



GRAND RALLY

MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2011



OVERVIEW

Dear GrandRally Participants:

Thank you for registering to attend the Fourth National GrandRally for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children! This is an exciting opportunity to speak directly to your Representatives, Senators and key Congressional staff about public policy important to grandparents and other relative caregivers and the children they are raising.

This guide includes information to help prepare you for your visit to Washington, D.C. Included is a schedule of events, Capitol Hill basics, a map of the U.S. Capitol, and information on scheduling visits with your Members of Congress.

If you cannot attend an in-person meeting with your legislator, you can call a 1-800 number that will be provided in order to make your voice heard on these very important issues. In addition, you can also schedule a meeting with your legislator and/or their staff in their home district to discuss these issues further.

There are also two opportunities to receive training to help prepare for your visit. Depending on your state, you may also be training at home or on a bus. *See your state contact for more information.*

You will receive additional helpful materials in your GrandRally packet once you arrive to Washington.

We hope the information provided in this guide is helpful and we look forward to seeing you here in Washington. If you have any questions please call 202-289-3979 or email Yvonne Friend at grandrally.yvonne2011@yahoo.com. You can also find helpful information at www.grandrally.org.

Thank you again for coming to the GrandRally!

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EVENT SCHEDULE

August – September

State Contacts Hold Trainings in Home States or on the Road

- Register for the GrandRally at GrandRally.org
- Generations United will hold two webinars focused on:
 - How to participate in the National Call-In Day
 - How to schedule a visit with members of Congress

Wednesday, Sept. 14th

Pre-Rally Celebration + Training

- Hilton Hotel in Silver Spring, Maryland
 - 4:00pm-5:30pm Advocacy Training
 - 6:00pm-7:00pm Reception
 - 7:00pm Celebratory Dinner

Thursday, Sept. 15th

The 4th National GrandRally

- 10:00am-11:30am Advocacy Training | CDF | 25 E. St. NW
- Noon-1:00pm Pre-Rally Activities | U.S. Capitol
- 1:00pm GrandRally U.S. Capitol
- 2:30pm-5:00pm Capitol Hill Visits & Debriefs

****Notes:** There will be lots of walking involved in the GrandRally activities! Please remember to bring comfortable shoes. See the *Frequently Asked Questions* section on page 8 for more information.

The trainings on Wednesday and Thursday will provide the same information to GrandRally participants, so you should plan to attend only one of the trainings.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

One of the most important and rewarding things you will do during your time in Washington is meet with your Senators and Representative in Congress. As a constituent and an intergenerational advocate, you are in a unique position to gain their support for policies and programs that will assist grandfamilies.

Note: It is important that you schedule your appointments before you arrive in Washington. Please try to call to request an appointment before September 7th. If possible, schedule the appointment between the hours of 2:30pm and 5:00pm on Thursday, September 15th.

**Please give yourself adequate time to get from office to office, particularly if you are going from a Senate office to a House office since the offices are several blocks away and will take approximately 30 minutes. Moving from an office on the same side of Congress will take approximately 15 minutes.

Getting to Capitol Hill

Transportation: Taxi service is readily available in Washington, DC. Taxis operate on a meter system. Most rides within the District are between \$5 – \$14.00. For more information, call the DC Taxicab Commission or (202) 645-6005.

Step 1: Identify Your Member of Congress:

1. Visit www.congress.org
2. Enter your zip code in the “Find your Lawmakers” box on the right-hand side
3. View names and contact information for your Members of Congress
4. Be sure to visit your member’s webpage for an update on issues he/she is working on when planning your visit.

Step 2: Make an Appointment: To schedule a meeting with your Member of Congress, call the number for the Washington office of your member, listed at Congress.org. Once connected share your name with the staffer and ask to speak with the scheduler to make a scheduling request with your Member of Congress.

Step 3: Speaking to the Scheduler: The first time you call your Representative or Senator to arrange an appointment, you might be a little nervous. The script on the next page is intended to help you with that first call. Be persistent. If you can’t get an appointment for Hill Day, schedule an appointment in your home state when you return.

