



Congressional In-District Meeting Toolkit



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	02
2. Identifying Your Members of Congress	03
3. Requesting a Meeting	08
4. Preparing for A Meeting	11
5. Meeting with Congressional Offices	16
6. Building on Your Momentum After the Meeting	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why Congressional Meetings Matter

Meetings with policymakers are an important part of providing education, building relationships, and alerting them to issues that are important within your community. Relationship-building with legislators helps them see the impact of your work and allows them to gain firsthand knowledge within their districts. Policymakers and elected officials are often not knowledgeable about home visiting; they are the experts in policy, and you are the expert in home visiting. Because legislators and policymakers make decisions that impact home visiting, it's vital to build relationships with them. Meeting with policymakers, sharing success stories of home visiting, and providing them with opportunities to see your work in action provides them with information that they would not be able to gain from a report.

Members of Congress have designated district work periods throughout the year to engage and work with constituents in their district, usually with an extended period in August. Because of the upcoming midterm elections, Congress is also planning to have an extended recess period this fall, making it a good time to reach out to your member of Congress and engage them in your work.

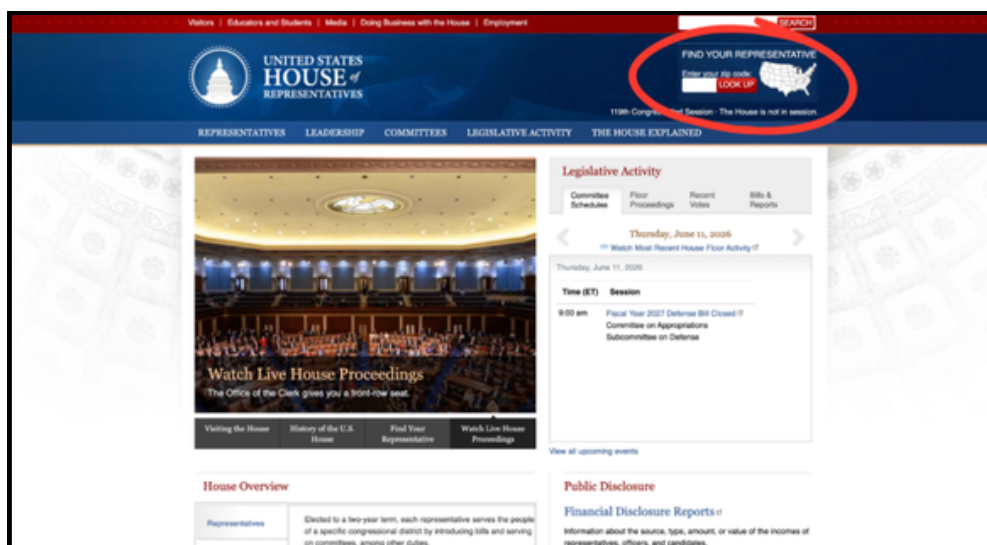
This toolkit is designed to serve as a step-by-step guide on how to identify your members of Congress, request a meeting, and prepare for a meeting with their offices. It also includes a guide on identifying what you want to gain from the meeting, sample talking points, and a suggested meeting flow. It then walks through what you should expect during your meeting, including who you will meet with and tips for having the meeting. The toolkit concludes by providing next steps for after the meeting to build on your momentum and continue fostering relationships with your members of Congress.

IDENTIFYING YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Before reaching out to schedule a meeting, you first need to identify who your members of Congress are and their district office contact information. The easiest way to do this is to go to the House of Representatives and Senate websites; both provide tools for constituents to identify their representatives and senators. This section will walk you through how to identify your members of Congress and find their district office contact information.

