AMERICAN
COLLEGE
HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

ADVOCACY GUIDE

Contents

About the Guide:

This guide provides an overview of where you, as members of the American College Health Association (ACHA), can learn and participate within the Advocacy Committee to increase visibility and understanding work of our Association. Our goal is to influence policy and government initiatives in a way that advances the health and well-being of our students, staff, and overall college health community.

For purposes of advocacy, this guide is broken into two parts to inform the overall ACHA advocacy process. The parts are as follows:

- PART I – Advocacy 101
    - What is Advocacy?
    - Levels of Advocacy
    - How does one ethically Advocate
- PART II – How to Advocate?
    - Identifying appropriate contacts
    - Have meetings
    - Other forms of engagement

Accompanying this guide, we have put together a series of sheets to go into more detail on various subjects and provide examples of materials referenced in the guide.

ADVOCACY 101 – THE LEVELS OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy may require engagement with different levels of government. The main three levels with which one can engage are the federal level, the state level, and the local level. Engagement at the federal level consists of work and communications with the US Congress. This may involve contacting Senators, Representatives, their staff, or staff in standing committees. Engagement with the federal level may also involve communication with the federal administration, which can include contact with the President, Departmental Secretaries, Administration Agencies (such as the CDC), or offices within Federal Departments (Such as the Office of Population Affairs in the Department of Health and Human Services).

Engagement at the state level differs slightly in that different statutory regulations may be in place from state to state. However, state-level engagement involves addressing the state legislature through contact with members of the state house or state senate and contact with the state administration which includes the governor and the state departments. State-level advocacy engagement may also include reaching out or contacting state-level organizations and coalitions, including state chapters of national organizations.

The last conventional level of advocacy includes the local levels which revolve around contact with city hall, the mayor's office, or local boards (such as the local education board). However, a unique level of advocacy available to ACHA includes engagement at the campus level. This includes petitioning a college's board of trustees, the college president, or faculty departments.

When advocating for an issue, one can engage with the government and stakeholders at varying levels. One should assess the appropriate level of advocacy an issue is required to engage in. For example, if a college is seeking to install a speed limit sign within a street intersecting their campus, the appropriate level to engage with would be the local or state level, as the Mayor's Office or State Department of Transportation will be responsible for creating regulations setting the speeds for the city. In this scenario, bringing this issue to the federal government would not result in an appropriate response.

One should also know whether the advocacy actions will be directed toward the legislative or executive branches of government. Knowing the branch will help the process by tailoring materials to specific audiences. What about the judicial branch? Advocacy through the judicial branch tends to require lawsuits and engagement with the court system, which is ultimately a more complex step, so advocacy does not tend to take place within the judicial system.

In addition to knowing the level of advocacy engagement, one should be aware of the general patterns of government. While the operations and protocols of most city halls or state legislatures may differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, there tend to be similar generalities in how many of these governments operate.

Please refer to our breakdown of how governments and legislatures operate at the end of this guide under Resource 1.

ADVOCACY 101 – WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is an individual or group activity that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.

Lobbying is the act of lawfully attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of government officials, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies, but also judges of the judiciary.

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Lobbying and advocacy tend to be direct forms of action in the government affairs space.

To put it into perspective, lobbying is direct actions attempting to influence the creation or removal of specific legislation at the local, state, or federal level while advocacy is focused on educating stakeholders and individuals on issues. Lobbying and advocacy activities tend to go hand-in-hand. However, while all lobbying counts as advocacy, not all advocacy work counts as lobbying.

To further illustrate how actions under each banner may differ, please refer to the table below demonstrating the difference.

Advocacy	Lobbying
Advocacy can be defined as an action that aims to support an idea or cause on behalf of others.	Lobbying is trying to influence direct legislative action, regulations, or other government decisions.
Advocacy is about speaking on behalf of other individuals or stakeholders when they cannot and supporting them so that they can speak better for themselves when they can.	Lobbying is a subset of advocacy but is directly related to influencing political and public officials on an issue.
The goal of advocacy is to bring change and development in new areas of policy.	The goal of lobbying is to maintain and improve public trust and trust in democratic institutions.

An example of lobbying performed on behalf of ACHA includes our ongoing work with Congress and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the introduction of legislation to establish a college health index, which would allow colleges and universities to assess their health and well-being programs on campus. Another example of ACHA's lobbying efforts includes our submitted comments to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) requesting changes to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection protocol. Through that effort, we requested that additional questions be included in data collection efforts to better assess how health services are provided on college campuses. Although ACHA's comment was received by NCES within the Department of Education, ACHA's proposed questions were ultimately not included in the IPEDS data survey. NCES opted to focus on changing questions and information collection methods related specifically to noncredit education citing comments received and discussions with the Office of Management and Budget as the reason for these changes.

Advocacy efforts under ACHA have involved educating members of Congress on the ongoing issues impacting healthcare access for college students while they travel across state lines. The purpose of informing lawmakers of this issue is to inspire a potential solution to maintaining student health access through telehealth across state lines. This way, students would be able to have access to their on-campus providers while they are out-of-state.

Therefore, lobbying can be a part of advocacy, but advocacy does not necessarily need to include lobbying.

As a method of further assisting the reader with advocacy and governmental affairs terminology, we have included a glossary at the end of this guide. Please refer to Resource 2 located at the end of the guide.

ADVOCACY 101 – HOW TO ETHICALLY ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY

Permissible activities and ethics considerations vary greatly from government body to government body. Also, not following them can have some pretty big consequences either directly or indirectly.

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the rules for the government jurisdiction in which you are planning to operate. If you are planning major activities, it is probably good to get legal or professional government affairs advice before proceeding.

That being said, many of the activities talked about in these documents will not require any form of lobbying registry and reporting or put you in much danger of violating ethics rules or putting government officials in a position to violate them. While many ethics rules are aimed at preventive activities for government officials, it is still good for you to understand them so that you do not end up putting a government official in a position that might violate the rules, and you can reassure them that your activity will be complying with state or federal regulations.

Resource 3, located at the back of this guide, provides more information on permissible activities and ethical considerations for advocacy.

HOW TO ADVOCATE – IDENTIFYING CONTACTS

After identifying the advocacy issue, the appropriate level of engagement, and the ethical advocacy procedures, the next step is to find the appropriate individuals to engage with. Identifying contacts goes along with identifying the level of government engagement since a local issue will require local contacts while a federal issue will require federal contacts.

Who the meeting will be held with will be a determining factor in the interaction process. As an example, petitioning the local jurisdiction to install a speed bump on a street may require fewer meetings than petitioning Congress to introduce legislation that requires student financial aid packages to cover the healthcare costs of students. The former may only end up requiring a couple of meetings with the appropriate local offices, while the latter will require engagement with both Congress and the federal administration. Therefore, knowing who to approach with requests is important.