Don’t be disappointed if you cannot see the Representative or Senator; ask to meet with the staff person who handles children’s or older adult issues in the office. Staff members play a very important role in identifying and following policy issues for Members of Congress.

SCHEDULING REQUEST TEMPLATE AND SAMPLE LANGUAGE

Phone Script for call with Scheduler:

“Hello, I am a constituent and I will be in Washington on Thursday, September 15th for the 4th National GrandRally for grandparents and other relatives raising children. I would like to meet directly with (Congressman/woman _____) to talk with him/her about legislation that is important to me and other members of my community. Can you tell me the preferred method to submit this meeting request in your office?”

Email/Fax Template for Meeting Requests:

August 22, 2011

The Honorable [INSERT NAME OF MEMBER]

ATTN: SCHEDULER

U.S. Congress

Washington, DC 20515 (House)

Re: Scheduling Request

Dear Representative [Last Name]:

My name is [INSERT NAME] and I am a constituent from [City, State]. I will be in Washington, DC on Thursday, September 15, 2011 for the 4th National GrandRally for grandparents and other relatives raising children. I would like to meet with [NAME OF MEMBER] and/or a member of their staff to discuss [Social Security and other Grandfamilies issues] and the impact it has on our community.

I am available to meet anytime after 2:30 pm on Thursday, September 15th.

Thank you,

[NAME]

[EMAIL]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[FAX]

FAX TO: [INSERT OFFICE FAX NUMBER]

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF MY VISIT

Meeting with Members of Congress is a very important aspect of your experience at the GrandRally. An effective meeting with a Member or staff person can make a real difference in the advancement of policies to support grandfamilies. You will receive talking points and other helpful materials at a training prior to your Hill visit. The following information will be helpful in making the most of your visits with Members.

Before You Arrive for your Meeting:

- You don't have to be an expert in policy or the legislative process to meet with Congressional staff in order to make a difference. You are an expert on your experience raising children/work with grandfamilies. Your experience is what's important. Sharing that with staff is what will leave a lasting impression.
- Remember that you have limited time during your visit, so plan accordingly. If you are going on your visit with a group, meet ahead of time to discuss who will say what.
- Plan to share a *brief* personal story from your program or your own life. Personal stories help your representative to put a face and a story behind the work she/he is doing. Personal stories can also enlighten people to a policy problem they may not have previously envisioned.
- Prepare and practice your story ahead of time. Be thoughtful about how much information you feel comfortable sharing. Do your best to explain how the member can help through supportive policies. Remember to limit the length of your story so you have time to discuss ways to improve public policy for grandfamilies.
- It is important that you bring concise materials with you that you can leave behind with the Member of Congress. Materials should be clearly marked with your contact information. You will receive some Hill Day materials to leave behind with priority issues when you receive your talking points. You may also want to leave information about a program you are involved with in your home state.
- You will be given talking points about specific policy proposals when you arrive in Washington. Review them ahead of time to be prepared to discuss your visit.


When You Arrive at Your Appointment:


- When you arrive at the Member's office you should inform the receptionist who you are and what time your meeting is scheduled. Have a seat and wait for your Member or staff person to welcome you.
- When you first meet with your Member or staff person:
 - Greet them with a firm handshake
 - Thank them for meeting with you
 - Wait for them to escort you to the location of the meeting – remember, some meetings will take place right there in the front office


During your meeting:


- Briefly introduce yourself and allow other persons on the visit to introduce themselves if present.
- Provide information about your experience raising the children in your care or the family you work with.
- Discuss key policy issues for consideration and present solutions. Share concrete ideas for ways to improve support for grandfamilies.
- Be sure to ask your Member for something concrete, such as the recommendations included in the talking points.
- Bring the meeting to a close by thanking the member again for their time.

DO'S AND DON'TS: MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBERS

 **DO Be Prompt and Patient:** When it is time to meet with a Member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a Congressman or Congresswoman to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to the Member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a Member's staff.

