

# FRAC 101: Paper Plate Campaign

A paper plate campaign is an easy – and effective – way of getting your Member of Congress' attention.

## What You'll Need

- Non-coated paper plates, trays or bags (the coating makes it harder for the ink, crayon, or marker to set.)
- Writing utensils
- Glue
- Scissors
- Magazines with pictures of children and food
- Your message written out in big letters so the audience can see it
- Local statistics about hunger or child nutrition programs

## Getting Started

First, you'll want to set a reasonable goal of how many plates you would like to get signed. Try and complete at least ten to make an impression on your Member of Congress. Gather your co-workers, volunteers, friends, and family and have some plates on display so they can get some ideas. Explain that you are going to take the plates to their Member of Congress, so they should be very thoughtful in what they write and draw on it.

If you are working with young children you might want to ask them leading questions to spark their imagination. For example, you may want to ask them about healthy food they like to eat or how they feel when they are hungry.

Encourage them to think about what information and images they would like to include on their plates. Some options:

- Pictures (either drawn or cut out of magazines) of healthy foods.
- Local data about participation in programs like the school lunch program.
- A story about how the child nutrition programs have had a positive impact.

Be available for questions or suggestions while they are drawing or writing on their plates.

## Delivering the Plates

It's best to deliver the plates in person and while your Member of Congress is in your area. Based on timing, you can present the plates during a meeting with your Member or you can present them during a site visit to your organization.

If you have scheduled a meeting with your Member, ask other anti-hunger advocates to join you. If you can not meet directly with the member, try to meet with someone in his office that covers child nutrition.

If you are able to organize a site visit, be sure to select a site that is running a children's program. Be sure to allow for time for the member to talk with the children. Arrange for the children to present the plates to the member. For more tips, check out FRAC's guide to organizing a site visit.

## Publicity

The plates provide an excellent opportunity for you to generate news and highlight our common message. For example:

1. Hosting a site visit? Send out a media advisory to notify media about the event. Be sure to highlight the plate delivery as a photo opportunity.
  - a. You can also highlight a visit to the district office. Just be sure to coordinate with the member's press office.
2. Create your own news. Take plenty of pictures, especially with the member and the plates. Post the photos on your website, Facebook account, or even Twitpic (be sure to tag FRAC!). Then send out an email to your network that recaps the visit.

\*Ask your Member of Congress to do the same and post the pictures on their websites.

## Best Practices

- Ohio Association of Food Banks, Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, gave paper plates with the personal stories of clients at their food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens to highlight the need for state funding to elected officials.
- Alameda County Community Food Bank, Allison Pratt, collected over 1,000 decorated trays to hand deliver to Members of Congress in their district offices, and at public events.
- Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium, Jeff Kleen, encouraged organizations from California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona and Montana to send postcards to the D.C. offices of their Members of Congress.