

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH CONGRESS

Meeting with a Member of Congress, or congressional staff, is a very effective way to convey a message about an issue such as the value of the National Science Foundation and USDA research programs to the nation.

### Meeting Guidelines

1. **Dress appropriately.** Follow the DC dress code. Business attire is the norm on Capitol Hill.
2. **Be on time and be prepared to wait.** Changes in the legislative calendar and office activity often necessitate Members and their staff to deal with other things.
3. **Be prepared and succinct.** Most meetings will last only about 10 minutes so plan on getting to the point quickly.
4. **Use a short anecdote or offer facts** that illustrate the value of NSF/USDA research to the state or district. (e.g. the state receives X NSF \$ each year; examples of new knowledge brought about by this investment).
5. **Limit the presentation.** If coming as a group, select a spokesperson (should always be a constituent) and a common strategy to come across as a cohesive team. Not everyone participating in the meeting needs to speak to get the talking points across, but complementary examples across the disciplines are valuable.
6. **Don't monopolize the conversation and don't patronize or complain** to the Member or staff. Remember you are part of a team of scientists with the common goal of encouraging support for science research and education.
7. **Follow-up** the meeting with a thank-you letter to the Member and staffer and offer to be a source of information in the future.