Finding Your House Representative

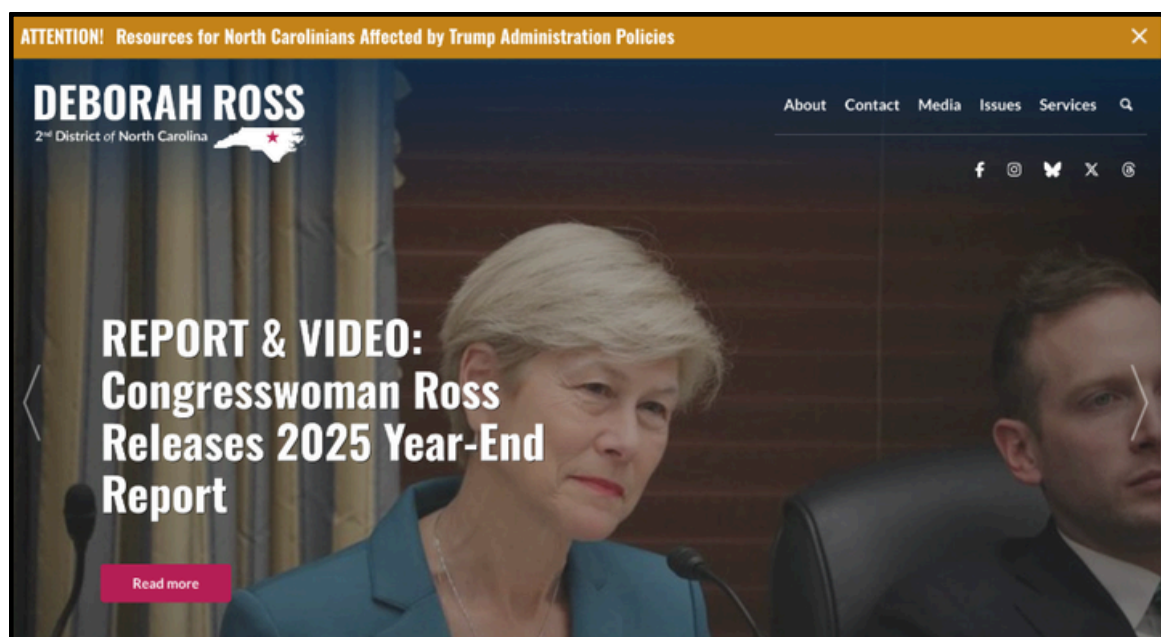
1. Go to the www.house.gov
2. Look at the top right corner, to the “Find Your Representative” search bar and enter your 5-digit zip code.



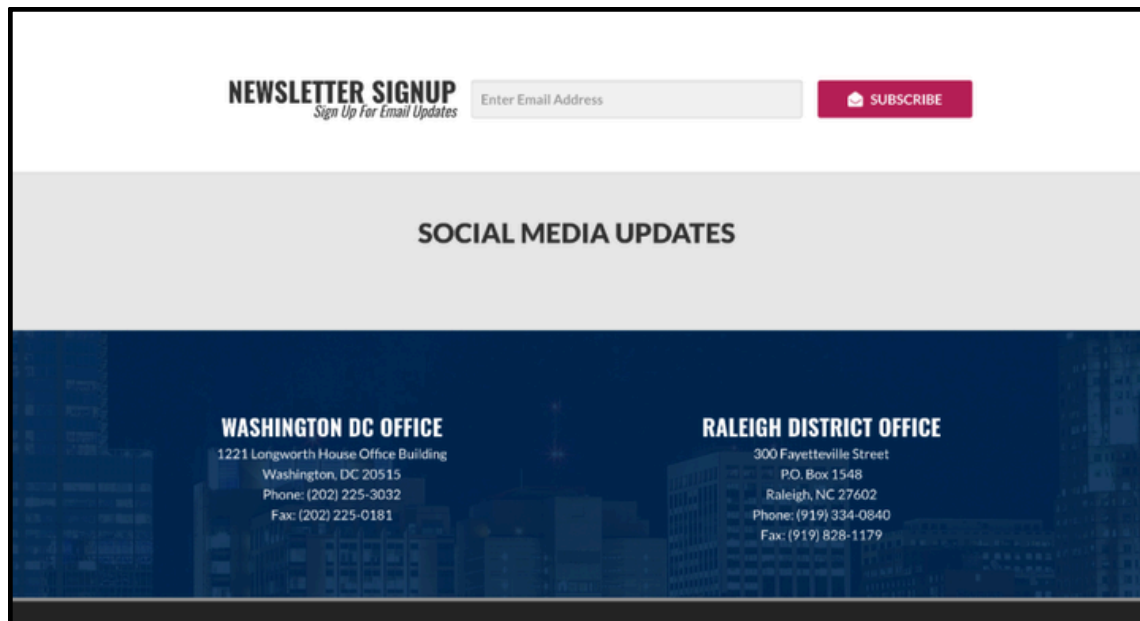
3. After entering your address, your representative will be listed. For example, the zip code of the HIPPY Family Resource Center in Raleigh, NC is 27609. Their representative is shown to be Deborah K. Ross.



