



Advocacy Education Series: Attending Fundraising Events

Fundraising events are great places to engage in advocacy. They provide you with an opportunity to get some face time with your legislator and get on their radar. As time goes on and you attend more events and see your legislator more often, they will learn your name and your issues.

There are typically two types of fundraisers that legislators hold. The first type is usually held in your state's capital city and is mostly attended by state government insiders like private lobbyists, trade and professional association staff, party committee members and leadership, and other various government relations professionals. The required donation to events in the capital are almost always more expensive than local fundraisers.

The second type of fundraising event is the local event, which is held in your legislator's home district and attended almost exclusively by constituents. Attendees of local events include local business owners, members of local fraternal organizations, concerned citizens, and even other locally elected officials.

Attending the Event

Your initial meeting with your legislator at a fundraising event should be plain and simple: your name, profession, and area of law in which you focus (if you are an attorney). You can also mention any special programs or relevant groups you are involved in.

After your introduction you can simply follow up with:

"I look forward to meeting with you in the future about an important issue that I have been dealing with. I'd like to get your thoughts and opinions on _____. I will call your office to schedule a date and time. Thanks for your time."

A simple introduction and the prospect of a future meeting is all you need to get started. Have a plan so that you can be concise and professional. If your legislator wants additional information, answer any questions and engage in a meaningful conversation. Just remember to be mindful of your legislator's time. Fundraising events are used by legislators as a time to see a lot of supporters in a relatively short period of time. Save your talking points for a scheduled meeting.

For additional guidance or questions, please contact Monica L. Reid, Senior Director of Advocacy, at mreid@nacdl.org.