

## Material Advantage Congressional Visits Day

### Scheduling Virtual Meetings Guide

Your members of Congress (United States Senators and Representatives) make time for meetings with constituents as part of their duties as elected officials. The focus of the Material Advantage Congressional Visits Day is to connect with member of Congress to clearly communicate the importance of research in materials science, engineering and manufacturing, and the need to increase federal R&D funding.

Start the scheduling process now by following the steps outlined below. If you wait to start the process, you may risk being able to schedule a meeting with your members of Congress.

#### 1. Identify your Senators and Representatives

To identify your Senators/Representatives you may visit the following websites:

- **Senate** <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm> Look up your Senators by state.
- **House** <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> Enter your zip code to find your Representative.

**TIP:** This **Congressional Districts map** is an *easy way* to find a quick list of your members of Congress, along with their website info, and phone number: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>

#### 2. Coordinate with your group (university and/or locale), and other CVD attendees

Please be sure to coordinate with other CVD attendees at your university and/or home state so that there are not multiple requests for appointments. Coordinating meetings will:

- increase your chances of getting a meeting with the member of Congress; and
- convey that we are a professional student group that is well organized and respectful of the member or their staff's time.

#### 3. Contact your Congressional offices for 2022 virtual visits

##### 1. FIRST STEP: Call

Each office has a different system for scheduling meetings. No matter what, your first step should be making contact via phone. Check the Senator or Representative's web page to see if the scheduler's information is available. If so, call him/her directly and if not, call and ask for the scheduler. The "Scheduler" is the key point of contact when making Congressional appointments.

- Make appointments as far in advance as possible for May 18 or May 19. Be prepared to default to the timeline of each individual office if you hear otherwise.
- See the **Example call** posted on <http://materialadvantage.org/student-chapters/activities/congressional-visits-day>

If your members of Congress do not have a **phone number** listed on the Congressional Districts Map web page noted under the first point, you may find them below.

- Senator Office phone numbers:  
[https://www.senate.gov/general/resources/pdf/senators\\_phone\\_list.pdf](https://www.senate.gov/general/resources/pdf/senators_phone_list.pdf) (pdf), also published on the following web page: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>.
- Representative Office phone numbers: <https://www.house.gov/representatives>

2. NEXT STEP: Usually email and/or online request form. **Reminder – be persistent!**

- EMAIL: See the **Example email** posted on <http://materialadvantage.org/student-chapters/activities/congressional-visits-day>
- ONLINE FORM: Many offices have **online request forms** set up specifically for requesting appointments. Some tips for filling out online meeting request forms:
  - If the only options given for the location are “DC” or the location of their home state’s office, choose “DC” but be sure to note in comment box(es) that you are requesting a **virtual meeting**.
  - Make sure to indicate that you are available on either **May 18** or **May 19** in conjunction with the **2022 Material Advantage Congressional Visits Day** event.
  - If given the option, please note that you are willing to meet with staff if the Senator/Representative is unavailable.
  - Make sure to note the number of attendees planned for the meeting, but also do not plan for more than 5 CVD attendees per meeting – more may be overwhelming to the staffer/Representative/Senator.
  - Example ‘Reason for meeting’ or ‘Description of meeting’:  
*I am a student in materials science and engineering attending \_\_\_ University in your Congressional district (only include if correct). I would like to request a **virtual visit** in conjunction with the **2022 Material Advantage Congressional Visits Day** event to discuss the importance of your support for education and research in physical sciences and engineering to the long-term employment outlook of myself, our state, and our Nation. Through your votes on funding for NSF, DOE-Office of Science, and ARPA-e, NIST, and other critical programs you can continue the advancement of science and technology that depends on this funding, now more than ever.*

**Be persistent!** It may take several calls or emails. Always gently follow up.

#### 4. Set up a meeting

Some tips for when you’re ready to set up a virtual meeting:

- You will need to be flexible with appointment times on the date(s) that you are requesting.

- Plan for 15 minutes between meetings so that you can close out of one meeting and still be able to log-in at least 5 minutes early at the next meeting. Another option is to split up your team to be able to attend overlapping appointments.
- Ask for the office's preferred virtual meeting platform. If there is not a preferred platform, default to the virtual meeting platform that you are most comfortable with.
- Once the appointment is made create a calendar invite, including the link to your meeting as the "Location" and include the call-in details in the body of the invitation. Also include a link to the Material Advantage handout within your email: <http://materialadvantage.org/cvd>.
- Let them know who will be attending the meeting. If you will be by yourself or if you will be part of a group. *Reminder:* Plan for no more than 5 CVD attendees per meeting – more may be overwhelming to the staffer/Representative/Senator.

## 5. Mark down your appointment status

Make sure to note your progress and/or scheduled appointments on the **Meeting Scheduling and Inter-state Collaboration worksheet**. Communicate with your group members throughout the process. This is an important step, so that all group members are aware of the status of the appointment(s).

## 6. Research the members of Congress whose offices you will be meeting with

You might think about dividing up tasks (such as research) to certain group members to share with the group/designated speaker.

- Know their background – did they attend the same high school as a member of the group?
- Know their districts – what universities exist within their districts? Any other relevant organizations? National lab or other that would be good to know?
- Know their relevant caucuses and committee assignments.
- Know their stance on pertinent issues.