At the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, staff assistants and legislative correspondents were suddenly dealing with double the constituent correspondence while transitioning to working from home and often losing their interns. Below is a guide of suggestions compiled from offices on both sides of the aisle on how to be most effective within this new reality.

**MILESTONES**

- **MARCH 4, 2020:** CHA informs members that unspent 2019 funds may be used to support remote operations; establishes House Telework Readiness Center
- **MARCH 12, 2020:** Capitol Complex closed to visitors, remote operations encouraged
- **APRIL 6, 2020:** Speaker announces new system to accept digital submission of bills, cosponsorships and statements for the record
- **MAY 15, 2020:** House changed rules to allow for remote committee proceedings and proxy voting
- **JUNE 29, 2020:** Speaker extends “covered period” due to Coronavirus emergency to August 18, 2020
- **AUGUST 17, 2020:** Speaker extends “covered period” due to Coronavirus emergency to October 2, 2020

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Introduction

On August 3rd, the Modernization Staff Association and the Congressional Management Foundation closed a survey sent to junior Hill staffers on their experiences working from home. The survey was completed by the following groups:

- 125 Staff Assistants and Legislative Correspondents
- 102 House staffers and 23 Senate staffers
- 83 Democrats, 40 Republicans, and 2 Independents

The results from the survey are displayed throughout this guide through graphs of poll responses.

While many offices are still working from home for the foreseeable future, fewer junior staffers feel confident about their ability to work effectively. We hope the resources in this guide improve those levels of confidence.
When more constituents than ever were trying to reach their Representatives about the growing crises in their lives, many offices suddenly appeared not to be home. While WFH, a lot of offices are letting calls go to voicemail and backlogs are growing. However, there are options to answer calls live despite being out of the office.

We recommend picking an option that still allows a live person to answer the phone so that constituents feel heard. However, we do NOT recommend placing that entire burden on one person, such as a single intern or the Staff Assistant. We’ve heard from many overwhelmed SAs that this takes a toll on their mental health and essentially becomes their full-time job.

Options for managing phones remotely include:

**Option 1: Forwarding calls to all staffers using technology**

Offices that use PCs can download the One-X Communicator for free. This software takes a copy of your desk phone and puts it on your laptop. With this system, you don’t have to forward phone calls to cell phones, and multiple staff members or interns can be logged in at the same time. Just like in the office, an incoming call will go to everyone at once, so multiple people have the opportunity to answer, minimizing the burden on a single person and sending fewer calls to voicemail.

- Calls sent here will still go to the House voicemail if they are missed. Just like in person, you can also forward calls back to the House voicemail during all-staff meetings or at the end of each day and on the weekends.
- Works using your laptop’s microphone and speaker. You can also buy a USB headset.
- To download: go to HouseNet and fill out a My Service Request form under “virtual desktop” -> “template”. You can select individual staffers or the entire office.

**Option 2: Forwarding calls to interns or staffers in shifts**

Some offices have chosen to forward calls to a different staffer or intern’s cell phone each day. If many people participate, this usually isn’t as much of a burden since each individual only needs to be on the phone one day every couple of weeks. Some offices forward all of their DC calls to a DO line or vice versa and then forward those calls to a cell phone so that the staffer or intern gets both the DC and DO calls at once.

**Option 3: Phone tree**

- Some offices have opted to create a “phone tree” system similar to many businesses where constituents receive an automated message when they call in directing them to press “one” for a personal issue, “two” to leave a message on policy for the Congressperson, “three” for tour and flag requests, etc.
- Setting up this system depends on your phone system. Contact your provider to ask for options.

**Option 4: Have all calls go to voicemail and have interns regularly check them**

- Many offices are letting all calls go to voicemail and having their interns go through and check the inbox, delete the messages, and log the calls into their CRM.
- You can have all voicemails transcribed and emailed to you, as well as upgrade your voicemail inbox to unlimited, for $4 a month. More information [here](#).
Flag and Mail Procedures

Despite the shift to WFH, mail and flag deliveries continue to function in the Capitol complex, albeit differently. Daily mail/flag deliveries have been halted; however, almost 80% of offices are still processing flag requests. There are several ways to ensure flags and mail can be delivered and processed as needed. Below are the best ways to access both physical mail and ordered flags.

