



# Engaging with Policymakers on Environmental Justice:

This guide will enable community groups to effectively engage policymakers in pursuit of environmental justice.

## ***Understanding our mission***

We will work closely with community-based partners and leverage their experience and expertise in environmental and energy justice work.

## ***Choosing Your Engagement Strategy***

### **Key Messaging Principles**

- **Clarity:** Be clear about the issues and the solutions you are advocating for;
- **Relevance:** Relate the issues to the specific concerns of policymakers and the community;
- **Credibility:** Use data and stories to support your message; Summarize the main issues and proposed solutions. Charts, graphs, and infographics can make complex information more digestible.

### **Direct Communication**

- **Letters and Emails:** Write personalized messages to policymakers;
- **Phone Calls:** Call policymakers' offices to express concerns or request a meeting;
- **Petitions:** Collect signatures to demonstrate public support for your issue.

### **Tips for Effective Communication**

- **Be Respectful and Professional:** Approach each interaction with respect;
- **Listen Actively:** Understand the policymakers'/staffers' perspectives and concerns;
- **Provide Solutions:** Offer realistic and actionable solutions to the issues you are presenting;
- **Make a HARD ASK:** Try to get a commitment from the policymaker/staffer

## ***Engaging with Policymakers***

### **Identifying Key Policymakers**

- **Research:** Understand the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal officials;
- **Know Their Interests (Bird-Dog):** Identify policymakers with a track record of supporting environmental or social justice issues.

## **Scheduling Meetings**



- Be Persistent: It may take multiple attempts to secure a meeting;
- Prepare an Agenda: Know what you want to discuss and the outcomes you hope to achieve
  - Include materials you wish to bring/leave behind with the office

### **Public Forums and Town Halls**

- Attend Events: Use public meetings to raise your issues and ask questions;
- Organize Your Own: Create platforms for community members to discuss their concerns directly with policymakers;
- Letter to the Editor: Writing a letter to your local newspaper's editor (LTE) is an effective way to speak about issues that impact your day-to-day life.
- Op-ED: Effective tool to offer persuasive arguments that can influence public opinion and decision-makers by addressing timely issues with authority

### **Online and Offline Advocacy**

- Leverage your online presence: Use social media platforms like Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to spread your message and organize campaigns;
- Setup/Participate in direct action: think of ways to get involved and make your voice heard outside the traditional channels.
  - Join grassroots coalitions/networks

### **Maintaining Relationships/Monitoring Progress**

- After your meeting, send a follow-up email and give a small overview of what you want to highlight from the meeting;
- Keep regular communication: Stay in touch with policymakers and their staff;
  - Keep them informed about the outcomes of your meetings and advocacy efforts.
- Provide Resources: Share new information, successes, and resources (e.g. newsletters, reports, events, etc) with policymakers to keep them engaged;
- Track: Monitor actions/remarks made by policymakers;
- Hold them Accountable: If your asks are not met, continue to follow up with the office reiterating your ask(s).

### **Resources and Tools**

- *NWF National Campaigns Advocacy Tools:*  
<https://www.nwf.org/National-Campaigns/Organizing-and-Campaigns/Advocacy-Tools-and-Trainings>
- *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EJ Resources:*  
<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>