



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

LANGUAGE ADVOCACY DAY

What is Language Advocacy Day? What is a “lobby day”?

“Language Advocacy Day” is a two-day annual advocacy event and language policy summit sponsored by the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and organized by the National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS). On lobby day, language learning advocates like you gather in Washington, DC to learn and practice lobbying for language access laws, for an expansion of K-20 learning and research opportunities, and for other relevant language issues at the federal level.

During the morning of the first day, JNCL-NCLIS provides attendees with an in-depth lobbying workshop and an overview of relevant proposed legislation to better prepare you to speak with legislators. Then in the afternoon, you will meet with the legislators’ offices that represent you so that you can visit with the legislators and their staff face-to-face and ask for language-friendly votes and/or funding. The second day consists of several networking opportunities and roundtable policy-discussions led by key figures in the language enterprise.

Will I be talking to lawmakers face to face?

Yes, every attempt is made to schedule a meeting with the legislators that represent you on Capitol Hill. In the event that your legislator cannot meet with you personally, you will get a chance to talk with one of his or her key staffers, who then will brief the member on your meeting. Your meeting will generally only last 10-15 minutes. You will be provided specific talking points and training on what to cover during the meeting prior to your meeting.

What is the process for scheduling a meeting?

As a service to you, we contact the office scheduler (the office’s gatekeeper) with whom we wish to speak (we always request the member AND the ed/labor staffer) requesting the time and day. The scheduler coordinates and confirms within 2-3 days of the request. In the request, offices ask for your zip code to confirm that you are, in fact, a constituent of their district. Additionally, we provide the talking points and “legislative asks” to the legislators’ offices prior to the meeting so that they may familiarize themselves with our issues and materials.

When will I get my schedule?

We begin scheduling meeting approximately 2-4 weeks from the event depending on the size of the group. Schedules are finalized 48 hours prior to the event, and you will receive a printed



schedule the day of the event. Electronic schedules may be available upon request up to 1 week prior to the event.

Will I be escorted or alone?

Frequently, other attendees from your district will be present. If so, meetings are consolidated so that each lawmaker only has one meeting per district. If no one else from your district attends the event you will meet with your legislators alone. Don't fret! During the training workshop, we will provide you helpful information regarding finding the meeting place and what to discuss during the meeting. Additionally, we will be stationed at specific check-in point on Capitol Hill so that you always know where to go for support, additional materials or questions.

Can I partner with a friend so I'm not alone?

We encourage you to recruit friends and family who have a stake in languages to attend Language Advocacy Day. A large turnout creates a powerful voice for language legislation. Legislators are primarily interested in hearing from their own constituents so only attendees from your same legislative district should attend legislator meetings with you.

What legislation will we be discussing?

Languages touch all aspects of the economy, labor and education, and there are many language-related bills filed each year during the legislative session. We based our top priorities for Language Advocacy Day upon several factors, including a bill's impact and chance of passage into law. By focusing our efforts on selected bills we've prioritized, we can make the most impact during your relatively brief visit to Capitol Hill.

What should I wear?

Dress professionally to meet with legislators. A business suit or slacks/skirt and a jacket are appropriate for lobby day. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, as you will be required to walk to multiple meeting spaces. Have a picture I.D. with you in case it is required (many Executive Branch government buildings require a state-issued I.D.). Also, depending on the forecast, it's smart to bring an umbrella and dress appropriately.

I can only make it for part of the day/only one day, is that ok?

The event is designed to build throughout the day. The workshop in the morning will prepare you for your congressional meetings in the afternoon. Starting and/or building relationships with legislators and staffers on Capitol Hill is the main objective for the day, and therefore, it's important to plan to attend the entire event.

Is there anything I can do to prepare for Language Advocacy Day?



Does your Member of Congress speak another language? Has she or he used another language while working, traveling or studying abroad? How does language affect his or her district? It's helpful to know your legislators before going into a meeting with them. Almost all elected officials have a website that can be found via any search engine. Do some investigating online to learn some background on your legislators to help you personalize your visit.

Does JNCL-NCLIS offer other opportunities to advocate for languages?

Yes, we offer multiple “points of entry” for language advocates to speak up for languages.

- *Your Organization's Lobby Day:* JNCL-NCLIS can organize your organization or company's next Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill for any group size, large or small. Past examples include *Classics Advocacy Day* organized for the American Classical League (ACL); Washington Leaders Forum, organized for the Association of Language Companies (ALC); Translators Lobby Day, organized for the American Translators Association (ATA). Contact us for more information (info@languagepolicy.org)
- *Contact Your Members of Congress:* JNCL-NCLIS publishes a list of “advocacy alerts” in our weekly newsletter, NewsBrief. You can sign up to receive weekly updates at www.languagepolicy.org. Advocacy alerts provide you with pre-written letters and/or talking points on issues of primary importance to the language enterprise as a whole so that you can easily and quickly contact your member of Congress on these pressing issues (i.e. cosponsoring legislation, supporting increases in appropriations, etc.)