

## Get to Know Your Staffer

A key to any advocates' success is building close relationships with staffers who work for elected officials. Staffers often meet daily with their boss to offer advice and to interpret the large number of policies introduced to them each year. Developing relationships with those staffers so that they become allies in our quest to turn elected officials into bold leaders against tuberculosis is a key component of building the necessary political will to control TB.

Follow these steps to develop a relationship with key staffers.

**Step One:** Learn more about your elected official. How many years have they been in office, what are their pet issues, and to which forms of pressure are they the most responsive.

**Step Two:** Identify the staffer(s) that work on TB – or whatever issue you are interested in. Often times you will need to call the office to determine this.

**Step Three:** Begin to build a relationship with that aide.

- Introduce yourself in person or over the phone.
- Ask if the staffer has a few minutes to speak to you.
- Tell the staffer that you are a constituent and concerned about tuberculosis.
- Thank the staffer for their work and something specific their boss has done.
- Choose one issue or policy to ask your staffer about and make a specific request.
- Ask if you can send them any follow up information.
- Make a plan to follow up them.
- Send a thank you e-mail.
- Be sure to follow up quickly.

**Step Four:** Establish an effective system of communicating information and requests to the staffer. Figure out if the staffer is most response over phone, email, fax or a combination of these.

**Step Five:** As your elected official and staffer take action to help control TB, acknowledge their efforts and thank them publicly.

**Source:** *RESULTS Educational Fund's Activist Milestones*