

## ***Scheduling an Appointment***

Federal and local addresses, fax numbers and phone numbers for your members of Congress are available at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) or on the Center for Community Change website at [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org) by clicking on "Take Action."

When scheduling an appointment, always first fax a letter requesting an appointment, and follow-up immediately by calling your Representative or Senator's office – the office receptionist will direct you to the scheduler. If the Representative or Senator is not available, always attempt to meet the highest ranking staff person available.

When scheduling the appointment with the scheduler, it is helpful to have prepared a list of participants you anticipate will join you for the meeting. When planning to request an appointment, it's often a good idea to reach out to one or two key colleagues that can bring useful perspectives or political relationship to the meeting. It is equally important to have perspectives in the room that can speak to the personal impact of the budget cuts.

Prior to the appointment, it is important for your group to select a spokesperson, identify the one or two messages you want to convey, and be clear about the kinds of follow-up items you want to request. For instance, you could invite the legislator to an event in your community, or you could get a commitment to a follow-up call in two weeks to update you on where things stand in Congress. It's helpful to identify a staff person charged with following up with you. Remember that meetings with Senators and Representatives can often be interrupted by other business, so be prepared to have your appointment end abruptly or to have less time than you expected. After the meeting, your group should immediately send a thank-you letter that underscores your concerns.

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## ***Template for Letter Requesting an Appointment***

[Date]

The Honorable [full name]  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Or

The Honorable [full name]  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear [Senator or Representative] [Last Name]:

I'm writing on behalf of [your organization] to request a meeting with you to discuss the impact that the federal budget resolution being debated in Congress may have on our community. We understand that you may be in [your state or community] when Congress is in recess between March 21 and April 1.

[Describe your organization in this paragraph, and include your organization's membership, mission and primary concerns.] The federal budget resolution should reflect our values as a community.

If you have any questions, please contact [Identify a contact person from your organization and provide both phone and e-mail contact information].

Sincerely,

[Your Name and Title]