4. Below your representative's picture, there will be a small computer icon. This icon will take you to your representative's website. Keep in mind, not every representative's website will look exactly the same. As an example, this is Representative Ross's website:



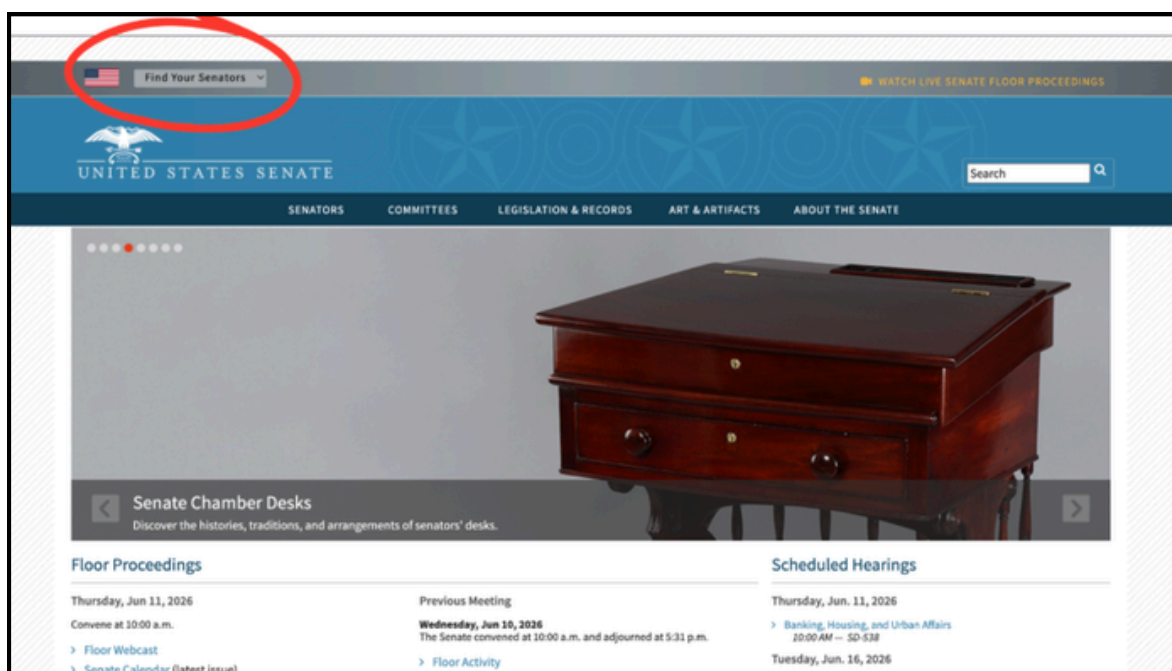
5. Often at the bottom of their website, you will be able to see a list of their office locations.



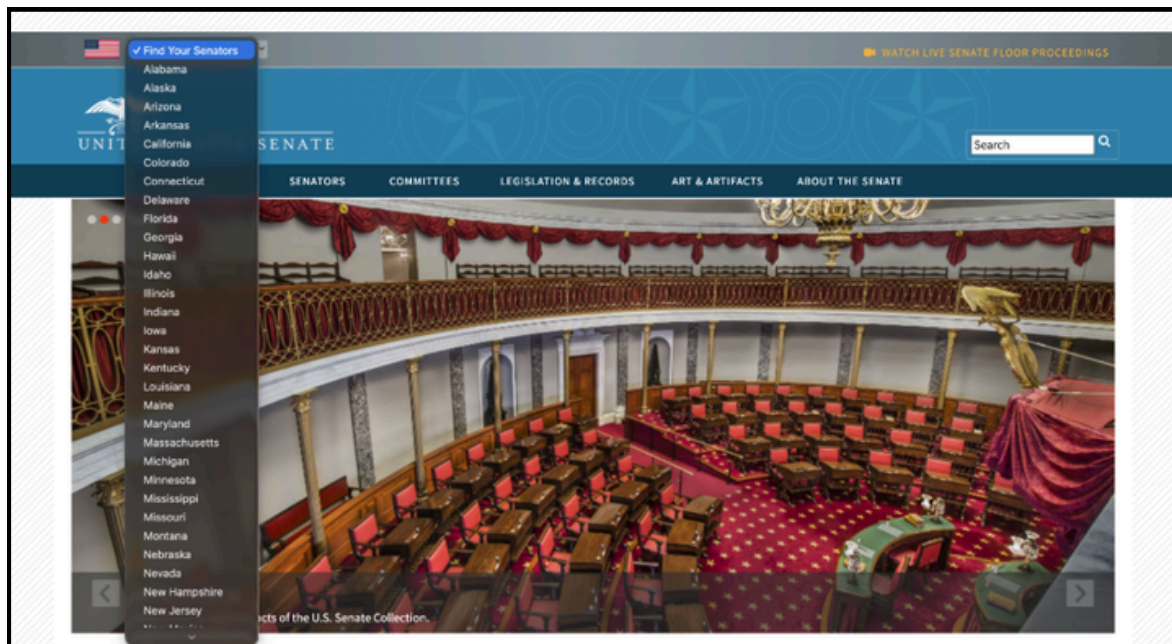
6. To schedule a meeting with your representative, begin by calling their district office with the phone number listed on their website. In the next section, we will explain how to schedule a meeting with the district office for your member of Congress.

