



Interacting with Government Officials

University faculty and staff interact with federal, state, and local government officials in many ways, including:

- inviting officials to campus
- testifying at legislative hearings
- visiting legislators in their offices

These engagements can be more effective and coordinated if you consult ahead of time with the External Relations and Communications (ERC) government relations team.

ERC serves as the System's liaison to members of the U.S. Congress and executive branch, the Illinois General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, federal and state agency leadership, and key local and community officials. ERC also leads the Council on Governmental and External Relations (COGER), which includes government relations leads from each of the three universities in the system.

Please let ERC and your university government relations lead know about university-related interactions with government officials. We can work together to ensure that you are effective in your communication, that you are well briefed on pertinent issues, and that your interactions are in compliance with legal and ethical requirements. You can find further guidance on government advocacy and engagement [here](#).

Tips for Effective Advocacy



Plan your message

Prepare for your meeting by developing talking points and a clear ask.



Know your audience

Familiarize yourself with the official's policy views, committee assignments, and district demographics. What about your story will speak directly to them?



Balance your pitch

Effective presentations often contain a balance of personal, relevant anecdotes and evidence-based data/examples. Be prepared to provide basic background information.



Beware of time limits

Prepare a succinct version of your presentation in case the meeting gets cut short. Know that legislative meeting spaces are often tight and can take place in small offices or even in hallways.



Remain professional

If you experience resistance, don't take it personally. Try to leave an opportunity for future agreement on other issues.



It's OK not to know

No one expects you to know everything. If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, offer to follow up with the answer.