

MLA MEETING GUIDE

MLA MEETING ACTION STEPS

- I. Contact your assigned MLA or the one in your constituency. Request and secure a meeting time.
- II. If possible and appropriate invite the MLA to visit you in your agency. If not, go to them and it may be helpful to take a colleague or a board member with you.
- III. Meet with the MLA and go over the request for support/key points and how it relates to your agency.

Key Elements of Good Government Relations

1. Simplify the issue and its impacts.
2. Know the players & their existing positions.
3. Prepare the case & emphasize benefits.
4. Educate on needs & solutions.
5. Listen to challenges & additional information needs.
6. Follow-up with thanks & answers to information gaps.

STEP 1: CONTACT THE MLA

- A. Send a letter by mail, e-mail or fax to the MLA's constituency office introducing yourself and asking to meet with the MLA. If you are constituents, say so. Indicate what you would like to meet with the MLA about. (*A sample letter prepared by ALIGN is available*).
- B. Follow-up a few days later by contacting the MLA's constituency office (ask for the office manager or secretary). (*Note: if you know the MLA personally, ask to speak to the MLA*). Ask if the MLA has seen the letter and whether he/she will be able to meet with you. Provide any additional information that may be requested.
- C. Thank the MLA or MLA's contact person for working to arrange a suitable date and time to meet. Repeat, if necessary, your reasons for requesting the meeting.
- D. Be persistent. Call every few days repeating your request for a meeting until it has been arranged.
- E. Once arranged, ask the MLA's office to confirm the meeting time, date and place by e-mail. Ask who will be at the meeting besides the MLA. Bring sufficient copies of any handouts or briefing material you may have for meeting attendees.

STEP 2: MEET WITH THE MLA

- A. Keep the meeting informal and friendly. Indicate you would like to quickly make some opening comments but would like to spend most of the time having a focused discussion.
- B. Present the briefing materials you provided by ALIGN. (*The MLA may request to have this information provided to them in advance of the meeting. If so, send them in advance*). Give an overview of your agency, ALIGN and summarize ALIGN's position on staffing and operational concerns. Have your client relate how having access to services offered by your agency has benefited him or her. Do not read briefing material. Invite the MLA to respond. Keep notes of questions asked and answered.
- C. Ask if the MLA supports ALIGN's position. If he or she can't commit, ask them why and note the reasons given.
- D. Before ending the meeting, ask the MLA if they need or want any additional information about your agency, ALIGN or the issue(s) discussed.
- E. Thank the MLA for their time. Confirm that requested information will be sent to them.

Note: Keep the presentation of information brief and to the point, allowing at least half of the meeting time for general dialogue, questions and comments from the MLA/staff.