



HILL VISIT SCHEDULING OVERVIEW



OVERVIEW

Congratulations on taking the initiative to advocate for the benefits of CTE! While the COVID-19 pandemic has made in-person visits in Washington, DC, virtually impossible, connecting and meeting with your federal representatives is now more important than ever, and in some cases, even easier since you do not have to travel.

Below, we will give a step-by-step overview of how to schedule a meeting with your federal policymakers.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some ACTE state associations coordinate the scheduling of Hill visits for all attendees from the state. Please contact your state ACTE leaders to see if appointments have already been made BEFORE following the steps below to make individual appointments.

WHO IS MY LEGISLATOR?

The first step to meeting with your legislator is to identify the correct offices. If you already know who your Member of Congress and Senators are, then skip to the next step. If not, you can visit [ACTE's Action Center](#), where you are able to put in your address and it will identify your two senators and your representative, as well as provide a variety of information about their background and offices.

CONTACTING THE LEGISLATOR'S OFFICE

Once you have identified who your elected officials are, you then need to reach out to their offices to schedule a time to speak with the Member, or their legislative staff handling education issues. We encourage you to hold visits anytime during the week of NPS, at whatever time is convenient for your schedule. Providing more options of times to Members of Congress will also increase the chances of getting a meeting scheduled.

To streamline the process for you, and to keep you from having to call each office, we have compiled a contact list for all schedulers in both the [House](#) and [Senate](#).

We suggest contacting your legislator's office about two weeks in advance to schedule your meeting. When doing so, you can use [our sample letter](#) or draft your own meeting request letter.

If you decide to draft your own, the most important thing to mention is that you are a constituent and making the request as a part of ACTE's annual National Policy Seminar. Further, let the scheduler know that you would like to introduce the legislator to CTE and to discuss the issues important to the CTE community, like COVID relief, annual appropriations, Perkins implementation, etc. Providing more information in advance will not only help the scheduler when presenting the request to the Member, but also help ensure you meet with the most appropriate staff (if the Member is unable to meet).

Additional Tips:

- Be sure to indicate whether your preference is for the meeting to take place via a web-based meeting platform like Zoom or via telephone. Be prepared to provide a meeting link if you would like to use a web-based platform. This will help streamline the process on the scheduler's end.

- However, even if you indicate a preference, do everything you can to be as flexible and accommodating as possible, it will increase the probability of them taking the meeting request:
 - Keep in mind, many staffers are working from home and may be more hesitant to have their camera on, so be cognizant of their wishes if you are doing a Zoom call. This isn't the case for everyone, but it certainly is for some.
 - Also, Zoom fatigue is real. Staffers are meeting with dozens of people per week, so phone calls are just fine, and you may find an increased chance of landing a meeting that way.
 - Considering how fluid Members schedules are these days, you may have more of a chance of landing a meeting with them via phone since they would be able to take it "on the go."
- If a meeting with a staffer is offered, we highly recommend accepting it. Staffers are the "eyes and ears" of their bosses and establishing rapport with them is extremely impactful. Do not feel slighted if you are not able to meet directly with your Member of Congress.

AFTER SENDING REQUEST

Elected officials get thousands of meeting requests each year, so you may not receive a confirmation email that your request has been received. If that is the case, call the office a week after submitting the request to confirm it was received and inquire if there is an update. Keep in mind, most offices have a scheduling meeting once, maybe twice a week, where they go through requests and the Member's calendar, so you may not hear back immediately.

IF THE MEETING IS ACCEPTED

Once you have confirmed the meeting details, provide the scheduler a full list of attendees so the Member/staffer is aware of who they are meeting with. Be sure there is clear confirmation of how the meeting will be initiated: If it will be by phone, who will make the phone call and do you have the correct number? If it will be hosted on a web-based platform, make sure everyone has the correct link.

You should then mark this on your calendar. Please, do not send a calendar request to the staffer/scheduler. They have their own internal systems for maintaining their calendars, and many times, although these requests are well-intentioned, can make their job harder.

IF THE MEETING IS NOT ACCEPTED

If the Member of Congress is unable to meet with you and the scheduler does not offer to put you in touch with the office's education staffer, ask them if the education staffer would be available to meet during the times provided. Usually, they will then put you in touch with the correct staffer and you can attempt to schedule a meeting with that individual.

If neither the staffer or Member are available at the times provided, ask for the education staffer's email and send them an introduction email, laying out the foundation of your relationship. Provide them with any handouts and talking points and offer to be a resource to them as CTE policy makes its way through Congress. Since all meetings are occurring virtually right now, you can always work to schedule a meeting after the official week of NPS.