**Flags**

The flag office has shifted operations to Postal Operations. If you are expecting a flag order, you may physically pick up the flag, either flown or unflown, in B240 (next to the Dry Cleaners in the Longworth basement). Hours are M-F, 9:00 - 5:30. Alternatively, you may call Postal Operations at 63764 and schedule a delivery.

To mail completed flag orders, you have the option to schedule a pick-up by calling Postal Operations or hand deliver the shipment to them, in room B240.

**If your office still processes flag requests by mail or check:** You may drop off a flag form, with payment attached in the office supply store. Hours have changed due to COVID but should be open Tuesdays and Thursdays. The drop-off location is in the back of the office supply store, inside the back office door.

Note: The flag office continues to give all the flags to the mail facility to deliver, but there is about a two to three week delay in delivery due to back up of mail being held at the mail facility with offices closed. After a flag is flown it used to take about 7-10 days for delivery, but it’s now sometimes three to four weeks for it to arrive at the office.

**Mail**

Deliveries and pick-up may be requested easily by calling Postal Operations at 63764.

To ensure a smooth delivery, one person should plan to be in the office with the door unlocked. Mail personnel will be wearing gloves and masks when handling all mail.

**Batching, Electronic Mail and Physical Mail**

At the start of the pandemic, many offices suddenly began receiving double the amount of weekly constituent correspondence. Rather than policy opinions, the phone calls and mail that flooded in was overwhelmingly casework. Constituents were relying on the government more than ever, but at the same time, many offices were dealing with a plethora of problems of their own, and some are still trying to get through their backlog. Below are some small tips for easing the burden.
Faxing

Offices can send and receive “faxes” via email:

To send a fax via email:
1. Send the email to *faxnumber*@fax.house.gov. i.e. 000-000-0000@fax.house.gov
2. Attach the PDF to the email that you wish to fax
3. Make sure NOTHING is in the body of the email, including your email signature (delete it!)

To receive a fax via email:
Contact your office administrator or technology specialist. They should be routed to a separate inbox that you can add to your Outlook.

Scanning physical mail

Fill out the Digital Mail Authorization Form on Housenet in order to have all of your physical mail scanned and entered into Fireside or IQ for free. This works for both DC offices and district offices!

Sending and receiving physical mail

- Mail Services comes around to offices each day to knock on the door and see if you want your mail dropped off and picked up. If you aren’t there, they will hold your incoming letters in the mail room and will not pick up your outgoing mail.
- You can visit the mail room in B-240 Longworth to pick up or drop off mail every once in a while if your office isn’t working in person regularly. For faster service, call or email Jen Bell, Postal Operations Team Lead, ahead of time at contr.Jen.Bell@mail.house.gov or 202-226-3764.
- Many Staff Assistants and LCs are going into the office every one to four weeks in order to check and send mail and flags.
- Some LCs have at home printers (this can be purchased through your office). This allows the LC to fully work from home, print letters on letterhead and use the franked envelopes and send out from their own address. Note that if your office chooses to do this, you must fill out the District Mail Tally Form and mark how many letters you’ve sent out from a location other than the base office.
- The flag office is no longer delivering flags directly to your office. Instead, they are being held with the rest of your incoming mail.
- The new flag office hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

CAPITOL HILL
WORK FROM HOME GUIDE
MAIL TIPS

“There’s a point of diminishing returns: a window past which you are doing more harm than good by responding. Consider setting a 30-day threshold for mail.”

— Tim Hauser, Chief of Staff for Rep. Alan Lowenthal
Mail Advice

The Congressional Management Foundation maintains a long list of resources to help offices manage their mail program. Especially during remote work, these resources can be a lifeline for offices dealing with increased volume and mail backlogs.

