mind.
 - Consider using this AAUW overview: AAUW is a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. Since 1881, AAUW has been one of the nation's leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW has a nationwide network of nearly 100,000 members, more than 1,000 branches, and 500 college and university partners.

Since AAUW's founding, members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day—educational, social, economic, and political. AAUW's commitment to educational equity is reflected in its public policy advocacy, community programs, leadership development, conventions and conferences, national partnerships, and international connections.

- If you have time, describe the work of your local AAUW branches and state organizations.
- 3. Invite representatives of other organizations at the meeting to speak briefly about their organizations. Ask them to keep the meeting time limit in mind.
- 4. If you are meeting with a member of Congress, give her or him a copy of the current *AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record* and point out her or his score. If the legislator has been supportive of AAUW positions, thank her or him for supporting equity for women and girls. If you are meeting with a state or local public official who has supported AAUW positions, thank her or him.
- 5. Raise your issue with the legislator. Use talking points from *AAUW Lobby Corps briefings* or *AAUW position papers*. Leave a copy of the position paper or other background information with the legislator.
- 6. Ask the legislator for her or his support on your issue.
- 7. Listen to the legislator's reply.
- 8. Thank her or him for the meeting.
- 9. After the meeting, please give the AAUW national staff your feedback by filling out this [online form](#), or e-mail your feedback to votered@aauw.org. This feedback allows AAUW to follow up on your discussion and coordinate local efforts with national lobbying.
- 10. Write the legislator a note thanking her or him for meeting with you and summarizing your discussion. Following up with legislators is critical, especially if she or he has requested more information or had a specific question about the legislation or issue.

INCORPORATE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Membership matters! Help grow the AAUW community by inviting prospective members to your event and encouraging them to join AAUW. Visit the [membership campaign website](#) to learn more.

TOOLS

MEETING WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL: IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS

MEETING WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL TOOLS

- [AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record](#)
- AAUW [Lobby Corps briefings](#)
- AAUW [position papers](#)
- AAUW [Two-Minute Activist](#)

PROGRAMS-IN-A-BOX TOOL KIT

The [tool kit](#) includes forms, checklists, and templates that you can modify and adapt for your program or event. The following may be helpful in planning this program.

- Event planning checklist
- Press release template

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT TOOLS

- [Individual members](#)
- [AAUW college/university partner members](#)

CONTACTS

- For questions or information about this Program in a Box, contact voterred@aauw.org or 202/785-7793.