Finding Your Senators

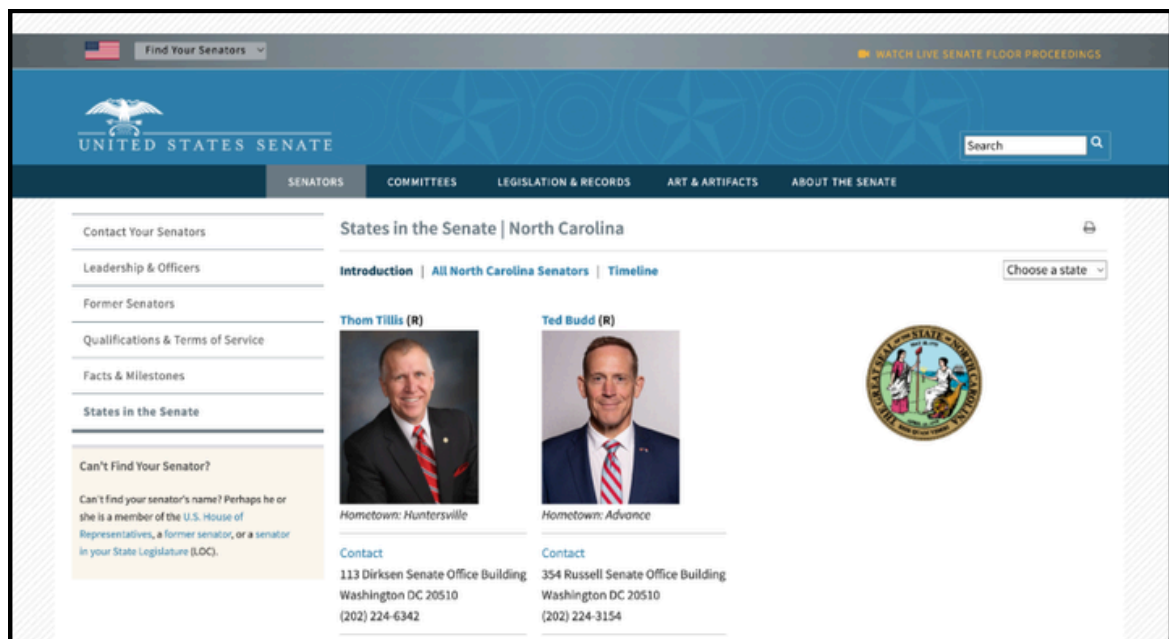
1. Go to the www.senate.gov
2. Look at the top left corner, to the “Find Your Senators” drop-down menu.



