



HILL VISIT OUTLINE & TIPS



Prepare Before You “Go”:

- A. Review your materials and ask ACTE staff any questions you may have. Refer to the relevant sections of the NPS website if you need more background information.
- B. Coordinate with others with whom you will be making visits during your State Planning Meeting. Outline who is going to play what role in the meeting and what will be discussed. Use the planning checklist provided on the NPS website.
- C. “Arrive” on the video platform (Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) or conference line 5-10 minutes early to ensure that you have no technical issues and that you feel comfortable using it.
 - If it’s a new platform, you may have to download a software. We suggest reviewing the platforms for your meetings and downloading the software before Capitol Hill Day.
 - Practice with your colleagues or family to test your internet connection and/or phone signal and ensure your face is well lit if using video.
- D. Secure a quiet, distraction-free space without political signs/affiliations present (posters, stickers, shirts, etc.). Notify those who you live with in advance to ensure privacy and silence when possible. Avoid distracting backgrounds and be sure to silence your cell phone.
- E. If you are using Zoom, consider using a picture of your organization’s logo, or the NPS Zoom image for your background. For instructions on how to add a virtual background on Zoom [click here](#).
- F. If your internet is not reliable, you may want to use your phone to call in to the video platform so that if your video stops working congressional staff are still able to hear you.

Important Note: If for some reason you cannot attend your meeting, it is highly recommended that you email ACTE’s Public Policy Team or your State leader so that they can ensure there is coverage for your meeting. If not, Members of Congress and their staff could be left waiting for a meeting with no participants.

During your Visit:

- A. Introduce yourself, clearly state where you are from and that you are a constituent and briefly describe your role in CTE.
- B. Mention that you are attending a national conference sponsored by the Association for Career and Technical Education—policymakers need to understand this connection to be responsive to our national advocacy efforts.
- C. Cover the following visit priorities:
 - Highlight the CTE programs in your community.
 - Make sure Members of Congress know that local CTE programs are supported by Perkins funding and how critical this legislation is to your community.
 - Ask that your Member of Congress work to increase funding for Perkins.
 - Share ACTE’s Legislative Priorities document.
 - Ask your Member of Congress to join the House or Senate Congressional CTE Caucus if they are not already a member.
- D. Ask about their priorities related to education and workforce development.
- E. If you are meeting before Thursday, invite them to attend the NPS Virtual School Visit to get a first-hand look at CTE programs.
- F. Thank them for their time.

Top Tips for Member Meetings

1. **Be prepared.** You want to establish—and then strengthen—a relationship with your legislator and his/her staff. You should prepare thoroughly, be polite, be as specific as possible, and never threaten (remember CTE is one of the last real bipartisan issues).
2. **Accept meetings with staff.** Don’t be concerned if you end up meeting with staff rather than your member of Congress. In many cases, this can prove to be equally or more productive. They are the eyes and ears for the legislator and have a lot of influence over policy decisions.
3. **Budget your time.** Be concise, but cover all the points you wish to make. In general, it is best to address a limited number of issues (three maximum). Most meetings last anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes, so budget your time wisely and leave time for discussion.
4. **Be personal.** Explain why the issue is important to you and to people in your district/state. Speak from your personal experience and illustrate your points with real people and examples, if possible. Explain the consequences that adverse action or failure to act will have on individuals in your state, city, or town.

5. **Be specific.** If possible, cite sources of independent support for your position (opinion polls, studies, etc.).
6. **You don't need to know everything.** If you do not know the answer to a specific question, offer to have ACTE staff follow up to provide additional information.
7. **Request action.** After you make your points, request specific action, and don't be afraid to ask the legislator's position. If they are currently undecided, ask them to inform you by mail or email when they make a decision, and to tell you why they took the position. If you are asking the legislator to provide leadership in moving something forward, ask him/her to provide you with a response or report on what happens.
8. **Leave contact information.** Leave your name, address, email address, affiliation, and telephone number with the member of Congress or staff. Thank them for taking time to meet with you.
9. **Stay in touch.** Follow-up the visit with an email thanking the member of Congress or staffer for their time and briefly summarizing the major issues discussed. Be sure to follow through on any commitments you made and provide any additional information requested. Keep in touch with the member of Congress and staff through occasional correspondence and visits to the local/state office.
10. **Finally, remember** that staying power and relationships are keys to accomplishing anything! Stay in the struggle and strive to maintain good communication with your members of Congress.