

Setting Up Virtual Congressional Meetings

OVERVIEW

Here are some quick and easy steps to set up a virtual Hill meeting via email:

1. Find your members of Congress and their contact information by entering your program's ZIP code and address under 'Find Officials' [here](#).
 - o You can also find their contact information...
 - on the member's website
 - by calling the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121)
2. Once you have the Capitol Hill Office number, call and ask, "Can you please provide me with the name and email address of your scheduler?" (Offices get these calls all the time).
3. The best way to set up a virtual Hill meeting is via email, so once you have the scheduler's email address, you can send your meeting request.
 - o If you already have a contact with someone in the office, perhaps their education staffer, CC that address on your email too.
4. NHTSA recommends sending a quick note in the body of your email and attaching a more formal meeting request. **For your convenience, there is a template for these Hill communications below.**

Tip: You can't meet via Zoom or your Zoom account is getting crowded? Offer a conference call instead. If you don't have access to a conference line, try using [FreeConferenceCall](#).

Note: Generally, when scheduling Hill meetings you should allot 30 minutes per meeting and plan to have your group join the meeting 15 minutes before it starts to make sure you are all ready to go. We also recommend allotting at least 30 minutes between meetings to give you time to transition.

P.S. Being that this year's FLI is in the middle of a national pandemic and many ongoing negotiations, it is highly likely that most of your meetings will be with staffers as many members of Congress will be focused on negotiations. This is a great opportunity to connect with your members' most trusted policy advisors!

Page Break

TEMPLATES

Initial Meeting Request

Body of email:

Dear **[Scheduler Name]**,

Please see the attached meeting request from Head Start in **[your organization/town/state]** to meet with **[member of Congress]** on Wednesday, March 10th via Zoom or conference call. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Attached document:

[Organization logo]

The Honorable [Name of member of Congress]
[Address line]
Washington, D.C. [20510/20515]

Dear [Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman Last Name],

This March, parents and staff from Head Start programs all around the country will be joining together for the National Head Start Association's 2021 Winter Leadership Institute. On behalf of the Head Start community in [community/city/county/state], I would like to request a virtual meeting with you or your staff **on Wednesday, March 10th.**

In today's challenging times, Head Start has continued its national commitment to give every vulnerable child an opportunity to succeed in school and in life. Our local Head Start community has been doing remarkable work during COVID-19, and our Head Start practitioners and parents can best speak to the impact of the Head Start's critical work, as well as the challenges and opportunities we face back home everyday.

Please let us know what time would work best for you, and we look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Organization]

Follow-up Email

No response? Don't be shy - reach back out! *It is not uncommon to have to follow up with congressional staff when requesting a meeting. A follow-up email to the scheduler could look something like this:*

Dear [Scheduler Name],

I'm following up on a recent meeting request made on [date you originally sent the email]. Please let me know if your boss or an appropriate staffer will be available to meet with our group via Zoom or conference call on Wednesday, March 10th.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Organization]

If you are still having trouble getting a response from the scheduler, **we recommend calling the office** and asking to speak with them or the appropriate staffer directly.

Need assistance? Please do not hesitate to reach out to Elizabeth Holloway (elizabeth@headstartca.org) or Amirh Moore (amoore@nhsa.org).