**Writing Tips**

**Focus on connecting, not persuading.** Instead of giving lengthy policy explanations or legislative status updates, write shorter responses that focus on your Representative’s/Senator’s views and actions. Link to existing content such as YouTube videos of him or her speaking; weekly explanation of votes on major bills on the webpage; or issue statements on Facebook. This will add a more personal touch to your replies and help constituents understand why your boss is voting a certain way.

**Eliminate pro/con letters.** Many offices write two separate letters for each issue: one for those who oppose and one for those who support his/her view. Doing so creates additional work for staff and risks sending someone the wrong letter. If your boss has taken a position, simply state it and his/her reasoning in a matter-of-fact tone. No need to persuade or be defensive. If your boss has not taken a position, simply connect to the issue and constituents in a different way.

**Create higher value, but fewer, responses.** Instead of creating a separate message for each individual campaign, group them together by broad policy areas (ex: changes to the tax code, protecting natural resources, regulatory reform). Then craft a high quality response on that topic with lots of links describing the Representative’s/Senator’s position and action taken to support it.

**Involve the communications staff in constituent correspondence.** In most offices, legislative staff oversee constituent correspondence and communications staff handle outreach. However, by coordinating, the office can develop common messages and talking points that, once approved can be repurposed for a variety of uses: responses to constituents, phone campaigns, Facebook, the website, and so on. This ensures consistency and reduces drafting and approval time. It can also help ensure responses to constituents are high-value and not too detailed. A few offices have even changed their organizational chart to make the Communications Director—instead of the Legislative Director—oversee all aspects of constituent correspondence.

Check out these resources from CMF:

- **5 Core Elements of a Successful Mail Program**
  
  “CMF has identified five core elements that are necessary for a successful mail program...”

- **Dealing with Backlogged Mail**
  
  “It happens sometimes to every office -- a backlog of old mail that seems insurmountable. Here are some recommendations from the CMF mail specialists that might help you get your office back on track...”

- **Handling Mail Volume**
  
  “Technology and advocacy organizations have made it extremely easy for the public to communicate with their Representatives and Senators. The record-breaking rise of civic engagement has increased mail volume to unprecedented levels. In the first six months of 2017, offices saw their mail increase threefold or more over 2016 levels... which were already so high offices were struggling to manage it. This is not business-as-usual, and offices don’t have the luxury of continuing the same practices...”
Requests for White House commendations and greetings are submitted through the form at https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

When filling out the form, use the following structure:

- **Message Type:** Leave Blank
- **Prefix:** Choose between Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Dr.
- **First Name:** First name of person receiving the greeting
- **Middle Name:** Leave blank unless constituent requests for middle name to be included
- **Last Name:** Last name of person receiving the greeting
- **Suffix:** Leave blank unless constituent requests for suffix to be included
- **Email:** Leave email of person logging in the greeting
- **Phone:** Leave phone number of person logging in the greeting
- **Country:** Leave as United States
- **Street:** Street address of person receiving the greeting
- **City:** City in which the person receiving the greeting resides
- **State:** State in which the person receiving the greeting resides
- **Zip/Postal Code:** Zip Code in which the person receiving the greeting resides
- **What Would You Like to Say?:** Leave the request here (ex: Request for a 100th Birthday Card)

Other tips:
- Make sure the box that says, “Keep Me Posted With Regular Updates From the White House” is unchecked.
- If it is a greeting request for a Wedding Anniversary, Birth of Baby, Wedding, etc. that requires a Mr. and Mrs., mark “Mr.” in the “Prefix” section and then make a note of it in the “What would you like to say?” section.
- OLA cannot give offices official updates
- Once OLA logs in greetings, Presidential Correspondence takes over the process and our office does not get updates from Correspondence on greetings
- Presidential Correspondence will send out the greeting on the day of the event or a few days after
- In order for your greeting request to be sent out on time, greeting requests MUST be sent out six weeks before the date of the event
- OLA cannot expedite requests

### Information Required for different types of Greetings

#### Birth of Baby (to be addressed to the parents)
- Baby's date of birth
- First and Last Name of both parents needed
- Home Address