Once the appropriate contacts have been identified, the next step is to research and familiarize oneself with the contact. Creating rapport is an important aspect of government affairs, and as such, knowing who one will be talking to allows for easier connections to be made. Most of the time, when engaging with Congress, meetings are usually taken by the staffers within a Congressional Member's office. Knowing the staffer's name, interests, and personality will allow for easier engagement and provide an easier time when doing the "ask."

The "ask" is the whole purpose of the meeting. For this reason, one should come prepared with the appropriate talking points which may include anecdotes, data, and reasons as to why a policy needs to be implemented, changed, or revoked. Preparation will allow for better tailoring of the talking points to the appropriate contact.

For more information, we provide Resource 4, which touches on identifying contacts.

HOW TO ADVOCATE – HAVING A MEETING/WRITING TO OFFICIALS

After the contacts have been identified and all other preparation and research has been completed, it is finally time to have a meeting with the government officials. As a reminder, creating rapport can be important as it will provide access for future engagement and can result in working relationships forming between the public and private sectors. Below we provide several forms of engagement with the government that can lead to beneficial outcomes for you and your institution.

- **Meeting with government officials** – One of the best ways to connect with government officials (or their staff) is to schedule a meeting with them. Legislators (and some agencies) will often have local offices one can contact and schedule a meeting. One can also request a meeting either through a call or through a letter/email. Ideally, the meeting will be with the legislator or senior agency official, but they are often with a staff member who specializes in helping constituents and/or your subject area. There are several goals for such a meeting. These goals include:
    - Introducing ACHA, your college, or organization and explaining what one does and has to offer as a resource for the official;
    - Building a connection and relationship that can serve down the line; and
    - Asking how they can help provide support (advocacy, grants, relationship opportunities, etc.), particularly if a specific need exists.

  IMPORTANT: Please let ACHA know of any meeting requests you are making, particularly if a meeting is scheduled so that we can synchronize what we are doing at the national level, help provide talking points and additional recommendations, and help take full advantage of the opportunities.
- **Writing a letter** – Another method of engagement with government officials includes drafting a letter. While a meeting is often more beneficial, it can sometimes take a while to arrange, and it does take time for the meeting itself to occur. As an alternative, or perhaps within the meeting request itself, you can include in your letter information about ACHA and your institution and ask for support from the government official.

For more information, we have included Resource 5, which provides more information on government engagement through talking points. Please also refer to Resource 6, which expands on meeting with government officials.

HOW TO ADVOCATE – OTHER FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

Providing officials with alternative methods for engagement can still allow for opportunities to establish fruitful working relationships. Although these engagement forms can be somewhat impersonal, they still provide valuable time by which government representatives can learn more about an issue at hand. Below, we provide examples of alternative engagement.

- **Site visits by government officials (and/or their staff)** – One of the best ways to build relationships and get your message across is having a government official (or their staff) come out and see firsthand some component of your campus, such as a sporting event or conference. These visits tend to be beneficial for all since the Representative receives exposure to his or her district and the campus or organization gets to interact with the legislator or his staff.
- **Participating in/attending local government events** – As you build relationships and stakeholders become more aware of your work, ACHA and your institution of higher education can offer to be a resource to the government officials by participating in key events, such as a roundtable on youth development. Even if you are not a participant in the event, having someone there in the audience is beneficial.

For more information on alternative engagements with officials, please see Resource 7, located at the end of this guide.

RESOURCE 1 – How Legislatures Generally Operate

While there are differences in how each local and state government works and how the federal government works, there are generalities that apply to most that we will cover briefly. Having a better general understanding of how government operates can help you better strategically influence it. While this document does not give a complete understanding of the various governmental processes, it does give a general understanding that will help, while additional assistance and professional advice may be called for on the more complex and important issues. Also, note that there are many different ways in this country that governments operate, but what is listed below is how things often occur, and while not always stated, the word "often" should be understood in what is written below.

Legislatures

In the legislature (Congress, Assembly, House, Senate, council, chamber, etc.), legislators (Representatives, Senators, Councilmembers, Delegates, Assemblymembers, Councilmen) introduce legislation (bills, proposed ordinances, motions) to be considered and voted upon. Steps in that process often include:

1. Introduction. One or more legislators agree to submit legislation, usually in some required format that a lawyer or counsel has helped prepare, for consideration. In some cases, legislation can be introduced from outside the legislature, typically by the executive (mayor, governor, etc.). Your council has the opportunity to work with legislators to introduce legislation, which you can help write or at least influence.

2. Dear Colleague. The introducing legislator(s) can ask others to support their legislation. This is usually done through a formal letter written by them often called a "Dear Colleague."

3. Cosponsor. Other Members of the legislature express their support for the measure by cosponsoring it or publicly signing on in support. You can encourage other legislators to support legislation your college wants to see advanced by having them cosponsor it.

4. Committee assignment. Legislation is then assigned to a committee of legislators that specialize in a given subject area (jurisdiction) to more closely evaluate and possibly amend the legislation. Legislation can often be sent to more than one committee.

5. Committee hearings. Committees can then hold hearings and bring in experts, interested parties, and the introducing legislator(s) to bring more attention to the issue, solicit suggested changes, hear reasons to oppose or support it, and in general learn more about the subject. Not all, in fact, most, legislation receives a hearing. The chair of the committee (often with a degree of input from the minority party, often led by a ranking member or vice chair) controls which hearings are held and who will participate in them (although, especially at the local level, there are statutes that govern public participation). Input in a hearing can come by way of individual council members and/or the council as a whole and by sitting on a panel that is being questioned, making a public statement at the hearing, or providing a written statement.

6. Committee consideration. Legislation assigned to a committee usually has to be approved by that committee before it can be brought before the full legislature for consideration. During that consideration process (markup), it might have to go to a subcommittee first and then the full

committee. At each stage, those on the committee can offer amendments to the legislation to either change what the legislation says or to add to it. These amendments can even be used to change the entire nature of the legislation. During this process, your institution has an opportunity to influence legislation by getting the backing of the head of the committee or a member of the committee willing to champion your position. It is often a lot easier to influence legislation during the committee process rather than waiting until it gets to the full legislature since it involves fewer legislators who need to be convinced to support it. Also, committees will often submit a report to go along with the passed legislation that gives background on their approval. While this document does not have the force of law when the legislation is passed, it often helps influence how the legislation is executed, so working with the committee staff on language within the report is another way your institution can influence things.

7. Authorization and appropriations. The legislative process often has two components, authorization and appropriations, that require action by two separate committees. Authorization is the legislature authorizing some sort of action. However, if there is funding required to carry out that authorized activity, a separate process (and committee) is involved to appropriate the funding to do that. Thus, a measure can be authorized, but not appropriated, and thus will not be carried out, because the funding needed to do it is not available. For example, let's say that your board authorizes the publication committee of your college to publish a new pamphlet. But then when the budget is put together, the funds are not available (appropriated) this year to do so. Thus, while the committee is authorized to make the pamphlet, they do not have the funding appropriated this year to do it and will have to wait to see if new funds are made available during the year, what the budget process results in next year, or whether the board will remove the authorization in some future session.

