

LEGISLATIVE TALKS 101

1. **Introduce yourself and establish any connections the two of you have.** Do you have a friend in common? Did your grandmother grow up in their hometown? Does GCDD have a program in their county? If you have a connection like this, mention it! (If not, don't worry and just be your friendly self.)
2. **Introduce your subject. See if they have any initial questions** (usually just "Are you familiar with topic XYZ?") Be simple and clear – you want to make sure they understand what you're talking about!
3. **Make a case for why your subject is important.** One great way to do this - tell a personal story and back it up with a supportive statistic.
4. **Make your ask.** Be sure it's clear what you are asking for, and that it would address the subject/issue/problem you've just told them about.
5. **Give them another opportunity to ask questions.** Do your best to address their questions, but don't panic if they ask something you don't know. Just say that you don't know that answer, but you will look into it and get back to them. (IMPORTANT: after the visit, do look into it and get back to them! Contact GCDD staff if you need help.)
6. **If applicable - arrange to follow up as necessary.**



GOLDEN RULES OF LEGISLATIVE VISITS

- **Remember: legislators are people who genuinely like and are interested in other people.** If they weren't they'd never run for office in the first place! Most of the time, they are very interested in talking to Georgia citizens – aka you.
- **Legislators are busy people.** You need to be prepared to explain your topic and make your case clearly in a brief amount of time.
- **Don't just talk AT the legislator** – talk TO them, LISTEN to them, and give them plenty of opportunity to ask questions and give you feedback.
- **Practice your “legislative talk” – preferably with people who know little to nothing about the subject you're talking about.** You want to be comfortable when you talk to legislators, so it helps to practice your talking points. And it's best to practice with people who don't know much about your subject, because many legislators won't either. Get those people to give you feedback – do they understand what you're saying?
- **Don't panic about being perfect.** If you wait till you're perfect, you'll never start. The goal isn't to be perfect, it's to get out there and give it your best shot. You will grow and evolve as an advocate over time.....and the more you do it, the easier it gets.
- **It's about providing accurate, meaningful information and building relationships.**