



2025 FPC Advanced Advocacy Academy PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Date/Time	Program		Format
January 15, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Introduction	Introduction to the Advocacy Academy & Congress 101	Webinar
January 23, 2025	Symposium #1	How to Hug a Porcupine: Relationship Building with Lawmakers and Why It's Important	In-Person
	Symposium #2	How to Create Stories to Move the Hearts, Minds, and VOTES of Lawmakers	
February 19, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Session 1	Mapping Your Assets: Connecting the Dots Between You and Your Lawmaker	Webinar
March 19, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Session 2	What to do Before, During and After Hill Meetings	Webinar
April 16, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Session 3	Strategies to Influence Undecided Lawmakers	Webinar
May 21, 2025	Symposium #3	Pulling It All Together: Refining Your Pitch	In-Person

July 16, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Session 4	How To Create a Local Event That Will Attract a Member of Congress	Webinar
September 17, 2025 3:00 pm ET	Session 5	Closing Session: The Citizen-Advocate's Toolkit	Webinar

Commented [MS1]: I will create the zoom links for these as soon as we settle on dates



2025 FPC Advocacy Academy COHORT CALL SCHEDULE

	Group #1	Group #2	Group #3
	New Members (D) with Liz Sears Smith(?)	New Members (R) with Marissa Brooke Brewer(?)	Returning Members (D&R) with Jay Cho?
Cohort Call #1	February	February	February
Cohort Call #2	March	March	March
Cohort Call #3	April	April	April
Cohort Call #4	July	July	July
Cohort Call #5	September	September	September

Commented [MS2]: All the consultants are proposed, but I will confirm as soon as we have dates



Introduction: Introduction to the Advocacy Academy & Congress 101

January 15, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the National Association of Realtors 2023 FPC Advocacy Academy, conducted in partnership with the Congressional Management Foundation. This program will help introduce participants to the program and reveal the methods and benefits for building relationships with elected officials. It will also introduce participants to a basic overview of how Congress works, which will serve as a foundation for future sessions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Meet the National Association of Realtors (NAR), Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) staff
- Review program outline and expectations
- Address how building relationships with lawmakers can be uncomfortable
- Introduce strategies for building relationships with Members of Congress

ENHANCED LEARNING

- *Citizen-Centric Advocacy: The Untapped Power of Constituent Engagement* (Article)
- *A Goalie's Mindset: What Soccer Can Teach Us About Lobbying* (Article)
- [Congress 101 – An Insider's View of Congress](#) (Video)
- [Schoolhouse Crock – How a Bill REALLY Becomes a Law](#) (Video)

Symposium 1: How to Hug a Porcupine: Relationship Building with Lawmakers and Why It's Important

January 23, 2025
(In-Person)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Building relationships with elected officials can sometimes be difficult and uncomfortable. It forces you and your key stakeholders to get close to politicians in ways that may feel “prickly” – like hugging a porcupine. This program will help participants overcome that discomfort, revealing the methods and benefits for building relationships with elected officials. Participants will learn who Members of Congress and state legislators listen to; what congressional staffers believe are the most effective communication tactics for influencing undecided Members of Congress; and how to conduct effective in-person meetings, influence legislators at town hall meetings, as well as effective advocacy in the state/district.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the benefits of building relationships with lawmakers
- Grasp the most effective communication tactics for influencing undecided Members
- Comprehend basic advocacy strategies

ENHANCED LEARNING

- *How to Write a Better Letter to Congress* (Article)
- *How Citizens Can Influence Congress at Town Hall Meetings* (Article)

Symposium 2: How to Create Stories to Move the Hearts, Minds, and VOTES of Lawmakers

January 23, 2025
(In-Person)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

People have trouble remembering facts, but they never forget a good story. Effective advocacy appeals to the heart, the head, and political health of the legislator. This presentation teaches FPC Academy participants how to organize and present their stories exercising the tactics actors use. It outlines the key elements of public policy advocacy storytelling and walks participants through an exercise to develop their own personal stories to move the hearts, minds, and VOTES of lawmakers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand why telling stories to lawmakers is an important advocacy skill
- Outline the key elements that advocates should include in the stories they tell lawmakers
- Explain why it's important to prepare and rehearse telling stories before telling them to lawmakers

ENHANCED LEARNING

• Storytelling Exercise (Activity) Create an audio file of your story. Participants should prepare and record a three-to-five minute story, as if they were delivering it to a Member of Congress or staff. Deliver the audio recording via email as an attachment to your cohort leader. Some stories will be selected and shared in future presentations.