8. Full legislature consideration. Once the legislation has gone through the committee review and approval process (note sometimes legislation can be brought directly to the full body without going through a committee, but this is not typical), it then goes to the full legislature for consideration (sometimes called the committee of the whole or open session). There are different laws, rules, and procedures on how a piece of legislation is to be brought to the full legislature for consideration, but a typical way is that the head of the legislature (President, Chair, Speaker, Majority Leader) sets the calendar for the body and thus assigns when certain pieces of legislation will be brought up for consideration. Once under consideration, legislators often have the opportunity to offer amendments, which gives your college another opportunity to influence the legislation other than just encouraging a yes or no vote.

9. Other chamber's consideration. Most legislatures at the state and the federal level have two chambers. While a bill can be brought up separately in both chambers and go through independent considerations in those chambers, it can also go through just one. In this case, once that one chamber has approved the legislation, it then goes to the other chamber, which then goes through the entire process again starting with assigning it to a committee or committees.

10. Conference. In those legislatures with two chambers, for a piece of legislation to be approved by the entire legislature, it must be passed by both chambers in the same form. So when a bill goes through both chambers, but the versions from each committee have differences, those differences need to be resolved and the resolved legislation goes back to each chamber for separate approval. The process for resolving the differences is often called a conference. A conference is made up of members of each

chamber that meet and vote on which language will be included in the resolved version. While this process is often closed and aimed at resolving differences rather than introducing new issues, this is still an opportunity for your institution of higher education to influence the process through one or more of the members of the conference, especially if there is something in particular that is currently in the language of one or both versions that you want to see stay in there, or language in one, but not the other, that you want to see not included in the final, resolved version.

11. Executive consideration. Once the legislature approves a piece of legislation, it often goes to the executive (President, Mayor, Governor) for their approval (or for them not to disapprove). Executives often can disapprove of legislation, called a veto. But legislatures often can overturn such a veto with some sort of supermajority vote.

Executive

While the legislatures pass legislation that authorizes and funds most government activities, the executive (departments, agencies, bureaus) often has a fair bit of leeway on how and when those activities are carried out, which provides opportunities to influence government action (or inaction).

1. Guidance. Executive offices will often put out documents or respond to specific letters with questions with guidance (Q&A, technical assistance, Dear Colleague) on laws and regulations. Your institution can get clarification on laws and regulations by requesting such guidance. You can also influence things, by meeting with the executive office to discuss your issue/position, and then work with them to have them release guidance that matches that position. Note though that while having such guidance can have weight, it does not weigh law, and can fairly easily be changed by the office through new guidance or further clarification, especially if the make-up of the office changes.

2. Rules and regulations. Rules and regulations have much more weight than guidance and have the force of law. For that reason, their creation usually has a much more formal process and more formal methods for the public to provide input. That being said, if you can build a positive relationship with the executive office before this process, you can often provide informal influence before the drafting process even starts. Rules and regulations can start with a request for formal input, but often just start with a draft rule/regulation. The public is then asked to provide comments on that draft. Once the formal comment period ends, the government office then reviews the comments (and in some cases responds to them) and drafts a final rule/ regulation. In some cases, the rule/regulation needs to go to the legislature for review or a higher level of government before its finalization. Often the chief executive needs to sign off on it, as well. Both rules and regulations can provide opportunities to advocate.

3. Adjudication. Many governments have a formal pseudo-judicial process within the executive office/branch to review government actions and determine if they comply with the law. Law often requires a challenging party to go through this administrative adjudication process first before they can sue in court over the action. Or sometimes you have the option of doing either. Administrative adjudication has the benefit of often being cheaper and quicker and often being led by someone with subject matter expertise or at least experience. The cons of this approach are that there can be more

of an administrative preference and if it rules against you, courts are likely to give it a fair bit of deference making a steep hurdle to getting a favorable judiciary court decision.

4. Implementation. Outside of these formal processes to influence government action, there are often numerous opportunities to influence how/when those actions happen. Through relationships with executive offices, your institution can often influence them. For example, let's say that your state is setting up a board to oversee a background check program for college campus staff based on some new law. While you worked hard to positively influence what was in the legislation and in the rules set to implement it, there is still a good amount of leeway given to the board once it is set up and running. You would want to have a say in who will be on that board. Using your government affairs tools in this guide, you can informally influence the selection process to the point of even providing the list of individuals who will be selected.

RESOURCE 2 – Glossary

Act - Legislation that has passed both the House and the Senate and was signed by the Governor or President, thus becoming a law.

Adjournment - The end of a regular legislative session with the hour and day of the next meeting set.

Adoption - Approval of an amendment, committee report, or resolution.

Agency - Administrative units of government responsible for policy-making and management of governmental activities.

Amendment - Change or modify a bill or motion by striking out, adding, or substituting language.

Appropriation - The government act of formally specifying the amount of authorized money that an agency can spend.

Appropriations Bill - A bill reported out of the House or Senate Appropriations Committee, which assigns government funds to a program.

Authorization Bill - A bill reported out of an authorizing committee (e.g., the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee), which authorizes a government program and recommends the funds necessary to finance it.

Bicameral - "Two chambers" legislative body, having two houses (as in the House and the Senate).

Bill - A legislative proposal introduced by a Member of Congress or state legislator. Federal bills are designated as H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate) according to the body in which they are introduced, and are assigned numbers according to the order in which they are introduced.

Bipartisan - Sharing support and/or cooperation from the two main political parties that usually oppose each other's policies.

Block Grant - A grant-in-aid with few restrictions or rules about how it can be spent.

Carry-Over Legislation - Legislation that is held over from the first year of a legislative biennium to the second year.

Categorical Grants - Money is given for a specific purpose that comes with restrictions concerning how the money should be spent. There are two types of categorical grants: project grants and formula grants.

Caucus - Formally known as Congressional Member Organizations, these are groups of legislators that come together for a unified purpose, typically around an issue or demographic. Popular examples include

the House Democratic Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus, but they can also include issues, such as higher education issues with the Congressional Higher Education Caucus.

Chairman/Chairwoman - The title given to a legislator who leads one of the numerous committees or subcommittees in the legislature.

Chamber - A legislative body, often used when there is more than one (see bicameral).

Companion Bills - Identical bills introduced in each chamber (House and Senate) to expedite passage by substituting the one that passed first for the other.

