Advocacy Goals

Educate
policymakers about the needs of social work professionals and the communities we serve

Advocate
for specific policies that align with NASW’s values and goals

Develop
or strengthen relationships with elected officials at the local level

Identify
opportunities for ongoing partnership and collaboration

Contact

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Conducting Legislative Visits
A Guide for Advocating on Behalf of NASW - CA
1. Identify your Legislators

Find your legislators at:
findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov
Each State Senators and Assembly members has a webpage, which includes district office locations and phone numbers.

2. Contact

A) Contact the legislator’s office and ask who handles the schedule for meetings and events.

B) Call/Email the scheduler and provide notice as far out as possible. The email should include your name, affiliation, purpose of the meeting, who will be in attendance, and the desired timeline for your visit. If you are lobbying or advocating for a particular purpose, mention that in your message. Find out if they are taking meetings in-person or virtually.

C) Once you have confirmed a date/time with the scheduler, plan and prepare for your meeting thoughtfully. Send a confirmation email to the scheduler a week or so beforehand.

3. Prepare

Read the official’s biography beforehand. Knowing your audience impresses elected officials and their staffers. Keep notes about the demographics of their district, which committees they sit on, what pieces of legislation they have authored or the initiatives they have led, and their voting record.

Meet with your team and divvy up talking points, assigning a lead or two who can help hold, guide, or time check the meeting. Remember the meetings usually last about 15-30 minutes so you want to utilize your time wisely. Develop talking points, and stick to them in an effort to preserve time. Remember to write down any questions you might have.

4. Meet

Introduce yourselves, share names, roles, and if they are constituents. Mention why this particular issue is important to you.

Present your talking points. Keep it conversational; don’t just read off notes. Know which team members are speaking before and after you but maintain flexibility if the conversation goes in a different direction.

If you do not know the answer to a question, offer to find out and follow up.

Ask the official for their support as you are wrapping up your talking points and offer to provide any additional information as needed creating an opening for a continuous dialogue.

Bring brochures and business cards to leave behind or to send by email after the meeting.

Send a thank you email or a handwritten thank you card to the official and/or staff person to reinforce positive relations.

“Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully.”

- Code of Ethics