

Preparing for a Meeting with Your Representative

KNOW YOUR ISSUE

The most important thing to know before meeting with your representative is your issue! The representative is going to assume you are an expert in this area because you care enough to meet with him or her. Take some time before your meeting to read through as much on your issue as you can. Try to set up a 'mock meeting' with another advocate to help you practice explaining your issue!

WHAT TO BRING

Being prepared is essential to having a good meeting.

1. **Issue materials / DPAC leave-behind documents-** If you ever get nervous or forget an important point, use the materials to give yourself a hint! Most materials will be left behind with the representative when the meeting is over, so expect that whatever you come with won't be coming home with you.
2. **Notebook and pen-** you'll want to make a note if the representative asks for follow up information and to write down your impression of the meeting right afterwards so you can write a good thank you card.
3. **Identification (driver's license)-** many government buildings require you to show ID to enter.
4. **Letter of medical necessity-** if the building your meeting is in has security, be prepared to explain any medical supplies, such as an insulin pump or CGM.
5. **Find out what NOT to bring!** Government building regulations on what you can and cannot bring with you vary wildly. Check your building's specific requirements before you go!

WHAT TO WEAR

Plan to dress in business casual clothing for your visit. More than likely, the representative will be dressed in business casual or business formal, and jeans or a tshirt wouldn't be appropriate in his or her office. Staff will likely be wearing business casual as well, so you'll fit right in!

PREPARE FOR NERVES

If you've never done a meeting with a representative before (or even if you have!), it can be daunting. If you think you'll be nervous, plan some relaxation techniques you can practice quickly before the meeting. You'll look more put together, and might even enjoy the meeting!

Did you get a meeting with a staffer instead?

Don't be offended! Staff are often more informed on the nuances of your issue than the representative may be, and they have the ear of the representative. If you can convince a staff member that your issue is worth caring about, they'll convey that to the representative!

• When meeting with staff, be sure to ask about their level of familiarity with your issue. You can skip ahead in your conversation if the staff already knows what you're talking about!

• Following up with staff is just as important as it is when you meet with a representative. The staff may even appreciate it more!