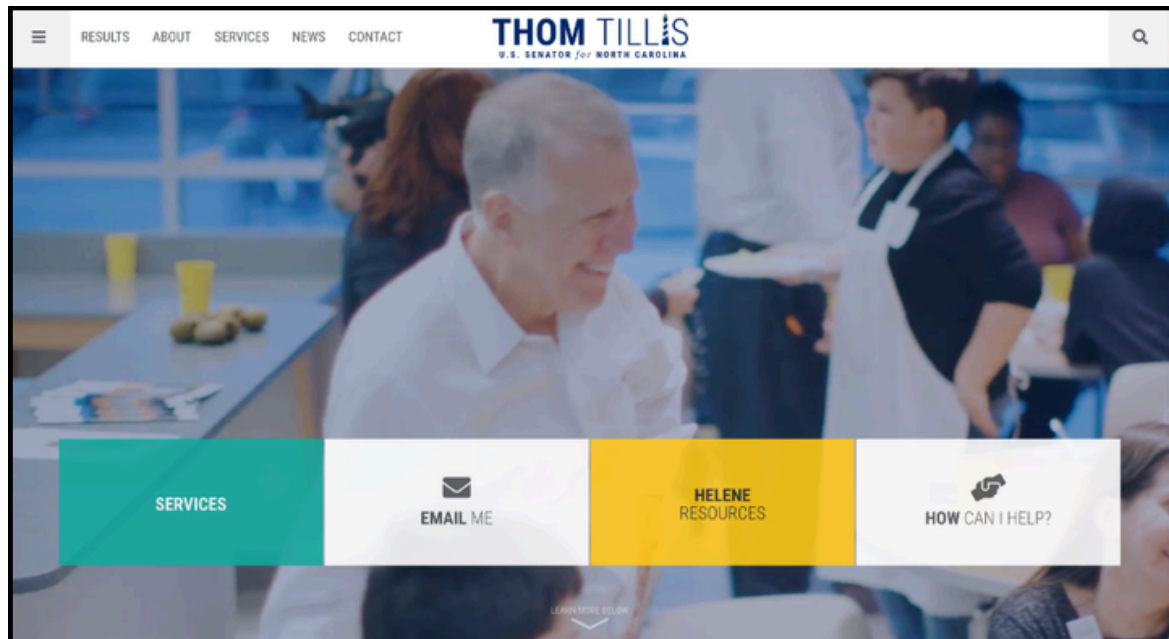
3. Click on the drop-down menu, and select your state.



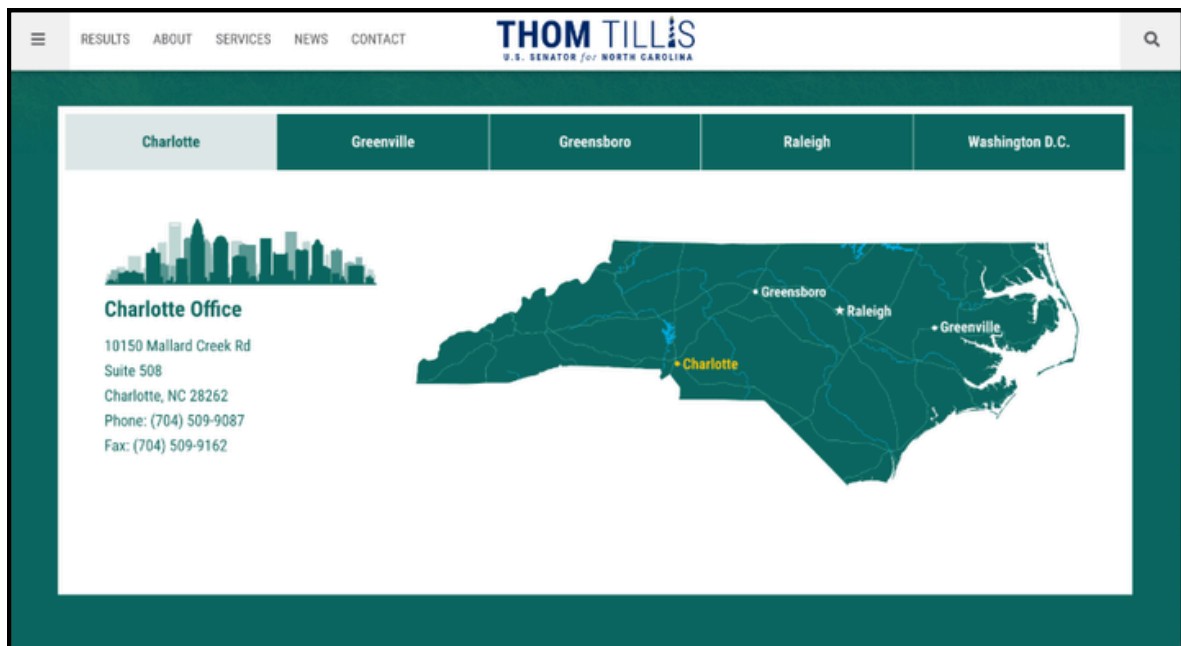
4. After selecting your state, your senators will be listed. For example, North Carolina's senators are Thom Tillis and Ted Budd.