#### Welcome to the World (to be addressed to the baby)
- Baby's date of birth
- Name of the baby
- Home Address

#### Birthdays
- Age the person will be turning
- Prefix
- Date of birth of THIS year
- First and Last name
- Home address

#### Condolences
- Day the individual passed away
- Prefix of the person who is receiving the condolence, not the person who passed
- First and Last name of the person receiving the condolence
- First and Last name of the person who passed
- Specify the person receiving the greeting, we cannot address condolences to a family as a whole

#### Eagle Scout
- Date of the ceremony
- First and Last name of the recipient of the greeting
- Full address

#### Graduation
- Specify whether it is a High School or College Graduation (Medical, Graduate, Military, and Law School graduations are included)
- Date of the ceremony
- First and Last name
- Home address

#### Retirement
- Date of retirement
- Prefix
- First and Last name
- Home address

**Please Note:** the White House does not do military retirements, please contact the military congressional liaison office for these requests

#### Religious milestone
- Date of milestone
- Specify milestone: baptism, ordained minister, preached a certain number of years, etc.
- Prefix of recognized individual: Dr., Reverend, Pastor, Mr., Mrs., etc.
- First and Last name
- Address of recognized individual

#### Church Anniversary
- Date of anniversary
- Specify the numbered year of anniversary (ex: 100th anniversary of Arlington Church)
- Address of the Church

#### Wedding
- Date of wedding
- First and Last Name of both partners needed
- Home address

#### Wedding Anniversary
- Year of anniversary (ex: 50th Wedding Anniversary)
- Date of the anniversary of THIS year
- First and Last Name of Husband AND Wife is needed
- Home Address

**Please Note:** the White House only does wedding anniversaries based off numbers of five (ex: 25th Wedding Anniversary, 60th Wedding Anniversary, etc.)
Redesigning Internship Programs

When the pandemic hit, many offices had to abandon their internship programs because they didn’t know the rules governing remote work, struggled to secure compliant devices, and were not set up to engage with interns from home. But even now that staffers finally have internship guidance, many are still avoiding creating modified programs because they think they wouldn’t be as valuable to the interns or they simply don’t know where to start.

Without interns, all of that overwhelming and urgent constituent correspondence is landing exclusively on the plates of junior Hill staffers, roles with already overwhelming workloads. Instead, offices can think creatively about redesigning their internship programs in a way that is still beneficial for both the office and the interns.

“Instead of cancelling internship programs out of fear that working from home won’t be a meaningful experience, offices should think about what they can do to create substantive remote programs that will benefit both the interns and the office.”

— Modernization Staff Association Founder
Ananda Bhatia, Office of Rep. Seth Moulton

One significant complication unique to remote work is the limitation on technology access for unpaid interns in the House. Paid interns can be provided with official devices and remote access to the office network. Unpaid interns, on the other hand, are not allowed to access personal constituent information — like correspondence or casework — while they are working from home. Offices are getting inventive with intern assignments, however, including: compiling press clips, drafting responses to form letters (that are then sent through the office system by a staffer), drafting one minute speeches, suggesting social media posts, and taking meeting, hearing and briefing notes.

When in doubt, ask the experts! See the “Frequently Asked Questions” from the Congressional Research Service.

Internships in Congressional Offices:
Frequently Asked Questions
House Paid Internship Program Regulations and Intern Telework Policy

Dear Colleague:

The Committee on House Administration (Committee) has approved new regulations governing paid interns in the House. When the House Paid Internship Program (Program) was created in 2019, the Committee adopted interim regulations and said that it would review and assess the regulations after the Program’s first year. The House also recently approved new funds for the Program. In addition, the unique circumstances regarding the coronavirus pandemic have necessitated adoption of a maximum telework posture for most House offices.

