TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

PRE-MEETING
Make sure that you have reviewed the Set Up and Prepare for Advocacy Meetings with Your Members of Congress guide. Know your roles, issues, asks and stories before entering the meeting. Do several role-plays as a group to ensure that everyone feels comfortable in their role.

MEETING

**Step 1 INTRODUCTION:** Share your credentials (Who are you and why are you important?). You are more than ‘a constituent’. You are a constituent who represents your campus community.

**Step 2 THE ISSUE AND YOUR STORY:** Explain the issue that you’d like to discuss using information from the CRS backgrounder documents and any other CRS resources or research you may have done. Most importantly, share why you care about this issue and what is happening on your campus. Your personal stories and ability to share that others on campus are also committed to this issue are vital.

**Step 3 THE ASK:** The CRS backgrounder documents will provide you with information on what pieces of legislation or other asks are most relevant for the issue at any specific point in time. Use those to explain what you are hoping your Senator or Representative will do. Make a direct ask for support: “Can we count on the Senator’s/Representative’s support on this measure?” Listen carefully and ask for clarification if needed.

**Step 4 CLOSING:** Reiterate the ask, make sure they have the leave behind, ask for the staff person’s business card, and don’t forget about social media. Ask permission to post a photo from their office. Tag the member of Congress, thanking the staff for their time and consideration. Don’t forget to tag @crsuniversity, @CatholicReliefServices, and your university as well. Use the hashtags: #crsuniversity & the relevant campaign #IamMigration, #IamGlobalHunger, #IamHumanTrafficking, #IamClimateChange.
POST-MEETING:

Step 1 DEBRIEF: As a group, review your experience. What did you hear? Did you get what you wanted? What are the next steps? How did you do as a group? As individuals? What do you want to work on for next time? What do you need from CRS?

Step 2 REPORT BACK: Your feedback is extremely valuable as CRS continues to advocate to impact the systems and structures that affect the lives of our sisters and brothers who are poor and marginalized. Let us know how the visit went by completing this quick and easy online report back form. In addition, be sure to share with your college or university how the visit went and what you heard from your member’s office. Invite others on campus to be involved in future advocacy efforts.

Step 3 FOLLOW UP: Send a thank you note or email to your member’s office within one week of your meeting. Not only is this proper etiquette, but it helps to develop your relationship with that office and to share any follow up information your member asked for. It’s a good way to keep the lines of communication open.

Step 4 CELEBRATE: Celebrate your group’s accomplishment in taking part in the most effective way to impact policy and your member of Congress (based on research from the Congressional Management Foundation). Your voice makes a difference!