 **DO Be Prepared:** Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials supporting your position. Members are required to take positions on many different issues. In some instances, a Member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is therefore helpful to share with the Member information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

 **DO Be Responsive:** Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the Member expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested.

 **DO Plan Your Visit Carefully:** Be clear about what it is you want to achieve. It is easier for congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the Member. Visit your Members' website to determine what key issues they are currently addressing.

X DON'T Be Nervous: Remember, you vote. It is important for people in Congress to hear directly from their constituents. Direct contact is one of the most effective ways members of Congress and staffs learn about the issues facing their constituents. They will welcome your thoughts and concerns.

X DON'T Be Shy Take a Picture! Ask to have your picture taken with your Member. Offer to provide the office with a copy once you return home. This is a great thing to include in your thank you note to the Member and the staff member. Photos of this nature are also great to put in your local newspaper or newsletter.

X DON'T Forget To Leave Your Mark: It is important to bring items to leave behind that will capture the essence of what you said in your meeting. Pictures and newsletters are great. You will also receive a packet to leave behind once you arrive to Washington.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Other than meeting in person, what is the best method for contacting my Member (Email, Phone Call, Fax)?

There is no rule saying that one form of communication is better than any other for contacting Members of Congress. However, due to increased mail screening, faxing, phoning, or emailing will prevent major delays when communicating with Congress. In any case, you should always provide your ground mail address in any communications with your Members of Congress.

What if I can't get an appointment with my Member of Congress?

Staff members play a very important role in identifying and following policy issues for Members of Congress. If you cannot see the Representative or Senator, ask to meet with the staff person who handles children's or older adult issues in the office.

What should I meet about?

Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the Member's constituency. GrandRally organizers will provide you with talking points in advance, but you are an expert in your program so feel free to discuss the work you're doing in the district/state.

What should I wear when I meet with my member?

Wear what is comfortable for you, but remember you will want to be presentable, and look and feel your best. Also keep in mind that Washington can be very warm in September and you will be doing a lot of walking so comfortable shoes are a must.

What should I bring to the visit?

Before your visit you will receive a packet to leave behind. One thing that you can bring that will stay with your Member is a personal story. Personal stories help your representative put a face and a story behind the work they are doing. Prepare a story ahead of time and be thoughtful about how much info you feel comfortable sharing. You may also want to bring information about a program you work with in your home state.

How much time should I allow between my visits with members?

Please give yourself adequate time to get from office to office, particularly if you are going from a Senate office to a House office since the offices are several blocks apart and will take approximately 30 minutes. Moving from an office on the same side of Congress will take approximately 15 minutes. If you have mobility challenges please allow more time. Cabs will be available.

Where can I go to rest in between meetings and events?

Cafeterias in the Senate and House buildings are a good place to stop and take a break (see page 9).

**Generations United staff members will be stationed in rooms on both the House and Senate side between 2:00 and 5:00 pm to collect your debriefing materials and to answer any questions you may have. These rooms are TBD and the detailed information will be provided to you at the GrandRally training sessions.

WHERE TO EAT ON CAPITOL HILL

Senate Side

Dirksen Cafeteria

Basement of the Dirksen Building

Union Station

50 Massachusetts Ave. NE

Lower Level: Food court

Main Level: Various restaurants

Capitol City Brewing Company

2 Massachusetts Ave NE

202-842-2337

World Famous Billy Goat Tavern & Grill

500 New Jersey Avenue N.W.

*Mention the GrandRally and receive a discount

House Side

Longworth Cafeteria

Basement of Longworth Building

Tortilla Coast

400 1st St SE

202-546-6768

Congressional Deli

402 1st ST SE

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP TO WASHINGTON D.C.

What You Should Expect When You Arrive to Washington

- Washington attracts thousands of tourists throughout the year, so expect to see crowds of people often traveling in groups.
- When entering a Senate or House office building expect to go through metal detectors. This is for your protection and the protection of your Members.
- You may see professional photographers and camera persons capturing the activities throughout the day. Please be advised that you may be indirectly filmed while attending or participating Hill Day events.

