

NPMA GRASSROOTS RESOURCES

HOW TO SCHEDULE A DISTRICT MEETING

Figuring out how to set up a meeting with your members of Congress and their staff in the district can be a daunting task. This guide will help you find your members and cover how to request a meeting.

How to Find Your Members of Congress:

You can go [here](#) for House members and [here](#) for Senators and plug your address in. You will have one Representative (House Member) and two Senators.

How to Contact Your Members of Congress:

You can go to your member's website by either clicking the links above or googling their name and "district office" (official websites will end in either [house.gov](#) or [senate.gov](#)). Once you have reached the official website, look for "district office contact information" often found under a "Contact Me" or "Office Locations" tab or at the bottom of the website. Now you will need to decide whether to pursue a visit with the Member or staffer in their district office. It is more difficult to get a visit with a Member than a staffer but be sure to mention you are a constituent to increase your chances of a meeting with a Member. Be aware that the Member may not be available, and scheduling is much easier with a staffer.

Important Items Before You Request:

- ▶ Make sure you identify yourself as a constituent! This makes your visit more of a priority than a non-constituent. You will often be asked to provide your town or full address to show you reside in the district.
- ▶ Staff versus Member visits: Staff is easier and quicker to schedule and will give you more time for detailed discussion. You may meet with a district staffer or a DC staffer in the district during August recess. Member visits are harder to get and will take much more time to schedule. You may not know if the meeting is confirmed until a week or even a few days before.

To Request a Visit With a Member Directly:

Online: Congressional websites will generally have a "Request a Meeting" and/or "Scheduling Request" tab. These tabs will either take you to the email of the scheduler or an online form. Make sure to use the contact information for the district scheduler. If there is no information provided for the district scheduler online, you will need to call the district office to get the correct contact information. Sending a district request to the DC office will usually mean a delay as they will have to send it on the district office.

Calling the District Office: You can ring the main line, using the district number from their website, and a receptionist will pick up. Explain that you are a constituent and would like to schedule a meeting with the Member in their district on a particular date. If it's short notice they may bump you directly to the scheduler; if it's further out and there is an online form, they may request you fill out on the website or send an email.

Curious where your request stands? You can call the district office or email the district scheduler two weeks after your request to check on your meeting status.

Please note: Bothering the scheduler repeatedly will not help your case. The scheduler holds a great deal of power, and you want to be respectful of the massive numbers of constituent requests they are processing.

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To Request a Visit With a District Staffer:

You will first need to identify which district staffer you should request a meeting with. The easiest way to figure out who to talk to is to call the district office using the district number identified on the Member's website. A receptionist will answer: *"I would like to schedule a meeting on a pesticide issue. Who would be best for me to talk to?"* They will likely have to check on who this is and will generally offer you their voicemail or an email address to directly send the request; very occasionally will your call be transferred immediately.

Need to leave a voicemail for the staffer?

Ensure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about, when you'll be in town and how to contact you.

- ▶ **EX:** *"My name is (insert name); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I would like to schedule a virtual or in-person district meeting sometime in August about preemption on the federal level. You can reach me at (phone number) and (email). I will also send you an email, so you have all of my information. Look forward to talking with you."*
- ▶ You can then send an email with the information below.

Need to email the district staffer?

Most staffers prefer email over voicemail. Make sure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about and when you'll be in town

- ▶ **EX:** *"Dear (staffer name), My name is (insert name); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I would like to schedule a district meeting sometime in August about preemption on the federal level. I hope to meet with you soon, and you can reach me at (phone number) and (email) if you have any questions."*

Get transferred to speak with the staffer directly?

Ensure you tell them who you are, what you want to talk about, when you'll be in town and how to contact you.

- ▶ **EX:** *"Hello (staffer name), My name is (insert name); I'm with the National Pest Management Association and I'm a constituent of the (Senator/Representative). I called to hopefully schedule a district meeting sometime in August about preemption on the federal level."*
- ▶ Offer to email them the information at the end of the conversation: this is a good method of accountability for both of you, to confirm you heard correctly on the time and location.