

# AIA Congressional Meeting Guide 2023 Leadership Summit

## BEFORE THE MEETING

Please, review this preparatory guide in full for a successful meeting on Capitol Hill.

- Review the two AIA background documents, two issue briefs, and talking points so that you have the information you'll need in the meeting.
- Please note: the two AIA issue briefs are meant to be shared with policymakers during your visit. The other documents (talking points, background documents, and this meeting guide) are not to be shared. They are for AIA member information.
- Assign speaking roles for each meeting. It is especially important to decide (in advance) who will start the meeting with introductions and who will deliver “the ask.”
- The talking points are meant to help shape the meeting conversation and divide up the speaking roles, but they are not meant to be a script. **Please personalize the conversation with supporting evidence from your practice and your experience.** The most memorable Congressional meetings include a combination of data-driven arguments and personal anecdotes.
- Connect as a group at the February 15 breakfast briefing so you can practice transitions between speakers to ensure the conversation is both balanced and fluid.
- On the day of your meeting(s), the Advocacy Associates mobile app will be the most convenient way to review the times and locations of your meetings.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- During these visits, it is extremely important avoid any discussion of campaign contributions (regardless of whether the contribution was made as an individual, through your firm, or through ArchiPAC). Federal law prohibits any mention of political giving on Congressional office property.
- Be sure to take pictures! Ask the Member of Congress (MOC) or Congressional staff if photographs are allowed, and if so, if pictures can be taken during the meeting or at the end of the meeting. Offices are accustomed to this request.



## MAKING THE ASK

- When making “the ask” on an issue, direct the question to the MOC/staffer, then pause and wait for their response. If the MOC/staffer supports your position, thank them. If the MOC/staffer does not support your position, ask them why and respond to those concerns.
- In your talking points, you will note that “the ask” is an actionable step you are asking a legislator to take. That is important.
- Members of Congress may say they will “look into the issue,” but this is hard to quantify. A successful ask includes an action item that can be measured.

Examples of a successful ask include:

- Co-sponsor the bill, lead a letter to a federal agency or to colleagues on the Hill, talk to a member of the Congressional leadership team, or hold a hearing in one of the Congressional committees on which they sit.
- It should be a direct, tangible step that they have the authority to take and which will support the legislation.
- **For AIA’s Lobby Day 2023, the ask is to cosponsor both bipartisan bills: the Democracy in Design Act and the Resilient AMERICA Act.**

## THANK YOU

- At the end of your meeting, remember to thank the MOC/staff for their time. If the MOC/staff have any additional policy-related questions, please feel free to refer them to AIA’s Federal Relations staff at [karakempski@aia.org](mailto:karakempski@aia.org).

## AFTER THE MEETING

- Regardless of a policymaker’s position on the issue, it is important to formally thank the office for their time and to connect the staff in the room to the AIA Federal Relations Team in Washington, DC for follow-up and collaboration.
- The best way to do that is to email a thank you letter on behalf of the group. Here are some tips for sending the thank you email:
  - Use the Advocacy Associates mobile app to find a template thank you letter that you can personalize from your group.
  - Assign one person from your meeting to send the follow-up email.
  - Connect them to the AIA Federal Relations Team by copying Kara Kempski at [karakempski@aia.org](mailto:karakempski@aia.org). Kara will ensure that she or another member of the team follows up with you and/or the Hill office to ensure that your conversations and relationship-building with this Hill office continue.

