

LDDI Exercise– Meeting with Your Member of Congress

Length: 1:30

Background

As part of your organizing work in support of the Kids Safe Chemicals Act, you will be meeting directly with your MOC at their Washington, DC office with a group of leaders from your organization. Prior to meeting with your MOC you will meet with your team to plan a strategy and assign roles for the meeting. MOC's will vary from supporters (tepid or otherwise) to undecided and swing votes, to those who are likely to oppose KSCA. This exercise will practice creating both the strategy meeting prior to the MOC meeting and the actual meeting with a MOC. The goals for your meeting with your MOC are to:

- Convey that passing KSCA is important for the MOC's constituents
- Make a direct ask of the MOC to support KSCA
- Respond appropriately to the MOC, depending on their position
- Secure a commitment to meet again in the district (if appropriate)

Task

For this exercise we will divide into 4 small groups of 7-8 people each. Each group will be assigned a MOC. Each group will be given a number 1-4 which corresponds with a brief description of their MOC on the following page. For this exercise, you will assume that your small group is the group of people who will meet with the assigned MOC. The challenges of this exercise are threefold:

- To ***develop a specific strategy and message*** to educate the MOC about why this is an important issue for their constituents and how it impacts them
- To develop a strategy for making a ***clear, concise and direct ask*** of the MOC that is appropriate based on what you know about the MOC before the meeting
- To ***assign specific tasks*** to group members and coordinate presentations for an effective meeting.

The exercise will be completed in these parts:

1. Each group will have **25 minutes to develop the strategy and prepare** for the meeting using the attached worksheet.
2. Each group will then have a **10 minute mock meeting with a MOC** (played by one of the trainers) in front of the whole room.
3. After each mock meeting we will spend 1-2 minutes only highlighting things that worked well from that group's meeting.
4. After all the meetings are completed, we will complete a full debrief.

Tips

- Be sure to designate one of your small group members to facilitate your small group and to help keep your group on task.
- As a whole group you will want to decide on what roles each of you will play. You may then want to prepare your part of the meeting separately. Be sure to allow time at the end to coordinate how you will make your presentation.

Member of Congress Scenarios

Each group will be assigned a number 1-4 that corresponds to a Member of Congress below.

1. **Representative Hart.** Rep. Hart is an eight-term liberal Democratic representative from a solid Democratic district. The district is an urban (formerly) industrial district that has been in economic crisis for 15 years with the loss of manufacturing jobs, and as families move out the demographics of the district are becoming increasingly older and lower-income. Hart serves on a key subcommittee that KSCA must pass through before coming up for a full House vote. In the past, Hart has been a strong supporter of chemical policy reform initiatives but hasn't taken a position or action on KSCA.
2. **Representative Waverly.** Rep. Waverly is a six-term fiscally conservative/socially moderate Republican in a first-ring suburban district. The district is increasingly becoming a swing district, but Waverly is known for strong constituent services, and as a result has won by large margins even as the district has changed. The district has a rapidly growing number of young families. Before coming to Congress, Waverly ran a very successful small telemarketing business and considers himself strongly "pro-business". Waverly has had little contact with your group in the past. Waverly's district includes two major industrial polluters.
3. **Representative Testing.** Rep. Testing is a very personable, first-term moderate Democrat from a rural district and was swept into office in 2006 as part of the change wave. The district itself is rather moderate and the previous incumbent was a Republican who served for 10 years but who had staunchly supported the war in Iraq until it was too late. Testing has not been a distinguished representative and has been rather cautious in marching with the Democratic leadership, afraid of being labeled too partisan. Tester's campaign message was to end the gridlock in DC and bring everyone together, and to be a voice in DC that represents and is in tune with the district. A member of your group served on a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) board with Testing for four years before he was elected.
4. **Representative Crass.** Rep. Crass is a three-term conservative Democratic representative from a moderate exurban district. The district has a large retired population, but is changing rapidly with many young families moving in for cheaper housing. A former long time funeral director, Crass won based on a strong personal network among older voters. Crass has voiced a free-market, anti-regulation ideology and is strongly supported by the Chamber of Commerce and the National Business Association. Though they don't have facilities in his district, a major chemical company is based in Crass's state and have given him the maximum campaign contribution in each of his two elections.

Meeting with a Member of Congress Worksheet

<p>1. Based on the scenario description, what do you think the MOC's interest (stake) is in this issue?</p>	
<p>2. How will you connect KSCA with this interest?</p> <p>[This will be your core message.]</p>	
<p>3. What objections might you anticipate from the MOC?</p> <p>[Note: this may be done as a whole group, or individually based on assignments below.]</p>	
<p>4. How will you respond to the objections and stay on message?</p> <p>[Note: this may be done as a whole group, or individually based on assignments below.]</p>	
<p>5. Who will take responsibility for the following roles in the presentation?</p> <p>[Note: you will need to decide what stories and how many stories are actually needed.]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who leads the meeting? • Who tells a personal story? • Who makes the ask? • Who answers specific questions on KSCA? • Who is the meeting recorder?