In light of these considerations, the Committee adopted new regulations, effective immediately, that include the following changes:

- Each office has a Program allowance of $25,000 per calendar year.
- Program funds may be used to pay interns who work in district offices.
- Paid interns are eligible to telework in the event of a disaster, pandemic, or other emergency, as part of an office’s continuity of operations plan, provided the educational part of the internship is maintained, any work is incidental to said plan, and participation in the plan is certified by the office.
- House offices may issue paid interns House equipment (e.g. laptops, tablets, and mobile phones) which can be used to access the House network. This change is intended to permit paid interns to continue their internships even where their office may be using telework arrangements. This applies to all paid interns, whether they are paid from the Members’ Representational Allowance, Program funds, or committee funds.

In light of the unique and unusual circumstances presented by the coronavirus, as well as to promote House office emergency preparedness in general, the Committee previously determined and announced that it is appropriate to permit Member and Committee offices to be able to access any remaining unspent LY 2019 funds to purchase teleworking equipment and supplies (e.g. laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc.). Offices may continue to use LY 2020 funds for this purpose, too. Paid interns may use such equipment for telework. Equipment is available for purchase from the House Office Supply Store, which you can reach at (202) 225-3321.

The core guiding principle of House internships remains the educational benefits for the intern. All interns, paid or unpaid, must perform services on a temporary basis as part of an educational plan. In prior Congresses, examples of an educational plan have included participation in the annual Intern Lecture Series, attendance at committee hearings, attendance at Congressional Research Service intern training programs, and other similar educational opportunities. Such in-person opportunities are limited at the present time. However, the Committee is working closely with its institutional partners and agencies to develop diverse and robust online educational programming. More information about that programming will be forthcoming.

The new regulations can be found on the Committee’s website here. Unless specifically noted, all other applicable rules and standards of conduct remain unchanged. As noted in the Members’ Congressional Handbook, the use of unpaid interns is subject to regulations established by the Committee on Ethics (Ethics).

Please contact the Committee at (202) 225-2061 (Majority) or (202) 225-8281 (Minority) with any questions. For questions regarding unpaid interns, please contact Ethics at (202) 225-7103.
Options for paying interns:

- Distribute the money evenly across all interns, even if it amounts to below the minimum wage. While some offices are choosing to forego the House intern pool money altogether, students would much prefer something rather than nothing.
- Prioritize need- or merit-based paid internships but pay everyone something so that everyone still qualifies to use government devices from home.
- Have some unpaid internships and one or two paid fellowships. Case study from Rep. Moulton’s office: We created a foreign policy fellowship aimed at recruiting diverse candidates who would not otherwise be able to intern on the Hill. We determine financial need by requiring that they be Pell-grant eligible, which we determine by asking them for a FAFSA form.

Distribute the money evenly across all interns, even if it amounts to below the minimum wage. While some offices are choosing to forego the House intern pool money altogether, students would much prefer something rather than nothing.

Example interview questions specific to working from home conditions:
Suggestions from Ananda Bhatia, Office of Rep. Seth Moulton:

- How do you prefer to be managed?
- How would you describe your communication style?
- How often are you in contact with your peers and supervisors?
- What challenges and advantages do you foresee for working from home?
- How do you keep yourself engaged in your work and manage your mental health?
- Do you have any experience coding? (backgrounds in computer science and experience with coding or even spreadsheet/data management can be great for revamping outdated office systems)

NOTE:
Given restrictions on network access and use of official devices by unpaid interns, consider a stipend — even a small one of $100 per month — to help remote interns be more effective.

Intern Management Tips
by: Bradley Joseph Sinkaus

BEFORE INTERNSHIP

- Send your office’s handbook (or CMF’s) ahead of time for interns to review, as well as any office policies, confidentiality forms, and evaluation criteria. Go over this information with them their first day.
- Ensure interns have access to a reliable internet connection and necessary video conferencing software (Teams, Zoom, etc.) as well as the G-Suite (Google Docs, Sheets, Hangouts, etc.) and determine ahead of time which methods are preferable for assigning work and communicating regularly
- Add interns to your office’s Slack and Asana Teams (if used) and assign them an office email account with a login and password.
- Establish mutually agreed-upon intern working hours (considering challenges presented by multiple time zones) and inform all staff of interns’ working hours.
- Connect with interns a few weeks before their start date to discuss goals and expectations for their remote internship.
- Record short welcome/introductory videos by staff for your interns (either evergreen or personalized)
- Connect with staff to determine relevant projects/project contacts for interns (e.g., if an intern is doing morning clips, will they report to the press assistant, communications director, or direct supervisor?)

