

# Advocacy Classroom

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What to Know Before You Go!



# What is It?

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The “What to Know Before you Go!” class from the Advocacy Classroom will provide your advocates with the knowledge and skills they need to be truly effective in their meetings with members of Congress and their staffs. Through the combination of the Congressional Management Foundation’s real-world data on congressional/citizen interactions and Advocacy Associates’ extensive experience in creating exceptional advocacy days, this course will leave your advocates feel confident in how to approach and conduct their meetings, as well as how to make the all-important ask.

# Why Is it Needed?

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Members of Congress and their staff notice when advocates aren't adequately prepared for a meeting. In fact, in a recent survey from the Congressional Management Foundation, congressional staff were asked how frequently they experience ineffective and even detrimental practices when meeting with advocates. The answers were astounding:

- 90% of respondents agreed that constituents frequently or very frequently do not have data on the impact on district or state.
- 87% agreed that these constituents don't know a legislator's history on a policy issue
- 81% agreed that they didn't make a specific request
- 55% agreed that they didn't convey a personal story

And yet these strategies are essential to influencing a member of Congress to agree with a specific position!

The Advocacy Classroom is designed to help advocates understand these important elements and employ tactics to successfully address them in their meetings.

# What Sets it Apart



Expertise



Cutting-Edge, Data-Driven Content



Multiple Learning Modalities



Customizable Modules



Robust Reporting

# Expert-Driven Content

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Capitol Hill Staff

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Congressional Management Foundation  
Researchers & Leaders

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Grassroots Advocacy & Training Experts

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# Expert Instructors

## Stephanie Vance, Managing Partner Advocacy Associates

Stephanie D. Vance, also known as the “Advocacy Guru”, is the author of five books including *Citizens in Action: A Guide to Influencing Government* and the Washington Bestseller *The Influence Game*. She’s a 30-year veteran of Washington, D.C. political scene and has held positions as a lobbyist, grassroots consultant and Congressional aide. Stephanie’s experiences as a legislative director and Chief of Staff on Capitol Hill led her to found Advocacy Associates, a firm dedicated to helping individuals and organizations be both heard **and** agreed with in the legislative environment. Ms. Vance is an adjunct professor at George Washington University’s Graduate School of Political Management and holds a Master’s Degree in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University, a Master’s Degree in Liberal Studies at Georgetown University, and a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from Western State Colorado University. She lives and works in Washington D.C.

## Bradford Fitch, CEO Congressional Management Foundation

Bradford Fitch has spent 36 years in Washington as a journalist, congressional aide, consultant, college instructor, Internet entrepreneur, and writer/researcher. He served on Capitol Hill for 13 years, working in a variety of positions for four Members of Congress, including: press secretary, campaign manager, legislative director, and chief of staff. After leaving Capitol Hill in 2001 he took a new position as Deputy Director at the Congressional Management Foundation and served as a management consultant for Members of Congress. In 2005 Fitch managed CMF’s [Communicating with Congress](#) project, and co-authored the report, [How Capitol Hill is Coping with the Surge in Citizen Advocacy](#). He left CMF in 2006 to form a new company, Knowlegis, in affiliation with Capitol Advantage. Knowlegis is now a part of CQ-Roll Call Group, where Fitch served as a Vice President until 2010 when he returned to CMF. He received his B.A. degree in Political Science from Johns Hopkins University and his M.A. degree in Journalism and Public Affairs from American University.

# Content

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# Topics Include

- How Congressional offices operate
- Why citizen advocacy works
- How to develop a compelling message
- Who the staff are and why getting to know them is essential to success
- What to know about legislators before a meeting
- What to expect in a meeting
- How to follow-up...

...and more!



## Ten Tips for Effective Meetings

Let's start with ten tips that will help your message stand out among the hundreds that pour into a congressional office every day. You'll delve into more details as you move through the course. Remember that actions and information that can be found in the Advocacy Day App are highlighted in green

### Tip #1: Always Identify Yourself

It is a waste of your time and money to meet with your elected officials without making it clear how you are connected to the district or state they represent. If you are affiliated with a national organization, it is not enough to simply state the name of the organization. The elected official and staff will be more likely to focus on your issues if they know how they relate to their constituents.

### Tip #2: Leave Behind Materials

You will definitely want to leave something behind, and it is possible that your national organization has some material for you. But a "leave behind" doesn't always mean pieces of paper. Most staff prefer electronic leave-behinds, which can be sent directly through the Advocacy Day App.

