



**Dose of Change**  
The Craft of AIDS Advocacy

# In-District Meeting Guide

# What's in this presentation?



# In-District Meetings

- **Members of Congress** have offices located in their home states.
  - **U.S. Senators** have offices located throughout their state
  - **U.S. Representatives** may have one or more offices in their district
- **Constituents** – the people who live in the area represented by the Member – can set up meetings to discuss important topics with the Member or their staff.
- When these meetings take place in the Member's home state – they're called ***in-district meetings***.



# How to Organize an In-District Meeting

Find out Who  
Represents  
You



Find Partners  
and Get  
Organized



Make Your  
Visit and  
Follow-up



# Finding Your Member of Congress

Before you can set up a meeting, you need to know who represents you in Congress.

Every Citizen has three Members of Congress\*

**One** U.S. Representative

**Two** U.S. Senators

\*Note: residents of Washington, D.C. and U.S. territories are represented by non-voting delegates



Finding your Member of Congress is...

easy as

1 2 3



**Dose of Change**  
The Craft of AIDS Advocacy

# 1. Go to VoteSmart.org

The screenshot shows the Project Vote Smart website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site's logo and name, "Project Vote Smart | The Voter's Self-Defense System". To the right of the logo is a newsletter sign-up form with the text "Receive Our Newsletter:" and a "GO" button. Below the navigation bar are several menu items: "HOME", "ABOUT US", "OFFICIALS", "CANDIDATES", and a "Help Us If You Can" button. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column contains search and category options, including "Find Your Representatives" with a search box for "Last Name or Zip Code", "Search Vote Smart" with another search box, and a list of "Basic Categories" such as "Biographical Information", "Voting Records", "Issue Positions", "Interest Group Ratings", "Public Statements", and "Campaign Finances". The middle column features a large graphic with the text "What's new?" and "YOU SEE IT! YOU KNOW IT! GREED, IRRESPONSIBILITY WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO? WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO! Fight Smart". Below this is a section titled "What's New At Project Vote Smart" with a sub-heading "Health Care Bill" and a paragraph of text starting with "On March 21, the House passed HR 3950...". The right column has a "Connect With Us" section with social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, and YouTube. Below this is a graphic featuring a dog and the text "POLITICS IS GOING TO THE DOGS" and "Bite Back by Joining Project Vote Smart!".



# 2. Enter your Zip Code

**Project Vote Smart** | *The Voter's Self-Defense System*

Receive Our Newsletter: Enter Email

HOME ABOUT US OFFICIALS CANDIDATES [Help Us If You Can](#)

**Find Your Representatives**

Search by Last Name or Zip Code

**Search Vote Smart**

**Basic Categories:**

- Biographical Information
- Voting Records
- Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)
- Interest Group Ratings
- Public Statements
- Campaign Finances

Voter Registration  
Ballot Measures  
Issues and Legislation  
Political Resources  
My State

**What's new?**

YOU SEE IT! YOU KNOW IT!  
GREED, IRRESPONSIBILITY  
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO?  
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO!  
**Fight Smart**

**What's New At Project Vote Smart**

**Health Care Bill**

On March 21, the House passed [HR 3950](#), the Senate version of the health care bill, by a vote of 219-212. The bill was not amended in the House, so it will go directly to President Obama, who has already announced that he will sign the legislation into law. However, changes to the bill are still imminent. In order to secure the necessary votes in the House.

**Connect With Us**

[Twitter](#) [facebook](#) [mySpace](#) [tlickr](#) [YouTube](#)

**POLITICS IS GOING TO THE DOGS**

**Bite Back by Joining Project Vote Smart!**

[Click Here](#) to learn more about Project Vote Smart  
*And how to help continue*



You May Have to Add Your 9-digit Zip, which you can find on the U.S. Postal Service website...

**Project Vote Smart | The Voter's Self-Defense System**

Receive Our Newsletter: Enter Email  GO

HOME ABOUT US OFFICIALS CANDIDATES [Help Us If You Can](#)

**Find Your Representatives**

Search by Candidate's or Official's Last Name, or Enter Your ZIP Code:  GO

**Search Vote Smart**

Google Custom Search  GO

**Basic Categories:**

- Biographical Information
- Voting Records
- Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)
- Interest Group Ratings
- Public Statements
- Campaign Finances

Voter Registration  
Ballot Measures  
Issues and Legislation  
Political Resources  
My State

For Candidates  
For Journalists

**Results for ZIP 60640**  
**Chicago, Cook County, Illinois**

[Current Elections](#)  
[Current Officials](#)  
[Current Candidates](#)

**Current Elections**

- [2010 Illinois Congressional General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois Gubernatorial General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois Statewide General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois State Legislative General Election, Senate Candidates \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois State Legislative General Election, House Candidates \(11/02/2010\)](#)