Committee - A body of Members appointed by the presiding officer to consider and make recommendations concerning bills and resolutions. Specific types of committees:

> **Committee of the Whole** - Either chamber of the legislature sitting in its entirety as a committee to consider bills or issues.
>
> **Conference Committee** - A committee composed of Members from the two houses specifically appointed to reconcile the differences between House and Senate versions of a bill or bills.
>
> **Interim Committee** - A committee established to study or investigate certain matters between annual or biennial legislative sessions and to report to the next regular session.
>
> **Joint Committee** - A committee composed of Members from both chambers.
>
> **Standing Committee** - A committee appointed with continuing responsibility in a general issue area or field of legislative activity.

Committee Report - Document accompanying a bill or resolution reported from a legislative committee with a specific recommendation, such as “pass,” “pass as amended,” or “do not pass.”

Committee Substitute - A bill offered by a legislative committee instead of another bill that was originally referred to the committee for consideration; technically, the committee substitute is an amendment to the original bill.

Concurrence (To Concur) - Action by which one chamber agrees to a proposal or action adopted by the other chamber.

Congressional Record - The daily printed account of the proceedings of the House and Senate. Members may “revise and extend” remarks, thereby editing the floor remarks. States often have similar documents.

Constituency - The people in a district represented by a legislator.

Continuing Resolution - If the legislature has not enacted all the necessary appropriation bills when a fiscal year begins, it passes a joint resolution continuing appropriations to fund the government until the appropriation bills can be enacted into law.

Convene - When the Members of a chamber gather for the meeting of the legislature daily, weekly, and at the beginning of a session as provided by the Constitution or law.

District - This term is often used as an abbreviated way to refer to a Congressional or Legislative District, or the geographical area a legislator represents. Offices located in that area are often referred to as District Offices. This can get confusing as Washington, DC can also be referred to as the District of Columbia, or District for short. But typically, when dealing with the House, district means a Congressional District.

Died in Committee - Bills that fail to get committee action (only permitted in certain states).

Earmark - To specify funds in an appropriations bill for a particular purpose.

Effective Date - A law generally becomes effective, or binding, either upon a date specified in the law itself or after a fixed number of days (depending on the state) after the final adjournment of the session during which it was enacted or on signature by the governor.

Engross - The process by which a bill is updated – that is, how adopted amendments and other changes are incorporated into a bill – as it makes its way through the legislature.

Federal Register (https://www.federalregister.gov/**)** - The Federal Register is the daily journal of federal government activities; for example, what went on in Congress, including statements made by Members of Congress on the floor, and activities of the Administration, including the posting of grant competitions. There is a web edition of the Federal Register to make it easier for citizens and communities to understand the regulatory process and to participate in government decision-making.

Fiscal Year - Financial operations of the U.S. government are carried out in a 12-month fiscal year, beginning on October 1 and ending on September 30 of the following year. State and local governments will likely have similar calendars.

Formula Grants - Federal grants in which a formula is used to determine how much money each state receives.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) - Independent, non-political agency in the legislative branch that serves as the investigating agency for Congress, carries out legal, accounting, and auditing functions, and makes recommendations for more effective government operations.

Grant - Pots of money that are divided and awarded to eligible entities or groups of entities to perform approved activities using designated criteria to achieve desired results. At the federal level, you see grants being awarded through national competitions. You also see grants go in predetermined formulas

or through competition with states and local governments for them to administer. Thus, just because the grant competition is run by a state or local government office, they may just be administering federal funding. In addition to government grants, hundreds of foundations, companies, and individuals offer grant opportunities and these should not be overlooked.

Grants.gov (www.Grants.gov**)** - A federal grants website that allows organizations to electronically find and apply for current competitive grant opportunities from ALL federal agencies. The site also allows users to sign up for various automatic notifications.

H.R. - Stands for House of Representatives and designates a bill originating in the House.

Hearings - House and Senate Committee sessions in which testimony regarding legislation is received from interested parties.

House - Short for the U.S. House of Representatives, it is one of two chambers in the federal legislature. It has 435 voting Members, known as Congressmen/Congresswomen, Representatives, or Members, which proportionally represent the population of the 50 states. The term may also apply to a state legislature chamber.

Letter of Support/Interest - A letter signed by a government official to an individual to express interest/ support for an activity, often the application of a grant.

Lobbying - Seeking to influence the passage or defeat of legislation. Originally the term referred to persons frequenting the lobbies or corridors of legislative chambers to speak to lawmakers.

Majority Leader - The leading spokesperson and legislative strategist for the party in control of either the House or Senate.

Marking up a Bill - Going through a bill, usually in subcommittee, section-by-section, revising language, amending sections, etc. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill, with or without a new number (Clean Bill).

Member - A Senator or Representative.

Minority Leader - The leading spokesperson and legislative strategist for the minority party in either the House or Senate.

NOFA (Notice of Funding Opportunity) - This is a term often used when a grant opportunity is announced.

Omnibus Bill - A bill containing several separate but related items.

Procurement - When a government or private organization purchases a product or service. There are procurement opportunities for large companies down to small organizations.

Project Grants - Categorical grant programs in which states submit proposals for projects to the federal government and the national government chooses which to fund on a competitive basis.

Recess - Different from adjournment, it does not interfere with unfinished business; it halts the proceedings temporarily.

Report - Both a verb and a noun, when a committee returns a bill to the floor of either the Senate or House, it "reports" the bill. A "report" is also a document setting forth the committee's explanation of its action.

Representative - A term for an elected official who serves in the U.S. House of Representatives. Also federally known as a Congressman/Congresswoman or Member of Congress. May also be the term used for certain state legislators.

S. - Stands for Senate and designates a bill originating in the U.S. Senate and possibly state Senate.

Senate - The U.S. Senate is one of the two chambers in the federal legislature. It is made up of 100 voting members, known as Senators or Members, two from each state. Each state may also have a state senate.

Senator - An elected official serving in the Senate.

Site Visit - The common term given for when a government official visits a location/program.

Speaker of the House - The elected presiding officer of the House of Representatives. Elected by the full House and is always a member of the majority party.

Staffer - A person who works for the legislature in a supporting capacity.

U.S. Code - A consolidation of the laws of the United States, arranged by subject under 50 titles.

RESOURCE 3 – Permissible Activities and Ethical Considerations

Permissible activities and ethical considerations vary greatly from government body to government body. Also, not following them can have some pretty big consequences either directly or indirectly.

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the rules for the government jurisdiction in which you are planning to operate. If you are planning major activities, it is probably good to get legal or professional government affairs advice before proceeding.

That being said, many of the activities talked about in these documents will not require any form of lobbying registry and reporting, or put you in much danger of violating ethics rules or putting government officials in a position to violate them. While many ethics rules are aimed at preventive activities for government officials, it is still good for you to understand them so that you do not end up putting a government official in a position that might violate the rules, and you can reassure them that your activity will comply.

