

# Finding Your New York State Elected Officials



To find your NYS and Federal elected officials, visit the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network at [www.acscan.org](http://www.acscan.org).

In the middle of the page, click on “Who Are My Elected Officials”. This page allows you to enter a zip code (and address if necessary) to find your federal and state elected officials. To toggle between federal and state reps, click on “NY Officials” or “Federal Officials” in the center of the top toolbar.

To see a map of each legislative district and get office locations for your legislators, you must go to the websites for the NYS Senate and Assembly

Senate:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/>

You can search by address for a Senator using the “Find My Senator” search field on the upper left of the web page.

Assembly:

<http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/>

Click on “Assembly Members” on the left toolbar. From that page, you can select a member, or search for a member using the search field on the right side of the page.

You can purchase a print directory of all New York State and the state’s Federal legislators from Capitol Hill Management Services at 518-462-6805.

## Rules for Successful Legislative Visits



- First, do your homework – learn about the member and their positions on your issues
- Initiate the meeting by calling or sending a letter. Every office has a different scheduling process.
- Meeting with staff is good, especially if you are meeting with the office for the first time.
- Keep it brief – you likely will not get more than 20 or 30 minutes (less if you are meeting on a session day at the Capitol).
- No more than 4-5 skilled participants should attend – more is overwhelming
- Bring people and stories that can demonstrate the scope of the problem or issue
- Role-play in advance
  - *Define roles among participants (opener, purpose, personal story, pin-down question, leave-behind packet)*
- You control the meeting and agenda
- Prepare brief talking points on issues to keep you on message.
- Give member time to give their thoughts on topic, but keep them focused
- Repeat the one thing you would like them to remember
  - Or make specific request (attend event, etc)
- Thank them and follow up with any requested materials

## 10 Tips on Meeting with Elected Officials



1. Come prepared. Each participant should know what role they are playing. Bring a packet of materials for the supervisor. Know how much time you have for the meeting. Know the issues. Know your allies and opponents.
2. Identify everyone in the room. It is important for the supervisor to know which organizations are represented, where they are based, and how many members they have. Be sure to point out which advocates are constituents.
3. Say what you know. Never lie. There is no faster way to lose your credibility than to give false or misleading information to a supervisor. If you don't know the answer to a question, acknowledge it and offer to get the facts and get back them.
4. Be specific and direct about what you want. Remind yourself what the purpose of the meeting is. Do you want the supervisor to know tobacco-related mortality in his district? Attend an event? Make sure you ask in a clear, direct manner. Only one person should ask the "pin down" question.
5. Stay focused. Elected officials are good at getting advocates to engage on every topic except the one at hand. Forcefully, but politely, steer the conversation back to the issue you came to lobby on. Do not leave before you get answer to the key questions.
6. Don't argue. No matter what, stay cool. You don't win any points for passion by arguing with an elected official.
7. Maintain control of the meeting. Don't let the supervisor start facilitating the meeting. You asked for the meeting. You are the one with the agenda.
8. Briefing materials should be brief. Elected officials glaze over thick packets of information.
9. Anticipate the arguments of your opponent. It is better to address your opponent's arguments early in the dialogue. Do so directly and openly, without a hint of defensiveness.
10. Follow-up and follow through. Send a thank you note to the person you met with. The note should restate the commitments you extracted in the meeting. Follow-up after an appropriate interval to find out if the supervisor did what they committed to do. It's also important for you to follow through on commitments that you made.