



Mountain State Centers for Independent Living Skills Development Class: **Working With Your Legislators and Other Elected Officials**

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Build A Relationship With Your Elected Officials By Doing The Following:

- Building relationships with elected officials is an ongoing process. Get to know them before a crisis arises in which you may need their help.
- To achieve name and face recognition, you will have to make regular contacts.
- Congratulate them after their election or reelection by letter and/or a visit.
- Don't call, write, or visit only when you need something. As often as possible, call just to say hello, thanks, or to update them with good news.
- Visit your legislators when they are at home.
- Get involved in the political process. Work on campaigns of legislators that share your views.
- Learn how to track bills, budgets, and committee, proceedings.
- Invite legislators to your home for coffee or breakfast.

Seek Opportunities For Informal Time With Legislators, Where Interaction Is More Personal

- Make social contact at events like dinners, plays, sporting events, and concerts.
- Attend meetings held by your legislators, or meetings where they will speak, and address questions to them.
- Invite your legislators to speak to your group or organization on an issue of value to you.
- Host an event like a picnic, party, or a breakfast where your community can meet legislator face-to-face.
- Present an award to your legislator for some deserved services.

Visit Strategies

- Schedule appointments in advance, state the topic in advance to the appointment secretary. Be sure they know you are a constituent. ☐
Confirm your appointment a day or two before your visit.
- Set your goals. Limit the number of issues to be discussed.
- Plan. If you go in a group considering taking no more than five other people with you. Structure your agenda. If you go with a group choose one person to be the spokesperson. ☐
Try to have someone in your group that lives in the legislators district.
- Be brief. Practice your message so you can present the basics in one to three minutes. ☐
Cover your topic in five minutes, ten minutes tops.
- Decide which facts, data, and/or statistics to use to make your points.
- Prepare written materials to leave with your legislator.
- Anticipate questions and have the answers ready.
- Never give a legislator bad information. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell her/him you will get that information for them. Tell them you will get back to her/him at a specific time.
- If you need to get information to a legislator do it in a timely manner. ☐
Always follow through and follow-up.



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