Key things to look for:

- Definitions. What is the jurisdiction of the lobbyist, lobbying activities, lobbying contacts, non-lobbying activities, etc.?
- Covered entity. What entities are covered by the ethics rules?
- Thresholds. Many jurisdictions set a threshold (hours, contacts, dollars per period) for which, if your institution is below, even if what you have done constitutes lobbying, does not need to be registered or reported.
- Lobbying registration. Many jurisdictions require those meeting a certain threshold for their definition of lobbying activities to register. Some registrations are free, while others charge a fee. Some require annual or bi-annual registration, while others you only need to register once.
- Lobbying reporting. Many jurisdictions require you to report your lobbying activities (again, once they are above a certain threshold). The reporting periods vary and can be quarterly, bi-annually, yearly, or only when you reach a threshold. Be careful, some require you to keep reporting even after your lobbying activities have concluded until you file saying you have completed your lobbying activities. What you need to report varies also from some requiring every contact, specifically listing the person contact, the medium for the contact, and the nature of the contact, while others may only require a total amount of lobbying, maybe just listing the government entities lobbied, and a general description of the types of/for what purposes the lobbying was done.
- Contributions. Giving contributions to government officials is a particular area you should have an understanding of before doing it. Some jurisdictions allow contributions so long as they are reported, while others ban donations while you are lobbying.
- Gift rules. Jurisdictions often have gift rules to define what is considered giving a government official a gift, what gifts are permissible, to whom and under what situations, and when and how gift-giving needs to be reported. The simple act of having light refreshments at an event could be considered a gift, giving a government official tickets to one of your running events, or having giveaways at events aimed at staffers and government officials.

- 501(c)(3)/Non-profit lobbying. A lot of people have some sort of notion that non-profit organizations, such as your institution, cannot lobby or they will lose their non-profit status with the IRS. For the most part, that is not true. Unless taken to the extreme, most of the things discussed in these documents should not put your organization in any threat of having your non-profit status removed. The official rule from the IRS is that "no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying). A 501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status."[1] So, as long as your lobbying activities have not become a substantial part of your institution's activities when considering all the activities it does and the expenses it makes, then you are fine. Also, remember that many of the activities talked about in these documents are not, at least at the federal level, considered lobbying. For lobbying, you need, in general, to influence some sort of legislative or executive-specific actions, and even then there are exemptions. According to the IRS, "[o]rganizations may . . . involve themselves in issues of public policy without the activity being considered as lobbying. For example, organizations may conduct educational meetings, prepare and distribute educational materials, or otherwise educationally consider public policy issues without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status."[2]

Information sources

Find a list of state ethics and lobbying laws here: https://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/ethics-and-lobbying-legislation-database-2009-to-p.aspx

[1] http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Lobbying
[2] http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Lobbying

RESOURCE 4 – Identifying Contacts

IMPORTANT: Please let ACHA know of any meeting requests you are making, particularly if a meeting is scheduled so that we can synchronize what we are doing at the national level, help provide talking points and additional recommendations, and help take full advantage of the opportunities.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

If you need to contact your Member of Congress or the White House, you can use the switchboards and speak with an operator who will connect you to the main office.

U.S. House of Representatives switchboard – (202) 225-3121 – Federal representative (regional)

www.House.gov – Access the U.S. House of Representatives and committee websites. There is a place on the front page where you can enter zip codes and find out which Representative represents your area.

U.S. Senate switchboard – (202) 224-3121 – Federal statewide representatives

www.Senate.gov – Website of the U.S. Senate, committees, and votes

White House Switchboard – (202) 456-1414 – White House federal agency staff

http://www.usa.gov/Agencies.shtml can help you find contact information for federal, state, local, or tribal governments and elected officials.

http://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/ – This website is where you can enter your address to find who your state legislators are and get links to their contact information.

RESOURCE 5 – Talking Points

Once you have determined what messages you want to get across during interactions with government officials, the next step is developing talking points for those interactions.

Talking points are just that, points that you use when talking or otherwise conversing with a government official. They do not need to be, nor probably should be, full paragraphs, but rather the points you want to highlight. They should include the message points you want to make, supporting and other background facts, and what asks you want to make to the government official.

Something to also keep in mind is that you will rarely have an opportunity, or will want to hit all the talking points, particularly the background and supporting facts, but will want to think in advance of what time will likely allow and your intended audience and then prioritize the points to fit.

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS USED AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL FOR ACHA

GENERAL NOTES:

- Review the meeting overview and Member bio before the meeting
- Call if you will be late for the meeting
- Turn off cell phones before heading into meetings
- Collect business cards and personal information of staffers (i.e., favorite afterschool activity as a kid)
- Take a few minutes after the meeting to collect your notes and compare them with the others while the information is fresh in your mind

Purpose/aim of meeting [in 10-15 minutes]: Make a positive, personal connection with the audience regarding the beneficial impact ACHA is having and how ACHA is looking forward to opportunities to partner with the federal government to provide cost-effective means of achieving mutual goals.

Meeting Outline

I. Introduction

- Introduce yourself and other members of the group
- If a staff-led (no Member) meeting, learn where the staffer is from, college attended, and interest/ experience higher education
    - Ask if they have heard of ACHA

II. Discussion: ACHA Overview

- ACHA background
    - History and founding
    - Work on behalf of the college community
    - Purpose/goals
- ACHA members in the Congressperson's area
    - Go over what our members are doing in the Member's state/district
    - How many do we serve and what are the program locations

- Show map

III. How ACHA is Making a Difference

- Statistical Impacts – Current evaluations of ACHA coalitions and impact as a health organization in higher education
- **Personal Story** – This is usually a good time to tell an impact story from an ACHA initiative or research effort (ideally in that district) that illustrates the positive benefits ACHA has had on the college health community.

IV. Policy Discussion

- ACHA Policy Focus – Mental and physical health promotion
- Exploring our policy agenda – Concerned about Title IX, addressing unhealthy habits, and college well-being
- Ask what they are working on and how we can help
- **ASK** – Site visit or meet with a local college
    - Give dates of upcoming events

V. Closing

- Thank them again for taking the time to meet
- Present and walk them briefly through the leave-behind packet
- Remind them about visiting an ACHA event
- Ask them if they have any questions or anything we can follow up on with them
- Ask if you can pose for a picture [make sure you take a picture of the office's nameplate after the group picture so that we can easily identify the Member/staffer of which the group picture was taken]

RESOURCE 6 – Meeting with Government Officials

Below are ways you can begin engaging with government officials, including Members of Congress.

Government officials can be very helpful in building visibility for your institution and ACHA, making connections, advancing policies, and identifying potential funding and other opportunities. They can also bolster credibility and legitimacy through pictures and other promotional efforts advertising the contact with the government official and your institution, and through your work with them, help demonstrate to your members the positive work of the institution. Government officials also often have access to information not generally available to the public and have connections with many influential people in many different sectors. But if you do not ask them for it, you will not learn of it.