### Tip #3: Be Specific

Too often, congressional offices receive vague, unspecific comments like "we should pay less in taxes," or "the EPA should stop picking on my business." These types of messages usually receive a very pro-forma response, something along the lines of "gee thanks, I'll keep your views in mind." To be more effective, you must ask your representative to do something specific related to your position. Your specific asks will be provided in the documents on your Advocacy Day App or web portal.



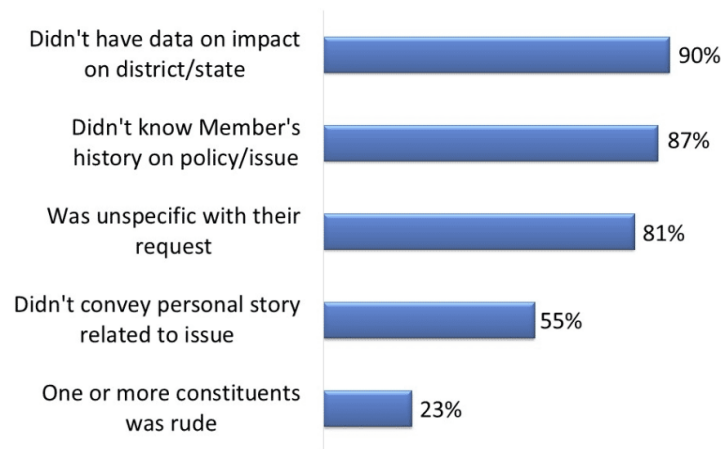
# Data Driven Content from CMF

## The Four Keys to Effective Advocacy: Being Prepared

If you come prepared for your meeting with a lawmaker, not only will you have a more successful meeting, but you will stand out! A survey of congressional staff asked the following question:

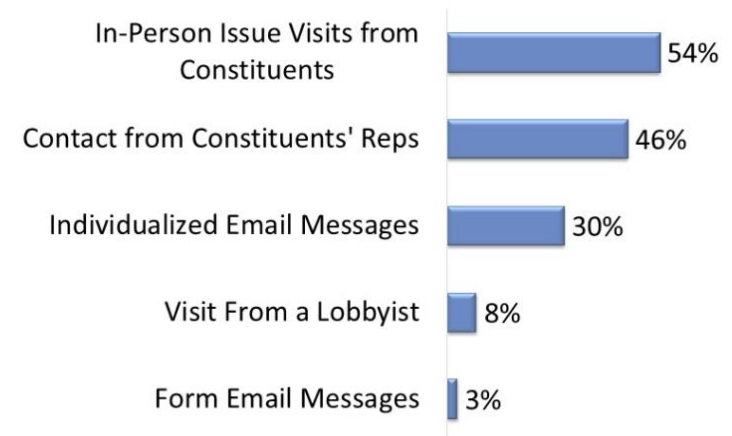
*How frequently do you experience the following in constituent meetings?*

“Frequently” and “Very Frequently”



*"If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy directed to the Washington office have on his/her decision?"*

“A Lot” of Influence



# Variety of Learning Modalities

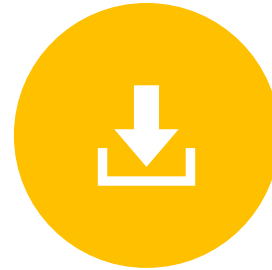
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VIDEO



READINGS



DOWNLOADS



KNOWLEDGE  
CHECKS

We are requesting the following amount for the "Save the Zebras" program at the Department of the Interior

- \$1 billion
- \$2 billion
- \$8 billion
- \$20 billion

**Submit answer**

# Knowledge Checks



# Customizable



Personalize your class for your event

# Customize

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Your logo

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Your policy content

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Your event format (virtual or in-person)

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Your knowledge check questions to ensure retention

