

CHECKLIST for meeting with your member of Congress (MoC)

Building relationships with members of Congress (MoCs) is essential to our mission of pursuing a world without hunger. And there is no better way of building the relationship than by meeting in-person with your MoC and staff. Meeting with your MoC may seem intimidating at first (we can all relate), but you'll get the hang of it. Remember, your member of Congress works for and represents you! And your [Bread for the World organizer](#) is here to support you through the process.

**Note: Some of the steps below are not chronological, so be sure to review the entire checklist first.*

○ REQUEST THE MEETING

- **1. Start with a call to the local or DC office.** Check your MoC's website for phone numbers.
- **2. Ask for a meeting with the MoC.** Let them know you are a constituent. Be as flexible as possible with the date and time of the meeting. The local office will be able to tell you what to do to proceed with the request. (Every office has its own process for scheduling visits, but they will usually go through the MoC's scheduler.) You should plan on asking at least a month before your preferred date.
- **3. Use our [sample meeting request letter](#) if needed.**
- **4. Provide additional information as needed** and to help get your MoC's attention (staff often ask for names of participants, their positions and specific issues or legislation to be discussed). Be sure to indicate if clergy or other community leaders might attend and/or someone whom the MoC knows. Remember, actual attendance depends on the date and time.
- **5. Be respectfully persistent.** Schedulers are VERY busy people. But if you haven't heard back after a week, it's generally okay to ask for an update on the status of your request. Remember: the scheduler is your ally, so be politely persistent without crossing the line into annoying.
- **6. Meeting confirmed.** Sooner or later, you'll likely get a reply saying the meeting is confirmed, either with the MoC or with staff. Trust us, this is super exciting! And don't fret if you get a meeting with staff. They are sometimes even more important because they advise the MoCs on issues and legislation.

○ PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

- **1. Invite others and build your team.** Some ideas: family, friends from your church, your pastor, recognized leaders in your community, and key stakeholders on the relevant issues. (*Be sure to do this concurrently with requesting the meeting, so your team is ready to go!)
- **2. Let your team know when the meeting is confirmed.**
- **3. Do your homework.** Research your MoC and try to figure out what he/she cares about.
- **4. Schedule a Zoom or conference call a few days before the meeting** to bring everyone up to speed and assign roles:
 - Send around any relevant documents (e.g., fact sheets) before the prep call.
 - Identify the meeting leader/facilitator (this person is typically the one who leads the introductions and who introduces Bread for the World).
 - Review and assign the main ask(s), talking points, and leave-behind materials.
 - Identify any specific stories to share in the meeting.
 - Assign a notetaker.
 - Determine who will follow up after the meeting.

○ THE MEETING

- **1. Gather with your team at a nearby location at least 30 minutes before the meeting for a final review.** This also ensures everyone will be on time to the meeting! You may want to pray together.
- **2. At the beginning of the meeting, ask the MoC or staff how much time you'll have.** (Usually, it will be between 15 and 30 minutes but might be longer or shorter.) This is a sign of respect, and it makes a good impression.
- **3. Thank your MoC for any positive actions taken in recent months or years.** This includes votes, cosponsoring, public statements, etc. If you aren't sure, your [Bread organizer](#) can help you find something.
- **4. Read body language; ask questions.** Before you launch into who you are and why the issue is important, ask if they have heard of Bread for the World, how familiar they are with the issue, etc. This may give you clues as to how to proceed with the conversation.
- **5. Make sure everyone introduces him or herself, including the MoC and staff.** Introductions should be brief but be sure to mention to whom you're connected and reporting (e.g., your church).
- **6. Be flexible.** Cover the talking points and stories, but don't be afraid to let the conversation go in unexpected directions as well. Remember, this is about building a relationship with your MoC and staff. Be conversational.
- **7. Make the ask.** Be clear and concise. Provide any leave-behind materials (e.g., fact sheets).
- **8. Figure out the best way to stay in touch.** Keeping in touch with the key staff on the issue(s) will be immensely helpful. Ask for business cards.
- **9. Get a photo.** It is perfectly acceptable for your group to ask to have a picture taken with the MoC and staff. They often like to post pictures of constituent visits on their website or social media, and you can use the picture to publicize your visit and your ask. (Don't be discouraged if they say "no" to a photo. Some offices are more sensitive than others when it comes to photos.)

○ AFTER THE MEETING

- **1. Debrief immediately after the meeting.** Share initial thoughts, feelings, and analysis. Confirm key takeaways and next steps, and *make sure everyone is clear on who's doing what next.*
- **2. Send two thank-you emails.** One to your team, and one to the MoC and staff. For the latter, you may also want to send a hand-written thank-you note.
- **3. Report back.** Let us know how the meeting went by filling out an [in-district action report](#). This helps Bread's policy team in Washington, DC, follow up with the office as effectively as possible.
- **4. Celebrate! You did it!**

DON'T FORGET TO [REPORT YOUR MEETING!](#)

Thank you for your leadership and for partnering with us as we pursue a world without hunger!

