Becoming a National Council Ambassador: Do I Have What it Takes?

If you’re thinking about joining the National Council Ambassadors Network but wondering whether you have the time, knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective grassroots advocate... the answer is, “Yes, you do!”

The most important requirement to be an effective advocate is that you are passionate about the issues on which you’ll be speaking. If you are willing to work to increase access to effective behavioral health and substance use treatment, then you can be an effective Ambassador.

Here are a few things you should know about being an Ambassador:

- **Face-to-Face Meetings Help Boost Your Influence** – The best way to deliver our messages and build and strengthen relationships is through face-to-face meetings with congressional staff and members of congress. Once you’ve spent time with a legislator or staffer, it will be much easier to reach out to them in the future. And they’ll be much more likely to return your call, respond to your e-mail and take your views into account.

- **You Are an Expert** – You know volumes more about our issues than most members of Congress or congressional staff. You will be able to answer their questions (they are not out to stump you) and, even if you can’t, you’ll be able to get the answers you need from the National Council staff.

- **It Doesn’t Take Much Time** – Being an Ambassador doesn’t mean you have to quit your day job. We ask that you meet with your Member of Congress 3 times a year, either in your home town or in DC. Setting up these brief meetings is easy (we’ll provide you with sample meeting request emails/phone scripts), and we will walk you through key talking points. Ambassadors should expect all of this to take about 2-3 hours per year.

- **You Will Make a Difference** – Once you start building relationships with your members of Congress, you’ll realize that legislators and staff need your help and want your advice as they work to understand the complex world in which you operate and how federal policies, laws, rules and guidelines will impact you, your organization and the people you serve. This information will help inform their positions on bills and the votes they take.

- **We’re Here to Help** – The National Council policy team will work to ensure you have the information and resources you need to succeed. We’re accessible online, via e-mail or telephone. You won’t be doing this alone.

**Make a difference.** Join the National Council Ambassadors Network at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JY6YV7B](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JY6YV7B)

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