

Congressional Staff Roles

Each member of Congress has staff to assist him/her during their term in office. To be most effective in communicating with Congress, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of key staff.

Commonly Used Titles:

Chief of Staff

The Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff reports directly to the Member of Congress. S/he usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. S/he is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant, or Legislative Coordinator

The Legislative Director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some congressional offices there are several Legislative Assistants and responsibilities are assigned to staff with particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health, energy, budget, trade, education, international affairs, taxes, military affairs, etc.

Press Secretary or Communications Director:

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the member, his/her constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands, and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or position on specific issues.

Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary, or Scheduler:

The Scheduler is usually responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. This person may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

Other Staff Titles:

Other titles used in a congressional office may include: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager, and Receptionist.