STEP 1. Identifying whom to meet with

- Federal representatives. Your Members of Congress are 1) the Representative(s) that represents constituents in your service area; 2) if different, your Representative; along 3) both of the Senators from the state. You can find your U.S. Representative's name and contact information by visiting www.house.gov and entering your zip code, and your U.S. Senators' names and contact information by visiting www.senate.gov and entering your state.
- State and local representatives. Look up the state legislature/local government website. Most will have a system, similar to the federal one outlined above, to determine representatives for a particular address/town.
- Federal government officials. There are also local offices of several important federal government agencies.

STEP 2. Contacting

Asking a government official for a meeting can be done in two ways:

- Scheduling a meeting. Government officials will often have local offices where you can contact and schedule a meeting. Ideally, the meeting will be with the government official, but they are often with a staff member who specializes in helping constituents. There are several goals for such a meeting: 1) introducing ACHA, your institution, and the importance of the higher education health community; 2) building a connection and relationship that can serve you down the line; and 3) asking how they can help provide support (grants, contracts, relationship opportunities, etc.), particularly if you have a specific need.
    - **IMPORTANT: Please let ACHA know of any meeting requests you are making, particularly if a meeting is scheduled so that we can synchronize what we are doing, provide any updated talking points and additional recommendations, and help take full advantage of the opportunities.**
- Write them a letter. While a meeting is often more beneficial, it can sometimes take a while to arrange, and it does take time for the meeting itself to occur. As an alternative, or perhaps within the meeting request itself, you can include in your letter information about your institution and ask that they keep you in mind regarding issues related to college health.

STEP 3. What to ask for

- Connections. Due to the nature of their work, government officials often have important connections in and out of government, such as local government officials, contractors, and community developers and organizations. By asking, they can help connect you to others who might have information about funding/recruitment opportunities or otherwise be helpful in your work. This can be with both other government officials and also with private contacts, as well. It is OK to ask if they would be willing to introduce you, along with giving you the contact information. Introductions can be as easy as an e-introduction via email to the office sending an introductory letter.
    - For introductory letters, it is often appropriate for you to offer to draft the body of the letter for them. In some cases, you might even have to specifically ask for a letter to be sent to specific agencies, and have the letter ask for that agency to identify who it is appropriate for you to talk to and help arrange that meeting.
- Ask them to come out and visit a site. Not only is having them come to see the great work you are doing helpful in building strong and useful relationships, but it is also a great opportunity for you to possibly get some press attention and some positive branding for your institution and ACHA. For example, photos from these site visits and press clippings can be utilized in future collateral and promotional materials. See the "Site visits" resource sheet for more on-site visits.
- Official recognitions. See the "Official Recognitions" resource sheet.
- Finding funding opportunities. While not a focus of this guide, there may be funding opportunities that government officials, Members of Congress, local offices of federal agencies, state representatives, local governments, etc., are aware of that can be useful if known.

STEP 4. What you can do for them

Remember that government officials, particularly those who are elected, are always on the lookout for positive publicity. With that in mind, here are some suggestions on things you can offer to government officials:

- Invite government officials (or their staff) to ACHA events, campus events, or other special events. This has benefits on several levels. The government official gets to see what is going on at the ground level and has an opportunity for positive publicity. This provides you with an opportunity to build a positive relationship with the government official and their staff and can help build visibility for the institution and ACHA.
- Internal publicity. Sharing the experience and pictures internally within the institution can be good publicity for the government official, particularly if your audience is their constituent. At the council level, this can be done through your website, newsletters, promotional material, pictures at events, emails to families and volunteers, etc. At the national level, please send all pictures and related material about your contact with government officials to ACHA.

Tips for meeting with a government official:

- Be prepared. Write down what you want to say and have it with you when you make the call. It may sound silly, and you may never even look at it, but it will boost your confidence. If there are more than two participants, organize who will say what during the meeting. One person can do the introduction while another points out the problem or discusses the local/programmatic perspective. The meeting will flow more smoothly this way.
- Create an agenda for the meeting and practice in advance. Be brief and clear. Also, have a folder of handouts available to pass out after the meeting.
- Take notes. Take notes on what is said and write down any commitments your elected official makes and any follow-up that needs to be done after the meeting.
- Connect with your audience. Establish a personal connection with your elected official and their staffer in the meeting by asking them about their higher education experiences or involvement in college health.
- Acknowledge your audience. Elected officials or staffers rarely hear the words "Thank You" from their constituents. Always thank them for the supportive actions they have taken, or just be sure to thank them for taking the time to meet with you. Praising a good staffer in front of their boss is an especially good thing.
- Be concise. Summarize your request in 5 minutes or less.
- Don't be a zealot or political. Fair, balanced, and thoughtful conversations will keep the door to your official's office open even if you don't find common ground. Keep the discussion non-political, unless there are particular policy asks that you have.
- Don't be a know-it-all or talk down to a staffer. Many staffers are young and may not know about your issue. Be professional and helpful, not condescending.
- Be gracious. No matter what the outcome of the meeting or their position on your issue, always make sure to thank them for taking the time to meet with you after the meeting.
- Thank you notes. Thank you notes are always a good idea, even if just by email. When meeting with a staffer, we recommend also sending a thank you to the government official the staffer works for to thank them for making the staffer available and for your appreciation of the staffer. If the government official has a superior (such as agency officials), a nice touch can be to send a similar note to their superior. Use the note as one more opportunity to reiterate your "asks" and main points raised during the meeting, and then thank them in advance for their assistance, even if they have not yet agreed to provide it.

Build relationships

While you can get useful information and such from a meeting and/or a letter, you are more likely to see benefits when you have taken steps to build relationships.

- Inviting government officials (and their staff) to site visits/events. As discussed above, this is not only good publicity but also great for relationship building. Be aware that the schedules of government officials are often busy, so make sure the offer notes that you understand if they cannot make it now, and that you will keep them informed of other opportunities. Then, do so. See the "Site visits" resource sheet for more information.

    - Try to extend an invitation *every three months* or so. If there is a specific event, such as a program or health symposium. This is particularly for federal government officials; however, you can also invite local officials and make an event out of it.
- Participating/attending government official events. As you build relationships and stakeholders become more aware of your work, your institution can offer to be a resource to government officials by participating in key events, such as a roundtable on subjects related to youth. Try to ask a question or otherwise be known that you are there. Get up and say hello to the government official (and their staff) at the event so they are aware that you are there, reinforcing in their mind who you are.
- Recognizing government officials. A way to build relationships, and possibly visibility, is to *recognize* officials for their service. You can also create, or work with ACHA to create, recognitions of your own and present them to the government official. Remember to best utilize these opportunities, steps should be taken to generate press and other attention.

