TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL MEETINGS WITH CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

Before your meeting:

• “Arrive” on your Zoom or conference line 5 minutes early to ensure that you have no technical issues
  o Practice with your colleagues or family to test your internet connection and/or phone signal and ensure your face is well lit.

• Secure a quiet, distraction-free space without political signs/affiliations present (posters, stickers, shirts, etc.). Notify those who you live with in advance to ensure privacy and silence when possible. Avoid distracting backgrounds and be sure to silence your cell phone.

• If you are using Zoom, consider using a picture of your organization’s logo for your background. For instructions on how to add a virtual background on Zoom click here.

• If your internet is not reliable, you may want to dial into the Zoom meeting in addition to logging on online. That way if your video stops working, your peers and the Congressional office you’re meeting with will still be able to hear you.

• You will have the email addresses and phone numbers of participants from your state, so if you encounter an issue you can update them in real time.

Important Note:

If for some reason you cannot attend your meeting on Capitol Hill Day, email MENTOR or your State Captain so that they can ensure there is coverage for your meeting. If not, Members of Congress and their staff could be left waiting for a meeting with no participants.

During your meeting:

• Have everyone in your group introduce themselves and where they are from. This gets a little challenging on a conference call, but Congressional offices understand. Let the legislator or staff know you’re all here as part of the National Mentoring Summit.

• Be open to chit-chat – especially if it’s about things going on back home – but be mindful of your time. Hill meeting are usually very brief (15-20 minutes on average).

• Come prepared to tell your story (why you care about youth mentoring) and to cover the issues MENTOR shares with you in January.
Before the meeting begins, determine who in your group will cover each topic. This allows you to come prepared and help the meeting run efficiently. This is why MENTOR emphasizes the best practice of pre-event networking with your state peers!

- Be sure to talk about activities going on in your state and cities: Members of Congress always want to learn more about what’s going on in the communities they represent.

- MENTOR will email the legislator and/or their staff materials that you will also receive prior to Capitol Hill Day.

- Be flexible! Meeting times and the staffer you’re scheduled to meet with may change. This is normal for Capitol Hill.

- Allow time for questions.

- Don’t forget to take a screenshot with your Member of Congress and their staff – you’re participating in the democratic process! We strongly encourage all Hill Day participants to post their pictures on social media using the hashtag #MentoringAmplifies
  - TIP: Tag your Members of Congress in your post and thank them for their time (and/or their staff’s time) and commitment to mentoring. Many will retweet and repost messages from constituents.

After your meeting:

- Send a thank you email to the Member of Congress and the Congressional aide(s) you met with to express your appreciation for their time. This is a great opportunity to briefly remind them of what you covered during your meeting.

- Fill out your Congressional meeting feedback form provided by MENTOR. These forms really inform our advocacy efforts throughout the year!

- Follow-up with MENTOR’s Team in March and April to assess what actions are being taken by Members of Congress and our team can help you find ways to engage congressional offices and foster an impactful relationship even after Capitol Hill Day.