**Current Officials**

**Congressional**

- [Senator Roland W. Burris](#) - U.S. Senate Junior Seat (Democratic)
- [Senator Richard J. 'Dick' Durbin](#) - U.S. Senate Senior Seat (Democratic)
- [Representative Mike Quigley](#) - U.S. House District 5 (Democratic)
- [Representative Janice D. 'Jan' Schakowsky](#) - U.S. House District 9 (Democratic)

**Gubernatorial**

- [Governor Pat Quinn](#) - Governor (Democratic)

Print Share

**Multiple Legislative Districts**

ZIP code 60640 has multiple legislative districts. Please enter your 9-Digit ZIP:

60640

**Don't Know Your 9-Digit ZIP?**

**Additional Information**

- [Voter Registration Information](#)
- [Ballot Measures](#)



# 3. Meet Your Members!

**Project Vote Smart** | *The Voter's Self-Defense System*

Receive Our Newsletter: Enter Email  GO

HOME ABOUT US OFFICIALS CANDIDATES [Help Us If You Can](#)

Print Share

**Find Your Representatives**

Search by Candidate's or Official's Last Name, or Enter Your ZIP Code:  GO

**Search Vote Smart**

Google Custom Search  GO

**Basic Categories:**

- Biographical Information
- Voting Records
- Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)
- Interest Group Ratings
- Public Statements
- Campaign Finances

Voter Registration  
Ballot Measures  
Issues and Legislation  
Political Resources  
My State  
For Candidates

**Results for ZIP 60640-2701  
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois**

[Current Elections](#)  
[Current Officials](#)  
[Current Candidates](#)

**Current Elections**

- [2010 Illinois Congressional General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois Gubernatorial General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois Statewide General Election \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois State Legislative General Election, Senate Candidates \(11/02/2010\)](#)
- [2010 Illinois State Legislative General Election, House Candidates \(11/02/2010\)](#)

**Current Officials**

**Congressional**

- [Senator Roland W. Burris](#) - U.S. Senate Junior Seat (Democratic)
- [Senator Richard J. 'Dick' Durbin](#) - U.S. Senate Senior Seat (Democratic)
- [Representative Mike Quigley](#) - U.S. House District 5 (Democratic)

**Gubernatorial**

- [Governor Pat Quinn](#) - Governor (Democratic)

**Additional Information**

- [Voter Registration Information](#)
- [Ballot Measures](#)



# Click on an Official's Name to Find Their Contact Info

**Project Vote Smart** | *The Voter's Self-Defense System*

Receive Our Newsletter:

HOME ABOUT US OFFICIALS CANDIDATES

Find Your Representatives

Search by Candidate's or Official's Last Name, or Enter Your ZIP Code:

Search Vote Smart

Basic Categories:  
Biographical Information  
Voting Records  
Issue Positions  
(Political Courage Test)  
Interest Group Ratings  
Public Statements  
Campaign Finances

Voter Registration  
Ballot Measures  
Issues and Legislation  
Political Resources  
My State

For Candidates  
For Journalists

About Us  
Contact Us  
Involvement  
Job Opportunities  
Press Releases  
Voter's Speaker's Blog

Vote Smart API  
RSS Feeds:   
Widget  
Log In

Representative **Mike Quigley (IL)**

[Key Votes](#) [Speeches](#) [Ratings](#)

Current Office: U.S. House  
Current District: 5  
Office Seeking: U.S. House  
District Seeking: 5  
First Elected: 04/07/2009  
Last Elected: 04/07/2009  
Next Election: 2010  
Party: Democratic

[Complete Bio](#)

Recent Key Votes:

[Health Care Reconciliation Act \(Yea\)](#)  
2010-03-25 - Project Vote Smart staff and volunteers are working hard to produce a clear and accurate summary of the contents of the bill. At this time, we have po...

[Health Care and Insurance Law Amendments \(Yea\)](#)  
2010-03-21 - Vote to concur with Senate amendments and pass a bill that amends various statutes related to health care and health insurance coverage, including, but ...

[Health Care Reconciliation Act \(Yea\)](#)  
2010-03-21 - Project Vote Smart staff and volunteers are working hard to produce a clear and accurate summary of the contents of the bill. At this time, we have po...

[More Votes](#)

Recent Speeches:

[Letter To The Honorable Barack H. Obama, President Of The United States](#)  
2010-03-29 - Letter To The Honorable Barack H. Obama, President Of The United States Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (ca-34) Lauds Labor Appointments Af...

[Quigley Introduces Landmark Transparency Bill](#)  
2010-03-26 - Quigley Introduces Landmark Transparency Bill Before heading home to Chicago for district work period, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) introduced t...