Courtesies

Like all relationships, courtesies can go a long way. In this way, government officials are a little different than other sales-related efforts. Ways to express courtesies include:

- Taking time to know something about them. Most egos are properly stroked when you take the time to get to know them, personally and professionally and show that when you interact with them. This should come as second nature to someone in sales. Find out what issues the government official cares about and connect what you are doing to their pet projects/issues where you can.
- Use proper titles. Titles are often important to government officials, so take a bit of time to learn what their proper titles are and use them.
- Thank yous. Thank you notes are always a good idea even if just by email. When meeting with a staffer, we recommend also sending a thank you to the government official the staffer works for to thank them for making the staffer available and for your appreciation of the staffer. If the government official has a superior (such as agency officials), a nice touch can be to send a similar note to their superior.
- Follow-up items. If you are asked or offered something to follow up with during or after the meeting, respond promptly, even if to give them an expectation of when you can get them the follow-up request.

Keep in touch

Like other sales lead efforts, you should find a way to touch base with the government official (or more likely with their staff) regularly. Once a month if you have something of interest, but at least once every other month. It can be an article you saw that you thought they might be interested in, commenting on something you heard/read about that they are doing, or, best of all, an update on information from ACHA, a project, or your institution. If there is an article about ACHA, college health, or higher education, send a copy. Simply attaching an article with a quick handwritten note is an excellent approach. In all your communications, take pains to steer clear of anything of a political nature beyond whatever advocacy issues you may be advancing, and in those cases, stick to the talking points and material provided.

- Follow-up in-person meetings. For federal legislative officials, it is not realistic, nor do we recommend requesting, to have a meeting more than once a year. Once every two years is more realistic. But

meeting with staff contacts can be more frequent, say once every six months or less if there is a particular reason to do so. Similar with non-federal/non-legislative officials.

Keep ACHA informed

Please keep ACHA informed of your activities concerning government officials so that ACHA can provide further support and coordinate your activities with our activities at the national level.

RESOURCE 7 – Other Forms of Engagement

Have your government official visit your program/event. Host a meeting, site visit, or have a government office visit an event but don't get overwhelmed with all the steps. These steps are suggestions, and you don't need to complete every step to have a successful event.

Ideally, the visit will be with the government official, but meetings are often with a staff member who specializes in helping constituents. There are several goals for such a visit:

1. Introducing ACHA and your institution and the work you do (see the "Talking points" resource sheet)
2. Gaining visibility for your institution, including potential press attention (and being able to use press clippings for promotion and related materials)
3. Building a connection and relationship that can serve you down the line
4. Asking how they can help provide support (grants, contracts, relationship opportunities, etc.), particularly if you have a specific need

IMPORTANT: Please let ACHA know of any site visit requests you are making, particularly if a visit is scheduled so that we can synchronize what we are doing, provide any updated talking points and additional recommendations, and help take full advantage of the opportunities.

STEP 1. Identifying who you want to invite to visit your program/event

- Federal representatives. Your Members of Congress are 1) the Representative(s) that represents constituents in your service area, and 2) if different, your personal Representative, along with 3) both of the Senators from the state. You can find your U.S. Representative's name and contact information by visiting www.house.gov and entering your zip code, and your U.S. Senators' names and contact information by visiting www.senate.gov and entering your state.
- State and local representatives. Look up the state legislature/local government website. Most will have a system, similar to the federal one outlined above, to determine representatives for a particular address/town.
- Federal government officials. There are also local offices of several important federal government agencies.

STEP 2. Contacting

- How. Though you can make a call, the ideal way to make contact is through either a letter or email, and then following that up with a call. Government officials will often have local offices you can contact and schedule a time for their coming out and visiting. See below in the "Sample Materials" section for a sample site visit request.
- What to include. Especially if you have not had contact with a government official before, include information about ACHA, your institution of higher education, and if you are invited to an event. Make sure you include contact information so that they can follow up. Other things they will often like to know and are good to include:

- Program of an event
- Who will be there (numbers, make-up, are they constituents, etc.)
- When would be the best time for them to come
- Will they get to speak or have any particular role
- Will there be press there

- How often. Try to extend an invitation *every three months* or so, especially if there is a specific event such as the ACHA Annual Conference, an ACHA-sponsored webinar, or a health symposium at your institution. If not, offer to have them visit your institution so that they can see what is going on in their community. This is particularly for federal government officials, where you can also then invite local officials and make an event out of it. Also, keep aware of election cycles for elected officials. Usually, the two months leading up to an election is when they are looking for opportunities to get out and meet potential voters and get publicity/press attention.
- When. Call well in advance for scheduling. Depending on the government official's schedule, this could be a month, or probably more, in advance.

STEP 3. Scheduling a meeting

- Have alternate dates available; or you might start by asking when the government official will be home/what his/her availability is.
- Have reasonable expectations regarding the official's time. It is not unusual for legislators to schedule numerous events during the day and have as little as 15-20 minutes for your visit, while others may budget 30 minutes or more.
- State that you want the legislator to attend, as well as staff.
- Give contact information for someone who will be at the event/location that they can coordinate with the day of along with who they should be in contact with leading up to the visit.
- Give detailed directions on how to get there and include where they should park (having dedicated parking for them can be helpful).
- It would also be appreciated if you share with them suggestions on the type of attire they should wear (casual, business, suit, etc.).
- Get from them who you can contact the day of. This may be a driver (also known as a bodyman), or it may be someone in the office who can get a hold of the government official. Rarely will you get a direct number for the official, especially if it is a federal official.
- Go over in detail with the scheduler what is expected to happen during the visit.
- Confirm any press that is likely to be there (or at least who you have invited to attend).

STEP 4. Plan your legislator's visit for maximum effect and make the visit worth your legislator's time

- Show what you do. While special events are great, especially if they can draw publicity attention, it is important that even during those events you find a way to show them what you do.
- Know about them. Take some time to learn about the government officials before they come. Often they will have a short bio on a webpage that you can reference. It is also good to look through recent press releases and news coverage. Finally, it is good to see what connections they have with higher

education, health, and college activities, if any. This can be done simply by searching the words "health," "college," or "student" and the government official's name.

- Contact the media to cover the event. This will ensure your community learns more about ACHA and your institution, as well as the government official's interest in it. Let the government official's office know when you call to schedule that you will be working on press coverage for the event.
- Get them involved. Have them help or speak at your institution or ACHA-sponsored webinar.
- Be organized. Even if it is just a visit to a program location, still map out the visit with a timeline and roles and responsibilities. If you have a particular representative participant or parent, see if they would be willing to talk directly with the official. You can even suggest talking points for them to highlight. Having them tell personal stories of positive impacts and what is going on "on the ground" is very powerful.
- Numbers matter. Make sure if you are inviting someone out that it will be well attended.
- Demographics can matter. If an elected official, go to their website and find out where they represent and make sure those at the visit are from their district.
- Put your best foot forward. It may seem obvious, but it is certainly worth reminding you that you want to make sure you are presenting the best possible picture of ACHA and your institution. Do not fake things or overly stage them, but do spruce things up and be on particularly good behavior.
- Pictures. Take pictures. This can be the most important aspect of the visit.
    - You can then use the pictures in promotional and other material.
    - Make sure you share the pictures with the officials and let them know they can use them as they want.
    - Share pictures with media outlets that may be interested with a brief press release.
    - Share the picture with members of your college community to raise awareness.

