

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

- 1 Gather contact information on key decision makers: School board member, Principal, Superintendent, Food Services Director, City Councilwoman or State Representative.
- 2 Start with a phone call to the decision maker's secretary. Explain who you are, what issue you are concerned about (sodas in school), and request a meeting. Tell them how many people are involved in your group, and how many will be attending the meeting.
- 3 For an elected official, you can ask to speak with the staff person who handles childhood obesity or school nutrition.
- 4 Prepare with your group before the meeting. Have talking points written up and a folder of materials to leave with target. Designate a leader who will do most of the talking, go over goals and issues, and divide up talking points.
- 5 Try not to do all the talking. Listen to the person you are meeting with and consider their point of view.
- 6 Make your key points before you hand out materials. This keeps the focus on you during the meeting, not your fact sheets.
- 7 Ask for 1-2 specific actions from your target, such as: a commitment to set up an advisory panel to develop a new beverage policy; a request for public hearings on school nutrition; or a letter from an elected official to the school board.
- 8 Bring an issue fact sheet, a background sheet that explains your group and press clippings if you have them. Put these materials in a folder and leave one for all participants in the meeting.
- 9 Go over the materials in your folder toward the end of the meeting.
- 10 Treat the officials you are meeting with as potential allies, not enemies. It usually is counterproductive to take a combative stance or appear overly aggressive.
- 11 Follow-up!! This is the key to getting a real answer to the questions you posed in your meeting. Polite and persistent follow-up keeps the pressure on your issue.