[Quigley, Issa Announce Bipartisan Transparency Caucus](#)  
2010-03-25 - Quigley, Issa Announce Bipartisan Transparency Caucus Today, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) announced the formatio...

[More Speeches](#)

Recent Ratings

Based off when the senators or representatives come into office and how many of the political entities they represent they have

16 Million Web Hits a Day and Climbing  
[We need Volunteers](#)

Biographical  
Voting Record  
Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)  
Interest Group Ratings  
Position Papers  
Speeches and Public Statements  
Campaign Finances

Opposing Candidates:  
[David Rotowitz](#) (Republican)  
[Matthew "Matt" Reichel](#) (Green Party)  
[All Candidates](#)

Contact Information  
Washington, D.C. Website:  
<http://quigley.house.gov/>  
Washington, D.C. Webmail:  
<https://forms.house.gov/quigley...>  
Campaign Website:  
<http://www.quigleyforcongress...>

[Complete Contact Information](#)



# Organizing a Meeting

At this stage you'll have to think about:

Finding other advocates

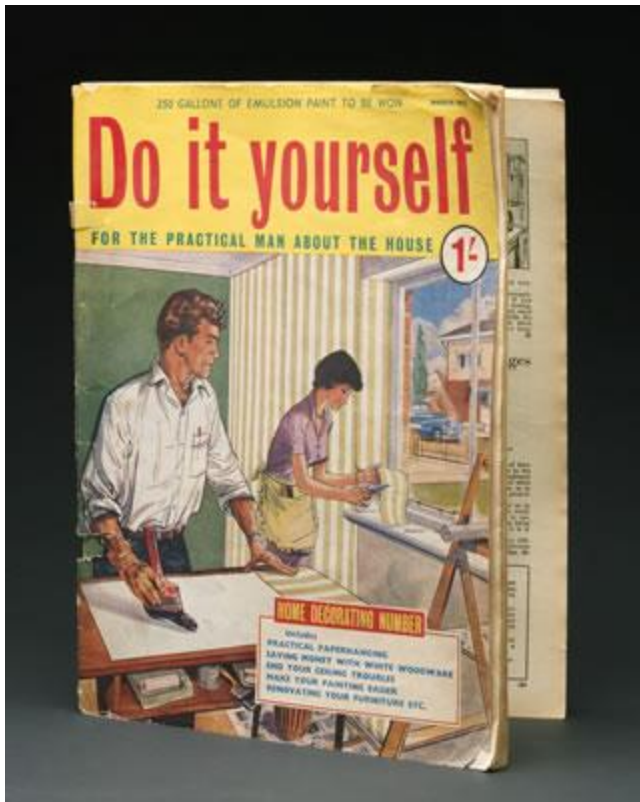
Scheduling the meeting

Preparing your talking points

Practice delivering them!



# What if no one in my area is organizing a meeting?



## Try reaching out to these groups:

AIDS Service Organizations

HIV Prevention and Care Planning Councils

Local Health Departments

Human Service Agencies

Churches

# Scheduling the Meeting

## Fax

- Using the contact info from VoteSmart, find the fax number for the district office you plan to visit
- Write a letter requesting a meeting and fax it to the office
- Use the sample provided in this toolkit

## Call

- After faxing, call the office and ask to speak to the scheduler
- You may have to call several times and may only be able to set up a time to meet with staffers (that's ok!)

## Confirm

- After you set up the meeting time, you should call the office again the week of the meeting to confirm the appointment

# Sample Meeting Request Letter



200 West Jackson Blvd.  
Suite 2200  
Chicago, IL 60606

Tel. (312) 922-2322  
Fax (312) 922-2916

March 30, 2010

The Honorable John Shimkus  
2452 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

VIA FACSIMILE: 202-225-5880

Dear Representative Shimkus,

On behalf of the estimated 42,000 Illinoisans living with HIV/AIDS, I am writing to request a meeting with you during AIDSWatch 2010 on either Tuesday, April 27, or Wednesday, April 28 to discuss critical prevention, care and treatment issues for people living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS. To day approximately 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS with an estimated 56,000 new infections occurring nationwide every year, 1,600 in Illinois alone.

A number of Illinoisans living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS would be delighted to have the opportunity to share their insights and concerns around the provision of prevention and care services in Illinois, across the country, and around the world.

Advocates from every corner of Illinois will join hundreds of others living with and impacted by HIV from coast to coast to participate in AIDSWatch 2010. Organized by the National Association of People with AIDS ([www.napwa.org](http://www.napwa.org)), AIDSWatch is in its nineteenth year of bringing Americans affected by HIV/AIDS to Washington D.C., to help educate our leaders on HIV/AIDS policy and appropriations matters. This year constituents will be discussing the need to adequately fund comprehensive and quality health care and treatment for all people living with HIV, the critical financial needs of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), and implementing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS).

