

THE ART OF NEGOTIATING A DEAL

- What is your group's top one or two priorities? Everything else can be used as bargaining chips. Of course, it can be very difficult for a group to decide on one or two top priorities or issues (because **EVERYTHING IS IMPORTANT** and **EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW!!**).
- Follow protocol – the “rules of conduct” or “the etiquette.” No matter what it is called, it should be written down so that everyone knows what is expected. When setting up a negotiation, or any policy meeting, it is important to follow the accepted protocol since it places guidelines on the discussion, and helps to manage the actions that come out of the discussions.
- Learn about your audience. This will help you present your case based on their interests and positions.
- Decide who should be on your team. Assess the number of people that will most help your negotiation strategy, how many people the other party is likely to bring, and the level of privacy needed.

NOTE: There are times that your group may need to get the help of someone outside of the team to take on a particular task. Remember, it's not what YOU know that counts, but WHO you know that can bring the right stresses to bear to make change!
- Practice your negotiation skills in advance of the meetings (like different options – for example, if they offer this, how would our group respond? If they offer that, how might we respond?). Practicing ahead of time can help.
- Bring documentation (facts and paperwork) to support your negotiation position. Also, evaluate any written proposals or materials you have received from the other party ahead of time.
- Think about the location. Negotiating at your location enables you to decide logistical arrangements (how the room will be arranged, who will sit next to each other, etc.). The other party's location is better for helping them feel at ease. A neutral site can sometimes be more favorable to reaching agreement.
- When all seems lost, you still have options!! One option is to walk from the negotiations, if it is going nowhere, and taking up too much of your time and energy. Sometimes that will re-start the talks.