



Advocating in Washington, D.C.

Meeting with your policymaker in Washington D.C. is an effective way to make neuroscience matters a high priority. While you may meet with staff, they make recommendations to their boss, so you can leverage their policy expertise to help your priorities stand out.

To set up a meeting in D.C. see SfN's resource "Scheduling Meetings With Policymakers and Staff." Once you have set one up, the tips listed below are a guide to help you prepare for and execute an effective meeting.

Tips for a D.C. Meeting:

- ▶ Identify 1–3 priorities that are important to you and provide specific information on them. Policymakers and their staff have limited time, so be succinct and discuss your top priority first.
- ▶ Provide tangible information on why they should care about the topic at hand and *how* it affects their constituency. Presenting data and specific information is very helpful in making your case. SfN can assist with this information as well as share concrete "asks," such as requests to:
 - Support sustainable and robust NIH and NSF funding (being sure to quantify the increase from one year to the next).
 - Cosponsor a bill.
 - Become a brain science "champion" and commit to speaking with colleagues to strengthen support.
 - Visit a lab to see groundbreaking neuroscience first-hand.
- ▶ Provide the most important documents or information via email 2–3 days in advance to the congressional staff you're meeting with. Supplying staff with this information gives them a knowledge base before your meeting and can help you communicate your issue more efficiently. When discussing a bill specifically, relevant information to provide in advance and bring to the meeting includes:
 - Name, number, and sponsor(s).
 - Committee(s) of jurisdiction.
 - Cosponsors and party breakdown of support, specifically members of the delegation.
 - Other bill information and analyses.
 - Direct impact on their constituents (creating jobs, improving community health, etc.)
- ▶ Follow up after the meeting — be sure to send a thank you email.

SfN staff are available at advocacy@sfn.org to help you prepare for, and follow-up on any D.C.-based advocacy activities. Working with SfN will also help to facilitate relationships between the policymaker's D.C. and state/district offices.

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