

Advocacy Meeting Elements

Advocacy Week 2022 Script



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Thank you for joining HIAS in our annual Advocacy Week, Aug 15-19, 2022. This document is a guide for your virtual advocacy meetings with the offices of your Representative or Senator. Before reading this guide, please make sure that you are registered for Advocacy Week, and that you have received guidance from HIAS on how to request and schedule a meeting for your group. If you have any questions on these steps, please e-mail Russ Agdern at russ.agdern@hias.org.

After you have scheduled your advocacy meeting, we recommend that you briefly meet with your team to review this guide and assign roles to different group members.

Here are the different elements that will make for a successful meeting.

1. **Introductions:** have everyone in attendance introduce themselves. Make sure to ask for the names and titles of all staff for the lawmaker present, at this point.
2. **Synagogue/Community/Coalition introduction:** If you are meeting as part of a synagogue, grassroots coalition or community group, describe that as well, including name, religious affiliation, size, and history. The goal here is to give the office a sense of your group, why it is important and what kind of power and standing it may have in their district.
3. **This is a Jewish Issue:** Explain that caring for the refugee, the asylum seeker, the person who needs a safe place to call home is a critical Jewish value, named in the Torah three dozen times. Describe the large support from the Jewish community for refugees, which includes 2,000+ Rabbis and 800+ congregations nationwide. If possible, this segment would be great for a clergy leader to hold, but not necessary.
4. **Powerful story about why this is important to you and your team:** While our stats and specific policy asks are important, emotion is what moves people to action. For the staff people on the other side of the zoom screen, it's important for them to hear why these issues matter to you. Have you resettled a refugee or humanitarian parolee from Afghanistan or Ukraine? Have members of your community gone to the border? Have you raised funds or supplies or volunteered with a local resettlement agency? Does someone in your group have a specific story about that work? If not, do you have a specific story about why this matters to you? A member of your community or family that had to get here safely?
5. **Policy Asks:** Based to some extent on which issue is most directly connected to your work, make these three policy asks (note: additional talking points will be provided for these, this section can be split up)

- a. For the Representative/Senator to stand up for the right to seek asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border by opposing all attempts to extend Title 42.
 - b. For the Representative/Senator to publically support and push for Congress to pass the newly introduced with bipartisan support Afghan Adjustment Act (HR8685 in House / S4787 in Senate) that will ensure all Afghans evacuated to the United States in 2021 have a pathway to permanent residency.
 - c. For the Representative/Senator to push for the Biden Administration to set the Refugee Ceiling or Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions to 200,000 for the 2023 fiscal year, and for the Federal Budget to include enough financial support for the State Department to meet that number.
6. Time for the Representative/Senator/Staff to respond: Give the legislator or their staff some time to respond to these three asks. Be respectful, and listen carefully for things that are not a clear commitment. If you don't get a clear answer, please feel free to politely ask again.
7. Request for follow up: Whether the legislator or staff need more time to give you a direct answer, or they are telling you they are going to take action, please ask for the staff to follow up via email with the group to update you.
8. Thanks and invitation: Thank the legislator/their staff for their time. Let them know that you are interested in ongoing communication on this issue. At this point, you can invite them to be a part of an event or meeting at your congregation or invite them to be a part of your community's Refugee Shabbat 2023 on February 4th-5th.
9. Follow up email: Send a follow-up e-mail thanking the office for the meeting, reiterating your asks, and expressing the desire for follow up and continued conversation.
10. Fill out the HIAS reporting form to let us know how this meeting went. The more information we have about these conversations, the more effective we can be in our advocacy. It is likely that HIAS will reach out to you in the future to build off of the relationship you began in these meetings, following up with the staffer with specific legislative asks or requests. These relationships strengthen HIAS' advocacy work.

You can use this script to guide your team to a successful conversation. You need not be policy experts for this meeting to be successful, effective, and powerful. We look forward to hearing from you about how your meetings go.