5. Click on your senator's name to go to their website. Keep in mind, not every senator's website will look the same. For example, this is Thom Tillis' website:



6. Scroll down to the bottom of the senator's website. The website should list their district office locations and contact information.



7. To schedule a meeting with your Senator, begin by calling their district office with the phone number listed on their website.

REQUESTING A MEETING

How to Request a Meeting

Once you have identified your members of Congress, navigate to their website and find the contact information for their district office. During business hours, call the district office and ask to speak with the scheduler or the staff member who handles district meeting requests.

If you are unable to reach someone by phone, return to the member's website to find other options for requesting a meeting, such as an email address or an online meeting request form.

When requesting a meeting, be sure to include:

- Who you are, including your organization/program, and that you are their constituent
- With whom you would like to meet (begin by requesting the representative or senator, though a meeting with a staff member is also a meaningful opportunity to inform and engage the office)
- Why you are requesting the meeting and why the conversation is important
- The topics you would like to discuss (for example, home visiting and the impact of these services in your community)

Sample Meeting Request Phone Call Script

You: "My name is [your name], and I am a constituent of [representative/senator name]. I am calling to request a meeting with the [senator/representative] or a member of their district staff during the upcoming work period."

Office Staff: "Can I ask what the meeting is about?"

You: "I work with HIPPY, providing home visiting services to families in [community/state]. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the impact of home visiting programs in our community and share how these services support families and young children. We would also welcome the opportunity

to invite [representative/senator name] or a member of their team to join a home visit, with appropriate family permission, to see firsthand how home visiting supports families.”

Office Staff: “What dates/times are you available?”

You: “I am available to meet [provide availability options] and would be happy to meet at the district office or discuss opportunities to participate in a home visit.”

If they ask for additional information: “I would be happy to provide more details. Could you please let me know the best email address or process for submitting a formal meeting request?”

Closing: “Thank you so much. I appreciate your time and look forward to the chance to meet with the office.”

Sample Meeting Request Email

Dear [First Name],

I am reaching out as a constituent of [Representative/Senator _____] to request a meeting with the [representative/senator] or a member of their district staff during the upcoming district work period. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the importance of home visiting services in [district/state] and the impact these programs have on supporting families and young children.

As a [your role/title] with [organization/program name], I work directly with families to provide home visiting services. Our program provides families with trusted, individualized support during early childhood, helping connect families to resources, strengthen parent-child relationships, and promote positive outcomes for children and communities.

I would also welcome the opportunity to invite the [representative/senator] or a member of their team to join a home visit (with appropriate family permission) to see firsthand how home visiting supports families in our community.

I am available to meet [provide availability options] and would be happy to meet at the district office or discuss opportunities to participate in a home visit.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Organization]
[Your Email]
[Your Phone Number]

PREPARING FOR A MEETING

A successful legislative meeting starts before you arrive at the policymaker's office. Taking time to prepare your team, organize your materials, and confirm the details will help you feel confident and ensure your meeting has a clear purpose.

Confirm Meeting Logistics

Once your meeting is scheduled, confirm the details with the Congressional office contact.

Before the meeting, confirm:

- Date and time: Confirm the meeting date, start time, and expected length
- Location or meeting link: Confirm whether the meeting will be in-person, virtual, or at another location
- Attendees: Confirm who from your organization will be attending
- Congressional office attendees: Confirm who you will be meeting with (member of Congress, staff member(s), or both)
- Contact information: Make sure you have the correct contact information for the person coordinating the meeting

If anything changes before the meeting, communicate updates with the Congressional office as soon as possible.

Prepare Yourself and Your Team

If multiple people from your organization are attending, take time to discuss roles before the meeting.

Keep in mind that you are more likely to meet with congressional staff than the member of Congress themselves, as members' schedules are often divided among many competing priorities. Staff—whether based in the district or on Capitol Hill—play an important role in helping members

understand constituent needs and shape legislative priorities. District staff regularly communicate with policy staff in Washington, DC, so meeting with district staff is a valuable opportunity to ensure your perspectives and experiences are shared. Whether you meet with the member or a staff member, approach the conversation with the same level of preparation and professionalism.