Session 1: Mapping Your Assets: Connecting the Dots Between You and Your Lawmaker

February 19, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Despite the narrative presented by Hollywood and the media, lawmakers are people too. Before being elected, they had careers, attended schools and universities, or volunteered in their community. This presentation will explain how the best citizen advocates research their Members of Congress to find connections and tailor their communications to resonate with their lawmakers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Create Member profiles to map personal or professional connections to lawmakers
- Develop tailored communications to connect the dots between issues advocates care about to those that their Members care about

ENHANCED LEARNING

- Legislator Profile handout (from initial in-person session) (Activity)
- *Building Relationships with Members: How to Thrive in the Small Village of Congress* (Article)

Session 2: What to Do Before, During, and After Meetings with Congress

March 19, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Every year, associations, nonprofits, or companies organize fly-in events so their supporters can meet with their Members of Congress. CMF research finds that many constituents could be better prepared for their meetings on Capitol Hill. This presentation reveals research on congressional offices' experiences in meetings with their constituents, and offers tips on what constituents should do before, during, and after their meetings with their Members of Congress and their staff.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn when advocates should request their meetings with lawmakers
- Explore staff and the Members' preference for meeting locations (DC or the state/district)
- Identify proven follow-up strategies

ENHANCED LEARNING

- *Face-to-Face with Congress: Before, During and After Meetings with Legislators* (Article)
- *The Magic Formula to Requesting Time and Setting Up Events With Congress* (Article)
- [What to Expect When Meeting with a Member of Congress](#) (Video)
- [Pre-Fly-In Checklist](#) (Video)

Session 3: Strategies to Influence Undecided Lawmakers

April 16, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Many Americans believe that lawmakers are unreachable – that they don't care about what constituents think and that influencing legislative outcomes is impossible and a waste of time. This session dispels those myths and offers practical tactics for interacting with influential undecided lawmakers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand Common Misconceptions: Recognize and challenge the myths that lawmakers are unreachable and indifferent to constituent opinions.
- Explore Legislative Influence: Learn why constituent engagement matters and how it can shape legislative outcomes.
- Acquire Practical Tactics: Gain actionable strategies for effectively communicating and building relationships with undecided lawmakers.
- Build Confidence in Advocacy: Empower individuals to see their role in influencing policy as valuable and impactful.

Symposium 3: Pulling It All Together: Refining Your Pitch

May 21, 2023
(In-Person)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This in-person training is designed to pull together previous lessons to provide FPC Advocacy Academy participants with tools and skills to be successful in their interactions with Members of Congress. Participants will have the opportunity to interact with other participants, sharing insights and developing strategies for successful interactions with Congress.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Update participants on legislative issues pending before the Congress
- Review key strategies for conducting in-state events with lawmakers

- Refine pitches and storytelling elements that can be used in meetings with lawmakers and staff

Session 4: How to Create a Local Event That Will Attract a Member of Congress

July X, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As Tip O'Neil once stated, "All politics is local." CMF research shows that Members of Congress consider visits to local facilities to be one of the most valuable ways to understand constituent views and opinions – more than any other source of information. This webinar will show participants how to entice Members of Congress to attend local events or meet with key stakeholders. It will also walk participants through the steps to invite legislators to participate in a powerful in-person experience that promises to inform Members about the impact their organization has in Members' districts or states while educating them about their issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the process of hosting an event for a Member of Congress
- Be able to submit a clear and compelling scheduling request

ENHANCED LEARNING

o [WAY Outside the Beltway: District Directors on the DOs and DON'Ts](#) (Video)

Session 5: Closing Session: Citizen-Advocates Toolkit

September X, 2025
(Webinar)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This straight-forward program will complete this training by reviewing the dozens of tools in the citizen advocate toolkit that have been presented throughout this FPC Advocacy Academy training.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review the range of tools that citizen advocates can use to engage elected officials