

Structuring Your Hill Visit

Meeting with your Members of Congress (or legislators) is a great way to build a relationship with their office and staff. They might not know of your Center and programs. You can educate them about what is happening to people with disabilities in the state or territory. It helps them know why it is important to fund disability programs and how policy changes they make improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Use these talking points as guide when meeting with your Members of Congress or their staff:

Describe your Center:



[Your Center's Name] connects the university to the community. Our job is to meet the needs of people with disabilities through research, education, and service. Some of our projects include [highlight key projects]. [Your Center's Name] is one of 67 UCEDDs, 60 LENDs, 16 IDDRCs that form a national network. The network works on many topics that affect the lives of people with disabilities, such as healthcare, education, employment, and improving other services and supports for people with disabilities. Our work supports families in all our communities since disability is a natural part of the human experience.

Tip: Remember that many Members of Congress and staff may not be familiar with many of the terms and acronyms that we use in the disability community. Be sure to use full names instead of acronyms.

Educate Your Members of Congress or Their Staff:

There are many areas of concern for people with disabilities. Pick 2-3 to discuss with them. Share with the office what the legislation is, why they are important and its impact on your state or territory for people with disabilities. It is important to always share with your members' offices about how federal funding is used in their state or territory. It tells them what is important to you in the yearly federal budget and appropriations process. (Remember that if you are being paid with or traveling on federal funds that you cannot lobby. See AUCD's Factsheet: Education versus Lobbying: Know the Difference).



The federal laws that create your Center or program and authorize funds for it include:

- **UCEDDs** – Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Assistance Act
- **LENDs** – Autism CARES Act
- **IDDRCs** – Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- **Projects of National Significance** – Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Assistance Act
- **TPSIDs** – Higher Education Opportunity Act

Share Your Stories:



Talk about your personal stories with disability. Connecting policies to people helps Members of Congress and their staff to understand the real-world effects. Bring local or state specific information and facts. Make yourself a long-term resource to them on issues impacting persons with disabilities.