A strong meeting should feel like a conversation, not a formal presentation or a script. However, having a general flow will help ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that your key messages are shared.

Before the meeting, decide:

- Who will kick the meeting off and provide introductions
- Who will explain HIPPY and the work you do
- Who will share data and outcomes
- Who will share personal or family stories
- Who will make the final ask

Each person should know their role but avoid memorizing a script.

Policymakers and staff appreciate authentic conversations and hearing directly from the people doing the work.

Develop Your Talking Points

Your goal in a meeting with a member of Congress or congressional staff is not to provide every detail about your program. Instead, your goal is to help them understand why home visiting matters, how HIPPY supports families in your community, and what support is needed to continue this work.

Talking points help ensure your team shares a clear, consistent message while still allowing space for personal stories and conversation. The strongest meetings combine:

- The big picture: Why home visiting matters and how HIPPY supports families in your community
- Your Experience: What you see by working with families every day through the role-playing parental curriculum and providing education
- The Data: Evidence—numbers can be powerful—that demonstrates your impact in the communities you serve
- The Ask: What you want policymakers to do, if appropriate

When preparing to meet with your Representative or Senator, identify what you hope to accomplish during the meeting and determine your specific "ask," if appropriate. Depending on your organization's advocacy rules and policies, you may be able to ask the member of Congress to take a specific action, such as supporting evidence-based home visiting programs like HIPPI. Having a clear ask gives the office a concrete action item and helps ensure your priorities are understood and considered.

If your organization does not permit advocacy or you are unable to make a specific ask, the meeting is still a valuable opportunity to educate the office about home visiting and the impact of your program in their district. Sharing information, building relationships, and serving as a trusted resource can help increase understanding of home visiting and lay the groundwork for future conversations.

Review and finalize your talking points based on:

- Who and how many people will be attending the meeting
- The interests or priorities of the policymaker
- Your meeting goal and specific ask

Each person attending should prepare 2–3 key messages they want the policymaker to remember.

A helpful structure is:

- My Role/Perspective
- The Challenge
- The Solution
- The Impact
- The Ask (if appropriate)

Use the following sample talking points as a guide for your discussion. You do not need to memorize or read them directly. The most impactful meetings are those that feel natural and authentic.

- "Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. We appreciate the opportunity to share more about HIPPI, which stands for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, and the families we serve in your district."
- *Invite the Congressional attendees to introduce themselves.*

- *HIPPY participants, introduce yourselves in 2-3 sentences. Be brief and include your name, program, and role.*
- “We are here to share how HIPPY supports families your district.”
- “HIPPY is an evidence-based early literacy and school readiness curriculum for parents of children aged 2-5.”
- “Parents use the skills and materials provided by HIPPY to work with their children daily, building cognitive, motor, and social-emotional skills over the course of 30 weeks.”
- *Share details about what home visits look like, describe role-playing, activities, and real stories/examples.*
- “The HIPPY curriculum has been used for over 50 years because the evidence shows it works. The HIPPY program is proven to:
 - Improve school readiness
 - Increase parent involvement
 - Improve school attendance
 - Improve test scores in reading and math past elementary school”
 - Include additional benefits you see from HIPPY
- *Describe where HIPPY is located in your state and share success stories from participation in the program.*
- “Do you have any questions?” *(If they ask you a question you don’t know the answer to, that’s okay. Let them know you will look into it and get back to them. Be sure to take notes and follow up after the meeting if you need to.)*
- “Thank you for your time today. Please feel free to always use us as a resource, and we would be glad to host you at a HIPPY program in the district so you can see our amazing home visitors in action.”

Gather Information and Prepare Examples

1. Data and Program Information

Prepare relevant information such as:

- Number of families served
- Number of home visits completed
- Communities or counties reached
- Program outcomes
- Local or state-specific data

Choose the information that best supports your message. You do not need to share every data point you have.

2. Family Stories and Success Stories

Personal stories help policymakers understand the impact of home visiting beyond the numbers.

Prepare examples that demonstrate:

- A challenge a family experienced
- How HIPPY supported the family
- The positive impact of that support

Before sharing any family story:

- Confirm you have appropriate permission
- Protect family privacy and confidentiality
- Avoid sharing identifying information

Prepare Leave-Behind Materials

Bring materials that the policymaker or staff can reference after your meeting.

