

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FEDERAL RELATIONS

START HERE: A Guide to Federal Meetings



Located in Washington, DC, the **Office of Federal Relations** represents the University of Washington to both legislative and executive branches of the federal government, participates in a variety of national forums, and advocates for UW federal interests. The office also serves as a portal for the federal establishment to the UW and as an access point for UW leadership to the D.C. establishment.



OFFICE OF FEDERAL RELATIONS

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MEETING WITH CONGRESSIONAL & AGENCY STAFF

Congressional and agency meetings provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of a federal issue, to *engage* Members and staff about a federal problem or potential federal solution, as well as promote the excellent work and successes happening at UW.

The Federal Relations staff wants to work with you prior to your meetings to help hone your message and to maximize impact. As you prepare for discussions with staff, we hope that you will keep several things in mind. Most meetings will be short – **no more than 20-30 minutes from entry to exit** – and are held in a **small** space, such as a small conference room, small office, or, in Congress, the front reception area or even the hallway, depending on the availability of space.

Please keep in mind, these meetings are not computer-presentation friendly environments. Expect meetings to have only **15 to 30 minutes** of presentation and discussion time (less for Congress and more for agencies) during which **you should not present material from a laptop**. Generally, there is neither the time, space, or technology available. Instead of computer presentations, use short handouts that you can leave behind to reinforce or emphasize the point of your meeting. Called **“one pagers”**, these documents ideally should be no more than one piece of paper with text on the front and perhaps the back, and a limited number can be left with each meeting. Federal Relations can provide guidelines on how to create impactful one-page handouts.

It is not uncommon for your Congressional or agency visits to start early in the day or end just before you need to leave for the airport. The Office of Federal Relations is more than happy to store your luggage while we are on the Hill as well as deliver it to the Congressional office of our last meeting to expedite travel needs and maximize visit times. Also, your Hill schedule may have extended breaks. The Office of Federal Relations is fully equipped with a conference room and Wi-Fi, where you are more than welcome to work during longer breaks between meetings.

Elevator Speech

You never know who you might bump into in DC. Prepare a brief **“elevator speech”** that summarizes your concerns in case you run into a stakeholder and have the opportunity for a very brief conversation. This speech should be no more than three to five sentences long and communicate the crux of what you are asking.

Guidelines for Hill Meetings

PRINTING HANDOUTS: Federal Relations is happy to assist with printing your handouts. Please email them to Gabriel Kornas (gkornas@uw.edu) in advance of your meeting day.

WEATHER: Please check the weather report for Washington, DC, prior to hopping on a plane and pack accordingly. DC's seasons are very different than Seattle's. Be prepared for very cold winter and extremely humid summer.

DRESS CODE: Washington, DC, is a formal city in which **business attire is expected for all meetings**, whether on the Hill, at a federal agency, or with private sector entities. Men are expected to wear a tie and a jacket, and women are expected to wear an appropriate equivalent – slacks, a blazer, a dress, etc. The Capitol campus is large, and you should **expect to do a lot of walking**, so please choose footwear accordingly.

ID REQUIREMENTS: You are required to show government-issued photo ID at security checkpoints in the Capitol and at federal agencies. A driver's license from Washington or another state will suffice at the U.S. Capitol. **If you are visiting a federal agency, your regular Washington state driver's license will not meet muster. Please bring a passport, military ID, or enhanced Washington state driver's license.**

BRING IT OR LEAVE IT?: You will pass through airport-like security screening upon entering federal buildings. You can bring a bag and a laptop, but we recommend limiting the amount of "stuff" you carry on the Hill to necessities. **Please leave food, drinks, and liquid cosmetics like lotion or perfume at your hotel** or risk having to throw it out in the Capitol building itself. To expedite screening, please place everything in your pockets (cell phones, keys, loose change) and metal items on your person (belts, large necklaces, etc.) in your bag prior to entering the security line. There are ample cafeterias and vending areas throughout the Capitol complex at which you may purchase food and beverage.

SCHEDULING MEETINGS

The Office of Federal Relations is happy to arrange meetings for you with the Washington Congressional Delegation or federal agencies. In most cases, **our Director or Deputy Director will accompany you to those meetings** to help stay on message as well as navigate the confusing Capitol complex.



We will submit your meeting requests two to three weeks in advance of your arrival in DC. Due to the nature of the legislative environment, we are not able to provide an update on your schedule on the Hill more than one week in advance of your scheduled meeting date. Even then, you should be prepared for meeting times to shift and last minute additions to your schedule on the day of your Hill visits.

Lobbying Disclosure

The University of Washington is legally required to disclose all lobbying activities to the U.S. House and U.S. Senate on a quarterly basis.

You are responsible for reporting any lobbying activities by the stated deadline via the Lobbying Disclosure Form on the Federal Relations website, regardless of whether the Office of Federal Relations assisted in planning your meetings.

www.washington.edu/federalrelations

You may request to be added to the Lobbying Disclosure mailing list by contacting Gabriel Kornas (gkornas@uw.edu).

UNDERSTANDING CONGRESSIONAL & AGENCY STAFF

The vast majority of Congressional staff are in their mid-20's and mid-30's. This is the norm in Congress. In addition, please keep in mind that most staff— unless they are specialists hired to work for one of the committees on a specialize subset of issues—are generalists, meaning that they are responsible for covering a widerange of issues; do not expect them to know or get into the details of the issue you would like to discuss or have in-depth knowledge of specific funding or grant annoucements. As such, we recommend you **avoid using acronyms and overly technical terms**.

With respect to agency staff, they are the policy and substantive experts within that specific, narrow area. In general, they are more versed in the details and technical aspects of the issue which you are interested in discussing and have a significnat understanding of specific past and future federal budgets, programs, and grand annoucments. However, they do not engage with Congress reguarly, and Congress determines federal funding levels and policy.