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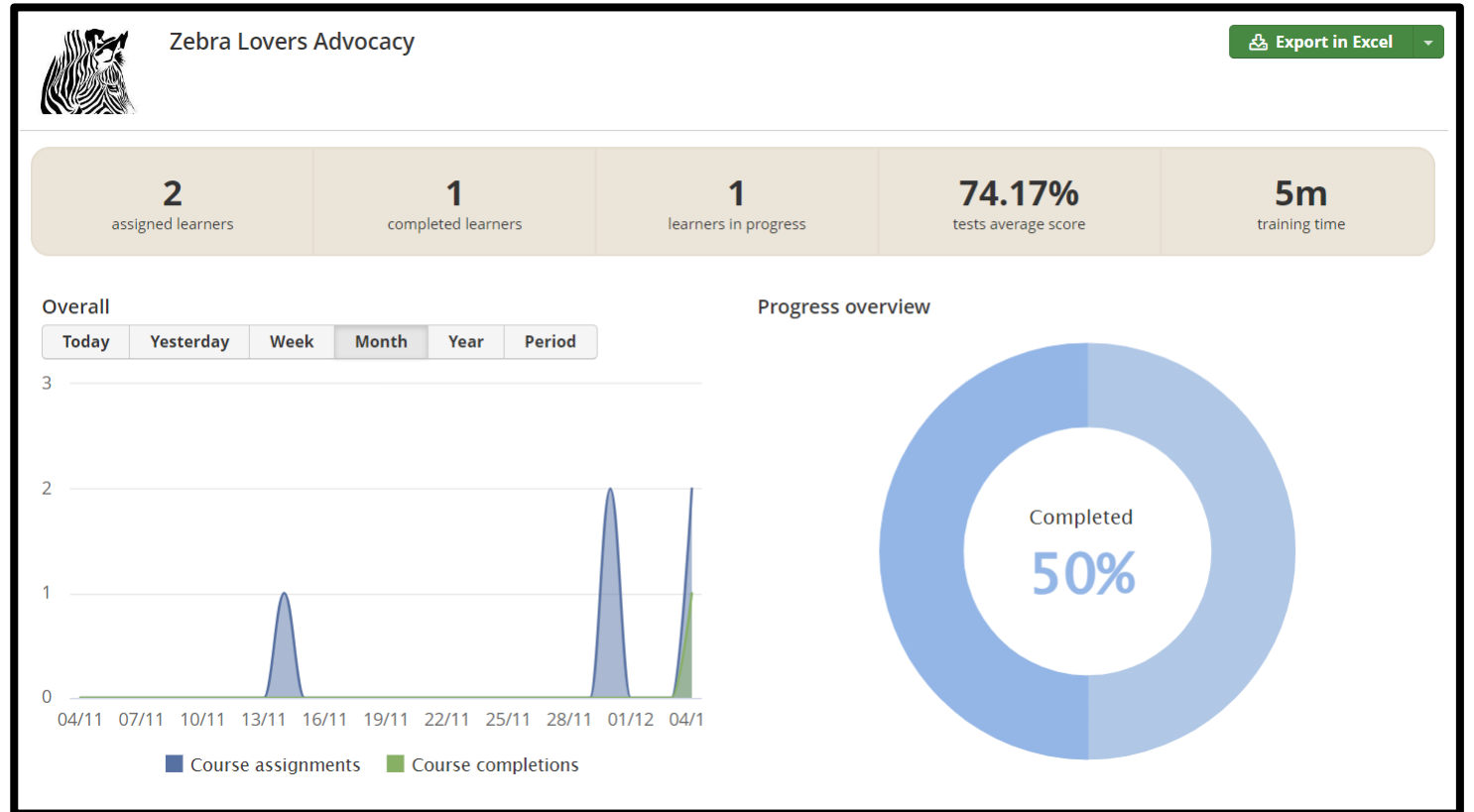
Additional customizations may be available. Contact us to learn more!

# Reports Available

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Keep track of your advocates' progress!

# Top Level Course Overview




# Top Level: Tests

Overall number completed and passed

| TEST ▾                                      | COMPLETED | PASSED | AVERAGE SCORE | OPTIONS |
|---|-----------|--------|---------------|---------|
| Knowledge Check: Basics of Advocacy         | 2         | 2      | 87.50%        | ...     |
| Knowledge Check: Knowing How to Talk to ... | 1         | 1      | 66.67%        | ...     |
| Knowledge Check: Making the Ask and Rese... | 1         | 1      | 66.67%        | ...     |
| Knowledge Check: Meeting Expectations       | 1         | 1      | 66.67%        | ...     |
| Knowledge Check: Policy                     | 2         | 2      | 83.33%        | ...     |

1 to 5 of 5





# Individual User Progress

(Can be filtered for specific users)

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| USER ▾                     | PROGRESS         | SCORE  | COMPLETION DATE | TIME   |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| S. Learner <b>LEARNER</b>  | 36%              | -      | -               | 1m 59s |
| S. Vance <b>INSTRUCTOR</b> | -                | -      | -               | -      |
| S. Vance <b>LEARNER</b>    | <b>COMPLETED</b> | 75.00% | 04/12/2023      | 3m 56s |

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