



American Society for Nutrition
Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice

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Nutrition Policy Advocacy: A Primer **Getting Your Message Across to Congress**

Why Advocate for Nutrition Policies?

Nutrition policies play a crucial role in shaping the landscape of nutrition research and practice, directly impacting the health and well-being of our communities. Advocacy can drive significant changes. By advocating, you can help create a healthier future for all.

Elected officials WANT to hear from you!
ASN members are experts in their respective research and practice areas

Before Advocating for Nutrition Policy, Consider the Following:

- **Level of Involvement:** Determine if you wish to be deeply engaged or play a supporting role. Your commitment level will shape your advocacy.
- **Expert Role:** Decide if you want to be an on-call expert. Building and maintaining relationships with policymakers' staff is crucial. As a trusted expert, your insights can significantly influence policy decisions.
- **Desired Outcome:** Clearly define the goals and benefits of the policy you support. Articulating the positive impact will strengthen your advocacy efforts and help gain support.

By considering these questions, you can tailor your advocacy efforts effectively and maximize your impact on nutrition policy.

How to Effectively Communicate with Policymakers:

1. Engage with Staffers:

- Members of federal and local Congress have staffers who often handle communication with constituents and experts. These staffers represent the policy positions of the legislators they work for.
- Be aware that staffer positions may change if they take on new roles, so developing and maintaining relationships with them is crucial for ongoing advocacy.

2. Use University Resources:

- University Congressional liaisons can help connect you to policymakers and support your advocacy efforts.

3. Share Your Position:



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- **Phone Calls:** Discuss your position directly.
- **Letters/e-mail:** Clearly state your advocacy position.
- **Public Comments:** Influence policy decisions by submitting comments on proposed rules.

4. Craft a Clear Message:

- Develop a concise ask with a brief, compelling justification.

5. Leverage Your Network:

- Use your professional and personal networks to amplify your advocacy efforts.

Top Tips to Get Started with Nutrition Policy Advocacy:

Mobilize Constituents and Build Coalitions:

- Form coalitions with stakeholders like hospitals, charities, schools, and community organizations. Diverse support strengthens your advocacy.

Avoid Debate:

- Expect opposition and avoid confrontation. Use friendly, constructive rebuttals to maintain a positive dialogue and focus on common goals.

Prepare a Clear Ask:

- Include a specific ask in 1-2 sentences in each communication. Clearly state your needs and intended outcome.

Build and Maintain Relationships with Policy Offices:

- Policymakers value credible sources. Scientists provide evidence-based info, and clinicians offer practical experience. Build relationships to be a reliable resource.

Understand the Situation:

- Gather essential information before making your ask: (a) current political climate; (b) historical context; (c) requirements to achieve your ask; (d) current investment levels and additional resources needed.

By following these tips, you can effectively mobilize support, communicate your message, and build relationships to advocate for nutrition policies.

NUTRITION MATTERS for your constituents and ASN can help!

ASN is the authoritative voice informing Congress on the latest nutrition advances, issues, and value for supporting nutrition research. Since 1928, ASN has served as the premier scientific professional society made up of the world's top nutrition researchers and experts. ASN's experts are creating the future of nutrition!