

# Meeting with Members of Congress

Meeting with Members of Congress (MOC) in person is an excellent way to communicate your concerns and NAR's legislative priorities. It is an opportunity for you to educate them on real estate issues and to strengthen your relationship.

## Meeting Goals

Keep these three meeting goals in mind:

1. You are there to learn more about your MOC;
2. You are there to convey the NAR position on a public policy issue;
3. You are trying to find out how the MOC feels about the issues.

## How to Prepare for a Meeting

- Homework Assignment: Research the Member of Congress's website, issue statements and news releases.
- Plan your meeting strategy ahead of time.
- If your Contact Team is attending the meeting, decide who will say what and in what order. If possible, assign a particular area of knowledge to each team member.
- Review the talking points in this folder; these are the issues that you should discuss.

## How to Deal with Questions During the Meeting

Remember your three meeting goals. The only way to achieve these goals is to engage in a constructive conversation. You should expect your MOC or staff to ask: "What is NAR's solution for this issue?" Should a Member of Congress ask you this question, do not be concerned. Your representative is looking to gather your thoughts on ways to address the issue and see if there are opportunities for you to work together. This question is actually a great opportunity to steer the conversation by reiterating the section of the talking points entitled "Congressional Action Needed." This is the primary answer to the "What is NAR's solution for this issue?" question, should it be posed to you. Should the Member of Congress want you to expand on this answer, you should feel free to share with them one of the following:

- As our representative, we trust that you have your constituents' best interests in mind.
- We know you will review all the specifics surrounding this issue and make a fair decision that continues to protect the American dream of homeownership.
- We would be happy to hear your thoughts and help answer any questions you may have as you decide on a course of action.
- While I am not a policy expert, I believe NAR's position is the right one for your district and for the people I work with on a daily basis.
- Working with NAR and my fellow local REALTORS®, we would be happy to provide you and your staff additional information as follow-up to this meeting.

## What to do During the Meeting

- Arrive on time and be polite and friendly.
- Dress and act like you take the meeting seriously.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist upon your arrival and mention with whom you have an appointment. Be prepared to wait or to be sent to another location.

- Be prepared for the possibility that your MOC might send a staff person to meet with you because of a scheduling conflict.
- Make sure to get the name and business card of any staff person who sits in on the meeting. This will help you should you need to follow up after the meeting.
- Be sensitive to the amount of time allotted to you. Ask up front, and if you get 15-20 minutes with your MOC (or staff), that's great!
- Plan on using half of that time to make your point. If you use less than the allotted time, the MOC or staff will appreciate your consideration of their time constraints. If you find you need all of the time, that's fine—just don't go overtime.
- State your issue, use facts and examples, and ask the MOC if they have a position on the matter.
- Listen. Don't be discouraged if they refuse to support your position.
- Be political. MOCs want to represent their constituents' (YOU!), so draw a clear connection between what you are requesting and what's going on back in the district.
- Thank the MOC for their time, offer your assistance, give them any handouts and leave. Don't linger.
- Leave your business card so the MOC or staff can contact you if they need to. Be sure to offer your assistance/expertise on real estate issues.

## Other Reminders for a Meeting

- Don't fail to show up for your scheduled meeting. Call if you're running late.
- Don't assume that the MOC or staff knows anything about your issue, but don't get bogged down with the details. Many of our issues are quite complex.
- Don't interrupt when the MOC or staff is speaking. Let them finish their thought or question before jumping in.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." If you're asked a question to which you do not know the answer, simply say you don't know and let them know that you will find out the answer and get back to them. (Don't forget to get back to them.)
- Don't threaten the MOC if he or she doesn't agree with your views on the issue.
- Don't underestimate your importance. As a voter, you have power. Your power is your vote and your ability to influence the votes of others in your community.

## Meeting Follow-up

- Send a thank you note that includes the points covered during the meeting and send along any additional information or materials you promised.
- Follow through on any promises you made to the MOC or staff.
- FILE A FIELD REPORT.
- Send the MOC a note of support when they do or say something in favor of your issue.
- Support the MOC with personal contributions to their campaign or volunteer to help in their re-election.