Examples include:

- Program fact sheet or one-page overview
- State or local home visiting data
- Success stories
- Business card or contact information
- Information about your policy priorities or request

Keep materials concise and easy to reference. Congressional staff often use leave-behind materials when following up after meetings or preparing future conversations.

Final Checklist

Before the meeting, confirm:

- Meeting date, time, and location/link are confirmed
- Congressional office contact information is correct
- Attendees and roles are confirmed
- Talking points are finalized
- Data and stories are prepared
- Leave-behind materials are ready
- Everyone knows the meeting goal and ask

Preparation allows you to focus on what matters most during the meeting: sharing your expertise and explaining the impact of home visiting in your community.

MEETING WITH POLICY MAKERS

Who You Will Meet With

These meetings are an important opportunity to share your expertise and experiences. Congressional staff serve as trusted representatives of the office and play a critical role in the legislative process. Many staff members specialize in specific policy issues, making them highly knowledgeable about the programs and legislation within their portfolio. They regularly communicate constituent perspectives and policy recommendations to the member of Congress and often help shape legislative priorities and responses.

Building relationships with a congressional office happens over time, and every interaction contributes to that process. Whether you meet with the member of Congress or a member of their staff, your conversation helps increase the office's familiarity with home visiting and establishes you as a trusted resource on issues affecting children and families. If a staffer attends the meeting in place of the member due to a scheduling change, treat the meeting with the same level of preparation and importance; your message will still have a meaningful impact.

What Will Happen During the Meeting

A typical meeting with a congressional office lasts 15–30 minutes and often follows this general format:

- **Check in:** If you are meeting at the district office, let the receptionist or scheduler know you have arrived for your meeting with [name of person].
- **Introductions:** Introduce yourself and anyone attending with you, then allow the congressional office to introduce themselves.
- **Share your message:** Use the talking points you prepared to guide the conversation. Focus on your experiences, the impact of home visiting in the district, and the purpose of your meeting. (See Preparing Your Talking Points on page XX.)
- **Discussion:** Allow time for questions and conversation. Listen carefully to the office's priorities and respond thoughtfully.

- **Make your ask:** Clearly state the action you are requesting before the meeting concludes.
- **Wrap up:** Thank them for their time, provide your leave-behind materials, and offer to serve as a resource if additional information would be helpful.

Tips for Meeting with Congressional Offices:

- Be conversational! You don't need to be stiff, and the meeting doesn't need to be overly structured. You should be prepared, but you don't need to sound like you are reading a script.
- Make sure to listen to what they have to say and answer any questions they have.
- Don't feel like you need to have the answer to every question ready. It is okay for you to say, "I don't have that readily available, but I will email you that information after our meeting."

BUILDING ON YOUR MOMENTUM AFTER THE MEETING

What To Do After Your Meeting

After you meet with your members of Congress or one of their staffers, follow up over email with the person you met within a few days. Include:

- Thanking them for taking the time to meet with you
- Recap of the important information covered in the meeting and the importance of your work
- Attach digital copies of your leave-behinds and your contact information.
- If the Congress member or their staffer requested information that you didn't have right away during the meeting, you should also include that information in your follow-up email.

We want to hear from you! HIPPY US and your HIPPY state office will be interested to know how your meeting went. Let us know how your meeting went, and send us pictures if you have any! Use the following link to submit photos:

- [Photo Submission](#)

Template of Thank You Email

Dear [Senator/Representative] _____,

On behalf of [organization name], thank you again for taking the time to meet with us, especially during such a busy district work period.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the impact of home visiting and how it builds strong foundations for family economic self-sufficiency and healthy child development, particularly in [district/state] where [number] of families receive home visiting services annually. Attached you will find digital copies of the leave-behind materials we shared during our meeting last week for your reference.

[If there is follow up material or questions you said you would follow up with the answer to:] Following up on your question during our meeting, [answer to their question].

We appreciate your interest in learning directly from home visitors and the families they serve. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to ensure that evidence-based home visiting remains available to families who can benefit from these services.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information or serve as a resource on home visiting and early childhood issues. Thank you again for your time and thoughtful conversation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Organization]

[Your Email]

[Your Phone Number]