



Updated June 2, 2026

CRS Services to District and State Offices: Overview and Selected Resources

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) serves all congressional offices—those on Capitol Hill as well as those in a Member’s home district or state office. This CRS resource guide is designed around activities often undertaken by district and state offices.

CRS is Congress’s own nonpartisan think tank, reference library, and information resource hub housed within the Library of Congress. CRS can assist district and state offices with any number of work-related needs. For example, staff frequently have questions about demographic characteristics or other information about districts/states or municipalities and options for navigating constituent casework as well as assorted questions originating from local stakeholders. CRS works exclusively for Congress and does not directly interface with the public. CRS can assist with providing information to help offices respond to inquiries from constituents or other entities. Resources on [CRS.gov](https://www.crs.gov) are accessible only to Members and congressional staff. Publicly available copies of CRS reports can be accessed at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>.

For further discussion, see CRS In Focus IF10503, *Constituent Services: Overview and Resources*.

Customized CRS Assistance: How to Ask for Help

Offices may ask for assistance with identifying resources or data, guidance on various issues, general information, and briefings.

To reach CRS: (1) make direct contact with a CRS subject matter expert; (2) call the CRS main line (202-707-5700) during business hours (Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., some Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., when either chamber is in session); or (3) place requests via the CRS Place a Request portal, monitored Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (All hours listed are Eastern Time.)

CRS Events for District and State Staff

CRS periodically provides a *District/State Staff Institute*, a two-day seminar that offers discussions on a range of topics. Topics typically include an overview of CRS services, [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), grants services to constituents, staff safety, casework practices, and casework resources from several federal agencies (e.g., Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Department of State, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Veterans Affairs). The program is typically offered at least a few times a year, sometimes virtually and sometimes in-person in Washington, DC. See the *District State Staff*

Institute resource page for the PowerPoint presentations and other materials related to this training.

CRS holds many events for Members and congressional staff throughout the year, including seminars on appropriations and budget processes, federal legal research, the legislative process, and various policy and legal seminars. See “CRS Events” for a list of upcoming opportunities or contact CRS to request information on planned future dates. CRS seminars may be offered in-person in Washington, DC, or virtually. Congressional offices may also request custom virtual trainings and briefings.

Casework

Casework refers to the response or services that Members of Congress provide to constituents seeking assistance, often when they are dealing with federal agencies to resolve specific problems. Common requests include securing federal benefits, obtaining a missing record or payment from a federal agency, or assistance with immigration matters. Each Member office has considerable discretion in how it defines and approaches casework, subject to House or Senate rules, ethics guidelines, and statute. CRS products discussing casework include the following:

- CRS Report RL33209, *Casework in a Congressional Office*
- CRS resource website “Casework,” at <https://www.crs.gov/constituent/casework>
- CRS Report R44696, *Casework in Congressional Offices: Frequently Asked Questions*

Federal Agency Congressional Liaisons

One challenge for caseworkers can be determining whom to talk to at a particular federal agency. To help, CRS maintains a directory of about 200 congressional liaison offices at federal government agencies:

- CRS Report 98-446, *Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies*, and <https://www.crs.gov/constituent/congressional-liaison-offices>

Grants and Funding

Federal grants are intended to meet goals authorized by Congress and often target community needs. Most federal grant funds go to state and local governments, which, in turn, may award funds as subawards to local entities, such as nonprofit organizations. The following resources can help district and state staff provide assistance to constituent grantseekers.

Grants Resources for Congressional Staff

Members of Congress frequently receive requests from grantseekers needing funds for projects. Each office handles grants requests in its own way, depending upon the Member's legislative agenda and overall organization and workload of office staff. CRS resources for congressional staff working on grants include the following:

- CRS resource website “Grants and Federal Assistance,” at <https://www.crs.gov/constituent/grants-and-federal-assistance>
- CRS Report RL34035, *Grants Work in a Congressional Office*
- CRS In Focus IF12906, *Constituent Grants Services in a Congressional Member Office: A Brief Guide*
- CRS Report R42769, *Federal Grants-in-Aid Administration: A Primer*
- CRS Video WVB00860, *CRS Snapshot – Federal Grants*

CRS is available on request to discuss the grants portfolio of a district, state, or DC office and to review possible strategies for managing staff workload or developing strategies for constituent engagement related to grants.

Grants and Other Funding Resources for Constituents

CRS resources developed for constituent grantseekers and businesses include the following:

- CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*
- CRS In Focus IF12910, *Searching for Federal Grants: An Overview of Resources*
- CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*

Also see the collection of CRS reports related to specific federal grants and other assistance programs, by topic, at the CRS.gov “Grants and Federal Assistance” resource page. Publicly available copies of CRS reports can be accessed at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>.

Grants Content for Member Websites

CRS also produces standard grants content for official Member websites that is used by many offices. The content consists of grants resources developed to benefit constituent grantseekers. This CRS-written web resource can be embedded directly on Member sites. To request this content, offices can contact the House Web Services office (202-225-6002) or the Senate HelpDesk (202-228-HELP).

Other CRS Reports and Guides for District/State Offices

In addition to casework and grants assistance, district and state offices engage in various other constituent service activities, including U.S. service academy nominations and administrative and budget process activities. The resources

below provide additional information on other constituent service activities and resources.

Constituent Services Overview

- CRS Report R44726, *Constituent Services: Overview and Resources*

U.S. Service Academy Nominations

- CRS Report RL33213, *Congressional Nominations to U.S. Service Academies: Resources for Outreach and Management*
- CRS In Focus IF13220, *Congressional Nominations to U.S. Service Academies: Member Office Management Considerations*
- CRS Infographic IG10096, *U.S. Service Academy Nominations: Timelines*
- CRS In Focus IF13219, *Congressional Nominations to U.S. Service Academies: Candidate Qualifications and Noncongressional Nominating Authorities*
- CRS In Focus IF11788, *Defense Primer: Military Service Academies*

Information About U.S. House Districts

- CRS Insight IN12489, *Congressional District Geography Workbook (119th Congress): An Interactive Tool for Congressional Users*

Administrative and Budget Resources

- CRS issue area website “Congressional Administration & Elections,” at <https://www.crs.gov/iap/congressional-administration-and-elections>. This page contains resources on Member office operations, staffing, and funding; congressional ethics; commemorations; and constituent services, among other topics.
- CRS issue area website “Legislative & Budget Process,” at <https://www.crs.gov/iap/legislative-and-budget-process>. This page contains resources on the legislative process, including committee rules and floor procedure, as well as the federal budget and appropriations process, among other topics.
- CRS Report R40962, *Members’ Representational Allowance: History and Usage*. The MRA provides funding for House Members’ offices.
- CRS Report R44399, *Senators’ Official Personnel and Office Expense Account (SOPOEA): History and Usage*. The SOPOEA provides funding for Senators’ offices.

Sarah J. Eckman, Analyst in American National Government

Maria Kreiser, Senior Research Librarian

IF12696

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.