STEP 5. Reinforce the visit with your legislator

- Coverage. Cover the visit in your newsletter, publication, or website. Use pictures, if possible. Send copies to the government official's office. If there is press coverage, send information on this to both offices. This might include copies of newspaper articles or information on when coverage ran on television or the radio.
- Thank yous. Thank you notes are always a good idea even if just by email. When meeting with a staffer, we recommend also sending a thank you to the government official the staffer works for to thank them for making the staffer available and for your appreciation of the staffer. If the government official has a superior (such as agency officials), a nice touch can be to send a similar note to their superior. If a federal Member of Congress, it is best to send the letters to their local office rather than their Washington, DC office as letters to Washington, DC go through extra security and even get eradicated.
- Follow-up items. If you are asked or offered something to follow up on during or after the meeting, respond promptly, even if to give them an expectation of when you can get them the follow-up request.

STEP 6. Contact ACHA and let them know you have held a site visit

- Contact ACHA ahead of the event and give them a post-event report
- Include:
    - A summary of the visit
    - Contact info for those attending
    - Any feedback provided by the visitors
    - Any follow-up needed/requested from the visit
    - Are there any other next steps

SAMPLE MATERIALS

SAMPLE – SITE VISIT REQUEST
(Mail or email as a PDF attachment on letterhead)

{Name}
{Title}
{Organization}

Dear {Recipient}:

I am Jane Doe, the {Title and Organization}, and I would like to invite you to come out and visit our institution.

At ACHA we are advocating for college health and empowering students to be their best, by ensuring their health and well-being.

[Insert information here about your particular college, such as service area, number of participants, how long you have been running the event, examples of programs you run, any awards or recognitions you have received, etc.]

I hope to hear from you soon so we can schedule your visit.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about our organization.

Sincerely,

{Name}
{Title}
{Organization}

SAMPLE – THANK YOU NOTE TO MEMBER OF CONGRESS
(Mail or email as a PDF attachment on letterhead)

{Date}

{Recipient Address}

Dear {Recipient}:

I am writing to thank you for coming to our {event}.

As I mentioned to you during your visit, our membership [add some facts and stats you shared during your meeting].

Please let us know if we can ever be of any assistance, particularly if you are looking to host or take part in any college health activities.

I also look forward to following up to plan a site visit so you can come out and see one of our health programs firsthand and meet with some of our outstanding runners.

Again, thank you for meeting with me.

Sincerely,

{Name}
{Title}
{Organization}

SAMPLE – THANK YOU NOTE EMAIL TO STAFF

Dear {Recipient},

Thanks for taking the time to attend our {EVENT}. We enjoyed our discussion and look forward to working with you more closely in the future.

We will follow up with your legislative aide about the college health activities legislation currently being discussed in the state legislature. We appreciate your frankness with us about where the process stands right now.

We'd love to get you and your boss to come out and see an event and/or attend our annual conference and will follow up soon with more details on what that visit would look like.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of any assistance.

Thanks again!

{Name}
{Title}
{Organization}

Many government officials hold a variety of events in their districts/states such as community forums. Attending these local functions can be another way to meet government officials, particularly if you have faced difficulty scheduling a meeting, which is not unusual. Legislators speak directly to constituents and learn about community concerns, and your participation and input are welcomed and encouraged. Most events are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend and participate. These events may include:

- Social gatherings
- Forums featuring experts on specific topics of interest to their constituents
- Town Hall meetings

As you build relationships and stakeholders become more aware of your work, your institution can offer to be a resource to government officials by participating in key events. Even if you are not a participant in the event, having someone there in the audience who can stand up and ask a question or make a point can help build visibility, and thus demand for your activities.

Offering to participate in an event

- What. When you meet with a government official or their staff, one of the things you can offer is to help them by participating in a forum or similar event, particularly focused on college health issues.
- How. You can make the offer through a letter or email when you meet with them, or during site visits.
- When. Do not hesitate to make the offer when opportunities present themselves. There is staff turnover, and they are dealing with a lot of people and issues. Although you may have made the offer before, making it again can help remind them of your work. Often it comes down to asking at the right time and since you often do not know when the right time is, making offers numerous times can be crucial. If opportunities do not present themselves, go ahead and write them every six months or so. Do not get discouraged.

Learning about events

- Sign up for event alerts through government officials' websites.
- You can find out about these events by visiting the websites of government officials, listing them in the local newspaper, calling their offices, and signing up for their emails and newsletters.

Attending

- Decide who is most appropriate to come. You may want to attend as a group if need be.
- While there:
    - Introduce yourself. Many community events are intimate forums to see policymakers and their staff. If you do not want to ask questions, do not worry. Your participation is still important. At the end of the event, if the opportunity allows, go up to the policy maker (or staff), introduce yourself, highlight something that was said during the event, and hand them concise and visual material about ACHA and your institution. Make sure to attach your card or contact information.

- Ask a question at a community meeting or candidate forum. Going to an event where your elected official or a key decision-maker is speaking and asking them a question is an excellent way to thank them in public for something good they may have done, get some visibility, and start or develop your relationship-building process. Remember, you are there representing your institution, so your questions should be non-partisan.
- Follow up with staff. Try to get contact information for staff in attendance. Reach out after the event to thank them for the event and use that as an opportunity to make other asks (see the "Meeting with/writing to government officials" resource sheet), or to reinforce an existing relationship.

Participating

If you are invited to participate in an event hosted by a government official, these are some helpful hints to keep in mind.

- Make them look good. Remember you are there by request of the government official, so be mindful of that, follow their instructions, and work to make the event successful from their point of view. Make sure to try to make them look good.
- Taking time to know something about them. Most egos are properly stroked when you take the time to get to know them, personally and professionally and show that when you interact with them. This should come as second nature to someone in sales. Find out what issues the government official cares about and connect what you are doing to their pet projects/issues where you can.
- Do homework about the topic. Remember you are there because of what you offer to the event. Take time to study the topic and have an outline of what you want to say.
- Use proper titles. Titles are often important to government officials, so take a bit of time to learn what their proper titles are and use them appropriately.
- Be concise. If they say you have 5 minutes to speak, prepare for 4. You almost always end up speaking longer than you think you will. This is where having clear talking points and an outline can be very useful.
- Thank yous. Thank you notes are always a good idea even if just by email. After the event thank the government official and any staff you are aware was involved in putting on the event.
- Follow-up items. If you are asked or offered something to follow up on during or after the event, respond promptly, even if it is simply to give them an expectation of when you can get them the follow-up request.