I appreciate your attention to this request and invite you to contact Brandy Cooper at (312) 922-2322 ext. 389 or [bcooper@aidschicago.org](mailto:bcooper@aidschicago.org) to schedule an appointment or to obtain further information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

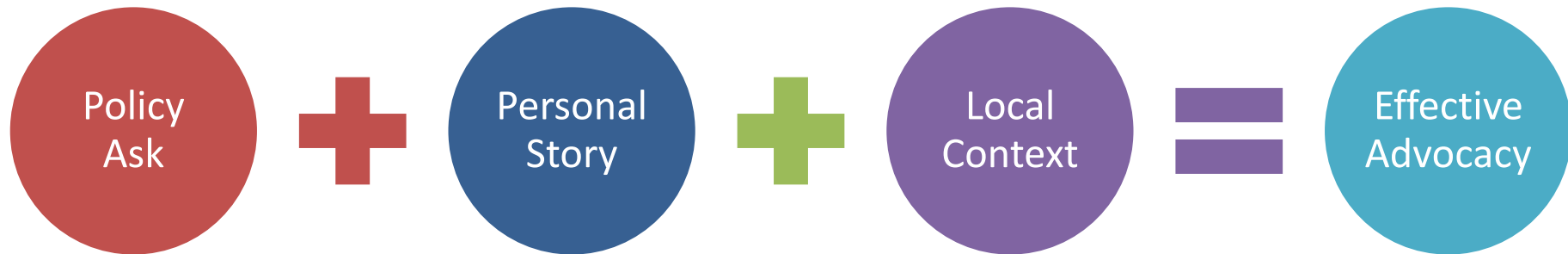
Pete Subkoviak  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Key Points:  
Date  
Recipient's Address  
Recipient's Fax Number  
Message with Request



**Dose of Change**  
The Craft of AIDS Advocacy

# Preparing Your Talking Points



# Preparing Your Talking Points

## Policy Asks

- Support \$126 million in emergency supplemental funding for AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs)
- Fully fund ADAP and eliminate the need for states to resort to wait lists or other cost containment measures

## Personal Story

- Use the *Tell Your Story Worksheet* to get organized. Available at [aidsconnect.net/dose](https://aidsconnect.net/dose)
- Make the connection between the issues and your personal story
- Tell how your life has been affected by ADAP



# Preparing Your Talking Points

## Local Context

- ADAP programs are jointly funded by state and federal dollars and administered by individual states, so programs vary from state to state
- The more specific information on your state's program you can share, the more your members of congress will listen:
  - Does your state have a wait list?
  - Has your state instituted other cost-containment measures?
- You can find out more about your state's ADAP program by contacting your state health department or online at the National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Director's website:  
[www.nastad.org](http://www.nastad.org)



# Preparing Your Talking Points

## Key Points:

- ADAP keeps people at work. Half of ADAP beneficiaries are workers that need their medications to stay healthy and productive.
- The lack of a treatment safety net may deter people from seeking out HIV testing services just as efforts to increase people's awareness of their status begin to yield results.

# Practice Delivering Your Talking Points

- If you are making the visit with a group of advocates, divide the topics among the group and practice delivering them together.
- If you are on your own, find a friend to stand-in as the legislator to help you rehearse.
- **REMEMBER: Tell your story and DON'T FORGET TO MAKE THE POLICY ASK!**



# Make Your Visit and Follow-Up

## Meeting Day Checklist:

- Dress professionally
- Bring copies of factsheets
- Arrive 15 minutes early
- Be polite and courteous
- Take note of any questions or requests for additional information
- Remember to thank the Congressperson or staffer for their time
- Tell them you will follow-up



# Don't Forget to Follow-Up!

- At the end of your meeting, tell the Congressperson or staffer that you will follow up with them soon
- Send a thank you card to reiterate your ask and show your appreciation
- Send them the additional information they requested and/or answers to their questions
- Keep track of their support or opposition to your asks and call or write to say thank you or to keep pushing them



# File a Visit Report to Help Track our Progress

- After your visit, take 5 minutes to fill out an online visit report available at [aidsconnect.net/dose](https://aidsconnect.net/dose)
- This is to help us keep track of which Members of Congress have been reached and what messages they've received.





**Dose of Change**  
The Craft of AIDS Advocacy

# Questions?

Contact:  
Jim Merrell  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
312-784-9048  
[jmerrell@aidschicago.org](mailto:jmerrell@aidschicago.org)  
[aidsconnect.net/dose](http://aidsconnect.net/dose)