

A Community Call is an effective and efficient way for advocates who have limited travel budgets to connect with their Members of Congress throughout the year. Members of Congress appreciate the opportunity to speak with constituent groups and advocates get the chance to organize a diverse group of stakeholders who represent the concerns of low-income individuals who are living in the congressional district.

How Do I Organize a Community Call?

Select a List of Participants

- Organize a small, but diverse, group of community leaders to participate in the call. These participants could include:
 - anti-hunger advocates;
 - after school providers;
 - food banks and other emergency food providers;
 - school officials and education organizations;
 - locally elected officials;
 - doctors and others from the health and medical fields;
 - child care providers;
 - religious leaders;
 - law enforcement, and;
 - other stakeholders.

Schedule a Meeting With Your Member of Congress

- Call the Congressional Aide who handles food and nutrition issues for your Member of Congress and request a date and time for the Community Call. During the call, explain the concept of the Community Call and what issues the group would like to discuss.
- E-mail a formal invitation to the Congressional Aide and the Member's scheduler, including

the list of participants (with the name, organization, position, town, and contact information for each participant), and background information on the issues you would like to discuss.

- **Tip:** If possible, try to have an advocate in the room with the Member of Congress during the call. If a constituent group is unable to have a local representative in the room, FRAC can participate in the call. This person can facilitate the conversation and give materials to the Member of Congress and Congressional Aide in person.

Organize a Planning Call With Participants

- Organize a call in advance with participants to review the Community Call's format and roles.
- Come to an agreement on the topics that will be discussed, topics to be avoided, common message, and "ask" of your Member of Congress.
- Develop a set of talking points and mention any statistical data that you plan to share during the call.
- Assign talking points to each advocate so everyone has an opportunity to participate. If any of your partners cannot participate in the actual call, ask them to send a letter of support.

- **Tip:** Remember to let the Congressional Aide know in advance what topics you would like to discuss by sending an agenda and background materials.

Make the "Ask"

- After you discuss the issues with your Member of Congress, make sure someone is tasked to request him or her to do a specific action. Examples include:
 - Sponsor or co-sponsor a bill;
 - Sign a "Dear Colleague" letter that may be circulating at the time of the call;
 - Write a letter of support or opposition to the Committee Chair or the Ranking Member;
 - Deliver a "one minute" on the floor of the House or Senate in support of, or in opposition to, a program or proposal;
 - Initiate any other action that would establish your Member as a champion for federal programs.

Follow up

- It is crucial to follow up with your Member of Congress and their Congressional Aide after the call.
- Please let us know how we can help you prepare for a Community Call.
- Questions? Contact Lauren Badger, Government Relations Associate, Lbadger@frac.org, 202-986-2200 x3023.