



Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

*A national network of organizations working to address issues of
nuclear weapons production and waste cleanup*



DC Days 2012: Training DC Days Participants

Making DC Days a group activity will build skills and relationships in your organization. Preparing your delegation before you ever get to DC will boost the confidence of your group members and make your time in DC much more effective. Please use the following tips to get your group ready for DC Days.

Recruiting Participants

- Reward your interns, donors, volunteers, or board members for all their hard work by sending them to DC Days
- Invite your friends, family, and other personal contacts
- When recruiting participants, contact local high schools/colleges/universities with active environmental, social justice, political, and security organizations
- Contact those who have written or signed op-eds or written a letter to the editor on nuclear issues.
- Contact lists of those who testified at or attended nuclear-related hearings
- Recruit community leaders and your influential supporters
- Invite your donors and members to DC Days; it's a great way to say thanks and to inspire them to increase their support for our cause

Training Recruits and Team-Building

Getting your delegation to meet together before leaving for DC is a critical part of making DC Days a group experience. Hosting a few short meetings can enhance people's understanding of our issues, help them figure out what to expect in DC, and build a team dynamic. Below are a few tips on planning these preparatory meetings.

First Meeting

- **Make the first meeting a casual gathering.** Potlucks or just beer and pizza are always crowd pleasers. If possible, screen a video of your work or about our issues. One example is *Amazing Grace and Chuck*, a kids' nuclear weapons protest film starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Gregory Peck.
- **Explain what the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) does** and how your local group relates to ANA's work.
- **Stress the fun parts of DC Days**, such as the chance to enjoy the National Cherry Blossom Festival, visiting famous places, being part of the democratic process, and attending the pizza party and awards ceremony with famous policy makers. DC days is work, but it's also a lot of fun.
- ANA staff is available by phone or Skype to help support your event.

Second Meeting

- **Go over past fact sheets** (available at ananuclear.org). Stress that this year's issues will be very similar to last year's and that we need to stay focused because we will only have a short amount of time with each congressional office.
- Have each participant **choose a field of "expertise"** that they will feel comfortable exploring and researching. Emphasize that the meetings are short, so they only have to be a "two minute expert" on their subject. Tell each participant that they will probably know more than the aide or legislator that they talk to. If any one participant omits or forgets something, there will be a team leader there to fill in the blanks. If someone does not feel comfortable talking during lobby meetings, remind them that every meeting needs a note taker and timekeeper, but we encourage everyone to speak. There is power in numbers: the more of us speak up, the more they have to listen!
- **Explain the Sunday training and stress its importance.** Go through each step (from previous years) and emphasize workshops and meeting signups. Newcomers only have to sign up for a few meetings a day. Try to remove the fear factor by making all phases of the training fun and emphasizing our team approach to meetings.

Before DC Days

- Using the map of Capitol Hill from the packet, have all participants **become familiar with the locations of all House and Senate buildings** and know how long it takes to get from one side of the Hill to the other. Remember, the DC Days HQ is only blocks from the Senate office buildings and about a 10-15 minute walk from the House office buildings. Remind your DC Days participants to always **have plenty of small bills to avoid paying for everyone with whom they share a taxi.** For the sake of their comfort and sanity, make sure everyone has **shoes they can do a lot of walking in.**
- **Try to find home-stays in DC.** It is more fun and greatly reduces the cost of the trip. Contacts in DC are often willing to take in fellow traveling activists.
- If you want to go, raise your own \$\$\$. Don't forget to ask family and friends!
- **Start out rested and healthy,** we work hard and play hard.
- Try not to be stressed! The best way to get around this is to prepare. Spend plenty of time **studying the fact sheets in the weeks leading up to DC Days.**
- Have Fun and Change the World!