

## Communicating with Congress

Members of Congress need to hear from their constituents. They depend on you to educate them about what is happening in their district or state and what legislation is most important to their constituents. At RESULTS, we regularly communicate with Congress to garner support for our campaigns and legislation!

### Getting started: what is Congress?

RESULTS focuses on advocacy at the federal level of government. There are two chambers of Congress (Senate and House of Representatives) which we can influence. Through these two chambers, we can also exercise influence on decisions made by the President.

Senate	House of Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referred to as "Senators"</li><li>• Everyone has two Senators that represent their state</li><li>• Each state has equal representation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referred to as "Congressperson"</li><li>• Everyone has one person who represents a specific congressional district</li><li>• Districts are defined by population</li></ul>

All lawmakers in the Senate and House can be collectively referred to as "legislators" "lawmakers", or "members of Congress (MOCs)". We do not refer to our Senators directly as a "Congressperson" and individual Senators should always be addressed as "Senator".

### Who should advocates contact?

1. Staff who work in the local district office
2. Aides who work in the Washington, D.C. office

You can look up staff information with our [Legislator Lookup](#). After finding your specific member of Congress, click on the "Staff" tab for a list of aides. You can also call the congressional office and ask or reach out to RESULTS staff for help.

Members of Congress have offices in Washington, D.C. and in your local community. It's important to be in touch with both but there are a few differences in the role each office plays.

Washington, D.C. Office	District Offices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congressional offices in D.C. are staffed with aides who have specific expertise on policy issues. Aides follow specific issues and legislation and advise your member of Congress on those issues. Ultimately, it is up to your member of Congress to decide whether or not to support a piece of legislation, but key aides can influence their decision.</li> <li>• Each member has one office in D.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of Congress have local district offices set up across their congressional district (or for Senators, across the state). Staff connect with the local community, represent the Congressperson at home while they are in D.C., provide case management services to constituents, and, most important, listen to <i>you</i>.</li> <li>• There are usually multiple offices located throughout your state or district.</li> <li>• District offices are a powerful link between you and your member of Congress.</li> </ul>

## Common ways to communicate

As RESULTS volunteers, there are a few key ways in which we regularly communicate with the offices of our members of Congress. These are not the only ways to communicate with your decision-makers, but they are what we utilize most frequently.

**Hand-written letters:** If you wish to mail in a letter, it's best to send it to the district (not D.C.) office as mail delivery is slow to D.C. due to security scans. If you have a meeting in D.C., you can bring handwritten letters to 'leave behind' during your meeting.

**Emails:** You can email the aides in the D.C. and district office directly with specific policy requests. The district office does not typically specialize in policy so will forward your message to the appropriate D.C. policy aide.

Typical email address format:

House of Representatives: [firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov)

Senate: [firstname\\_lastname@senatorlastname.senate.gov](mailto:firstname_lastname@senatorlastname.senate.gov)

**Phone calls:** A phone call might be necessary to follow up on an email or scheduling request that has been unanswered or raise a time sensitive request. Also, as important votes come up you can flood the D.C. office with phone calls to ask your member to vote a certain way. Call and ask to speak directly with an aide or the scheduler or leave your message with the staff who answers.

### Tips for writing and calling

- Use the [EPIC format](#) to create a concise and powerful message.
- **Letters and emails:** In addition to the EPIC message, be sure to start your message with an introduction of who you are and include your contact information at the end of your message, including your zip code, so the office can reply. RESULTS also has email actions you can take in the [Action Center](#).
- **Phone calls:** When calling, ask for the aide who works on your issue. If that person is unavailable, ask to speak with someone else. Messaging for a phone call or voicemail should be even shorter and more concise than a typical letter so there is space for conversation. Be sure to include your name and zip code in voice messages so they can confirm you are a constituent.

## Sample calls to Congress

### Example 1

"Hi, this is \_\_\_\_\_, a RESULTS volunteer from \_\_\_\_\_. Can I please speak with the aide who works on housing issues?"

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"I'm calling to urge you to ensure the next coronavirus relief package includes funding to meet the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness and America's lowest-income renters.

As the health and economic impacts of coronavirus becomes clear, our country's lowest-income and most marginalized people are at the greatest risk of harm. People experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to contracting the disease, and once infected are more likely to require critical care and die from COVID-19. Resources are needed *now* to curb the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

The next coronavirus relief package must include funding to help keep America's lowest-income renters stably housed. Please tell House and Senate leadership to ensure the next

congressional relief package includes at least \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance and implement a uniform national moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures.”

## Example 2

"My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am from [city/town]. Congress must ensure that any emergency spending package includes resources to help people experiencing homelessness and ensure housing stability for America's lowest-income renters. Please tell the senator/representative to prioritize \$100 billion emergency assistance for renters and a national moratorium on evictions, as well as direct financial assistance for homelessness service providers."

## Sample letter to Congress

Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

*I am \_\_\_\_\_, a constituent and RESULTS volunteer. I'm reaching out to ask that Congressperson \_\_\_\_\_ support critical global health and education funding to address the global impact of COVID-19.*

*As a leader in global health and development, the United States must urgently respond to contain and mitigate the impact COVID-19 and protect hard-fought gains in global health in low-income countries.*

*Already, COVID-19 is diverting essential funding needed to control tuberculosis (TB), the world's leading cause of death from infectious disease. Immunization campaigns across the world have been suspended, which would have collectively immunized over 13.5 million people. And without urgent action, the number of people facing hunger is expected to double to 265 million by the end of 2020.*

*As Congress prepares for the next stage of its coronavirus response, they should include support for lower-income countries to deal with the immediate crisis and to strengthen their healthcare systems in the long run. Will you speak with leadership and ask them to include the following?*

- *\$1 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria*
- *\$200 million for USAID Global Health-Tuberculosis*
- *\$900 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance*
- *\$250 million for Nutrition (\$200 for Food for Peace, \$50 for USAID Global Health-Nutrition)*

*I would appreciate your prompt reply to my requests. Thank you for your time and attention.*

*Sincerely,*

*John Q. Public, 1234 Citizen Ave, Anytown, USA 98765*