



Advocacy in a Virtual Environment

Benefit Protection Team Leader Webinar
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Virtual Lobbying Meeting Tips

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mid-Winter for the upcoming year will be Virtual.

The pandemic has required us to alter our advocacy practices, but we can still be just as effective with phone calls and video chats when face-to-face meetings are not possible.



Scheduling a Virtual Meeting

By Phone

Call the member's office and ask for the scheduler to see if they are accepting requests for virtual meetings

By Email

Send a request to the scheduler and ask to set up a meeting via conference line or video platform

Scheduling a Virtual Meeting (Continued)

Once the meeting is scheduled:

- Confirm the virtual platform to be used
- Determine who will be sending the invitation to the meeting

Make sure you share the virtual meeting login information or phone number with all participants if you are using a meeting room or conference line

Materials for a Successful Meeting

- Gather materials you want to share with the member's office
- A day prior to the meeting, confirm the meeting with the scheduler or aide
- Outline an agenda with tasks for each person using your Talking Points
- Practice and test technology well in advance of your meeting

The Meeting

- Be punctual
- Open your meeting with brief introductions
- Dress professionally
- Avoid background clutter and background noise

The Meeting (continued)

- If the meeting is with a staff member, that can be as good or even better than meeting with the representative
- If you plan to lobby with a group of advocates, you may want to designate roles, such as a facilitator, a tech manager, a note-taker, etc.
- Establish cues for when each person should speak (this can be part of the facilitator's role)

The Meeting (continued)

- Refer the elected official or staff member to DAV materials
- Actively listen and ask questions
- When appropriate, make a specific “ask” in your meeting: for example: Can we count on your support for (insert a specific bill/and summarize what it will do)

The Meeting (continued)

- Your elected official may not have much knowledge on an issue—be prepared with a brief summary explanation
- Take detailed notes
- Ask the member of Congress or staff member if you can take a snapshot of the screen or a selfie with the screen to share later
- Always be courteous and thank the elected official or legislative staff for their time and consideration

Post-Meeting Activities

- Tweet your members of Congress to thank them for the meeting and include a photo if you have one
- Remember: No lobbying meeting is the final conversation with a member of Congress
- Share what you learned by completing a “Meeting with Congress” in DAV’s Commander’s Action Network (CAN)
- Share what you learn during your meeting with your advocacy network



Virtual Mid-Winter Events

- February 21, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Virtual Webinar to review Critical Policy Goals for the 117th Congress
- BPTL Happy Hour on February 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

