

**TAKE ACTION:
 ORGANIZE A PAPER PLATE
 OR POSTCARD CAMPAIGN**

The federal nutrition programs benefit millions of low-income families each day. These programs are public policy at its best, and that is why it is critically important for Members of Congress to see the efficacy of these programs from a variety of perspectives. A paper plate or postcard campaign is an easy, effective, and fun way of getting your Members of Congress' attention by collecting stories and testimonials from constituents.

How Do I Organize a Campaign?

Set a Goal

Set a reasonable goal for how many plates or postcards you would like to send. To make an impression on one Member of Congress, you should gather at least 25 messages. If you want to send paper plate or postcard messages to your entire congressional delegation, instead of one target, your number will be much higher.

Recruit Participants

Recruit a diverse array of participants from your community. They can include coworkers, volunteers, partner organizations, program participants, teachers and schoolchildren, friends, family, business leaders, and other community members who know the importance of federal nutrition programs.

Decorate

Materials Needed:

- Non-coated paper plates, postcards, or trays (the

coating makes it harder for the ink, crayon, or marker to set);

- Writing utensils (markers work well; other optional materials for decorating purposes will require glue and scissors); and
- Sample messages that include local statistics about hunger and federal nutrition programs.
- **Tip:** Make sure you have a few sample plates or postcards on display so participants can get some ideas. Explain that you are going to send the plates or postcards to their Members of Congress, so they should be very thoughtful and creative in what they write and draw on them. Encourage them to think about what information and images they would like to include, such as:
- Pictures of attractive healthy foods (either drawn or cut out of magazines);
- Local data about participation in specific programs; and

- A story about how nutrition programs have had a positive impact on them.
- **Tip:** Be sure to include the town and state to remind Members that a constituent is sending the message.

Deliver the Plates or Postcards

If possible, it's best to deliver the plates or postcards in person. Schedule a meeting or site visit with the Member of Congress to deliver the plates or postcards and discuss how to strengthen and protect the federal nutrition programs. If possible, arrange for some of the individuals who created the plates or postcards to present them to the Members of Congress during a site visit.

If you cannot schedule a meeting with the Member, request a meeting with his or her Congressional Aide (who handles nutrition issues) and ask them to deliver the plates or postcards.

For more tips on planning a site visit, check out FRAC's Advocacy Tools webpage.

Publicity

Plates or postcards provide an excellent opportunity for you to generate news and highlight a common message with FRAC. For example:

- *Hosting a site visit?* Send out a media advisory to notify media about the event. Be sure to highlight the delivery as a photo opportunity.
- *Meeting with Members of Congress?* Tell people about it via press releases, social media, or blogs. Be sure to coordinate with your Members of Congress' press offices.
- *Create your own news.* Designate someone from your organization to photograph the event (ensuring that you have releases from any private persons to be photographed). Take plenty of pictures, especially including the Members of Congress with the plates or postcards. Post the photos on your website and social media pages.

Be sure to tag FRAC! Remember to send out an email to your network recapping the visit.

- *After the event ...* Be sure to share and highlight any resulting press with your Members of Congress' offices as well as with your supporters.
- Ask your Members of Congress to do the same and post the pictures on their website and other social media accounts.

For More Information

- Please let us know how we can help you prepare for a paper plate or postcard campaign, or let us know about a campaign you are planning, so we can share it with others.
- Questions? Contact Kate Sims, Senior Government Relations Associate, ksims@frac.org, 202-986-2200 x3023.