What to Bring:

- Comfortable Shoes
- Camera
- Schedule of arranged appointments
- Personal stories and information about your program to share during your hill visits.

What Not To Bring:

- Sharp objects of any kind (other than pens or pencils)
- Liquids, Cans, or Bottles
- Hairspray or Aerosol Containers of Any Kind
- Nail Clippers
- Food or Beverages of Any Kind
- Bags larger than 14" x 13" x 4"
- Weapons or Firearms

VISITING CAPITOL HILL

Getting to Capitol Hill

There will be lots of walking involved in the GrandRally activities! Please remember to bring comfortable shoes.

Need Help Getting Around? The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority offers safe and clean transportation throughout the city. Trains and stations are reasonably accessible for people with disabilities. If you have questions, station managers and rail station employees are available to assist. For more information on riding metro please visit www.wmata.com.

Other Transportation: Taxi service is readily available in Washington, DC. Taxis operate on a meter system. Most rides within the District are between \$5 – \$14.00. For more information, call the DC Taxicab Commission or (202) 645-6005.

Finding Your Way Around Capitol Hill

On the next page you will find a map of the Capitol Hill grounds. Senate Office Buildings are located on Constitution Avenue. House Office Buildings are located on Independence Avenue. The Capitol Building sits between Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue.

Accessibility

Information for visitors with disabilities can be found at <http://visitthecapitol.gov/>. For more information, please call the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services at 202.224.4048.

Capitol Security & Prohibited Items

Before entering the House and Senate office buildings, all visitors are screened by a magnetometer and all items that are permitted inside the building are screened by an x-ray device.

The following items are strictly prohibited in most Capitol buildings: pointed objects (knitting needles, etc.); large bags, backpacks & luggage; cans and bottles; perfumes; electric stun guns; martial arts weapons and devices; food and beverages; guns; knives of any size; mace and pepper spray. **We recommend that all of the above items are left at home or in your hotel room as there will not be an opportunity to store them once on Capitol grounds.** For a complete list of Visitor Safety and Policies, please visit: <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov>.

MAP OF CAPITOL HILL



FOLLOW UP FROM HILL DAY VISITS

It is extremely important to follow up after your visit with Members of Congress. The following reminders are three important steps you must be sure to follow once you conclude your visits with Members of Congress.

Remember to fill out your Reporting Form.

Immediately following your visit please fill out the report form in your packet. This form will allow you to evaluate your meeting and capture your immediate reactions to your visit. Please follow the instructions on the form.

Debrief with one of Generations United staff.

If you are able, please stop by one of the Hill Visit debrief rooms. Generations United staff will be reserve a room in a Senate and House office building all afternoon for you to debrief with after you've finished your visits. The room number will be provided at the GrandRally.

Write a Thank You.

When you get home be sure to follow up and write a thank you note to the Member or staff person for meeting with you. If you or your Member made commitments to follow up in some way, be sure to mention that in your letter. Your letter should be no longer than one page.

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO TO CARE FOR OUR COUNTRY'S CHILDREN!

GRANDRALLY HILL DAY 2011: REPORTING FORM

Please complete and return after each meeting and be sure to use a separate form for each visit. Return this form to the debrief room, Hill Visit table, or fax it to 202-289-3952 ATTN: Melissa Ness.

Member of Congress _____

State/District # _____

Name of Congressional Staff _____

Was the Member of Congress Present: _____ YES _____ NO

Specific Legislation or Topics Discussed:

Were the people you spoke with familiar with the topic?

____ Extremely Familiar ____ Very Familiar ____ Moderately Familiar
____ Somewhat Familiar ____ Not At All ____ Difficult to tell

Describe the overall response of the member or staff person:

Please List Materials Distributed, If Any:

Please Complete the Following with Your Contact Information:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Affiliation: _____

Names of others who attended the visit: _____

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