DURING INTERNSHIP

- Develop a mutually agreed upon work plan for their success (and go over via video conference during their first week).
- Include list of everyday mini assignments, potential bigger projects, as well as project contacts for each task so the intern knows who to direct questions to.
- Provide a list of staff contact information that includes their titles, duties, and any issue assignments. Include an organizational chart if you have it.
- Set up 15-minute introductory “meets” between interns and, depending on the size of the office, each staff member, each “department” (comms, leg/policy, casework, etc.), or each “department head.”
- Establish a designated staff member with whom the intern will have weekly check-ins (consistency is essential).
- Include the intern wherever possible: ensure intern receives invitation to all-staff meetings and devote part of the weekly staff meeting to briefly discussing the intern’s projects as a team.
- When delegating tasks and assignments to the intern, provide examples or templates of relevant work products so they are aware of the end result wanted (such as memos, briefing materials, constituent letters, etc.).
- Conduct a mid-term evaluation of the intern’s performance and schedule 1-hour video call to go over evaluation, and listen to any concerns the intern has or problems they have been experiencing.
- Recommend that interns keep running list of completed projects so they have a portfolio of accomplishments when they leave.
- Incorporate interns into office culture. While this can be challenging to accomplish virtually, encourage staff to invite interns to “get-to-know-you” coffees, brown bag lunches, and staff virtual happy hours.
- Encourage interns to connect with each other virtually to promote a friendly and collaborative work environment.
Thank you for your interest in our internship program.

Throughout the public health crisis, the congressman’s office has based its policies on ensuring the health and safety of both our staff and the Capitol staff, while continuing to serve constituents of X district and provide educational experiences.

*Internship duties in our office are part of the necessary work of the office, so we will certainly take on fall interns. Whether these will be in-person, remote, or some combination thereof depends upon the national and local health situation, which is continually developing. At the moment, our summer interns are working remotely.*

Applications for fall internships are due July 31st. While we anticipate having a clearer picture of our fall program to convey during the interview process, we understand that the logistics of travel and lodging are more difficult during this time. As such, we anticipate varied internship plans according to students’ circumstances.

Note: It’s great to include as much information as possible even if you don’t have exact answers. This is a stressful time for everyone, including students with very limited information about their fall situations, so the more clarity they can get, the better. It is also important to post whether internships are unpaid, or exactly how much they are paid, online before students apply! This type of transparency is better for diversity recruiting.

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**Hiring Interns During Remote Work**

Sample language for your website:

Thank you for your interest in our internship program.

Throughout the public health crisis, the congressman’s office has based its policies on ensuring the health and safety of both our staff and the Capitol staff, while continuing to serve constituents of X district and provide educational experiences.

*Internship duties in our office are part of the necessary work of the office, so we will certainly take on fall interns. Whether these will be in-person, remote, or some combination thereof depends upon the national and local health situation, which is continually developing. At the moment, our summer interns are working remotely.*

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**General Interview Questions**

Suggestions from Andrea Calderón, Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester

- Tell me about yourself.
- How would you describe your communication style? How often are you in contact with your peers and supervisors?
- What challenges and advantages do you foresee for working from home?
- How do you keep yourself engaged in your work and manage your mental health?
- How do you prefer to be managed?
- Why do you want to intern on the hill/for Congresswoman Blunt Rochester?
- What are some issue areas you care about?
- How is your coursework relevant to this internship?
- What kind of work environment do you thrive in?
- What are your long-term career goals?
- Give me an example of how you’ve dealt with a conflict with another person.
- What would you do if a constituent called and was upset?
- What is one word you would use to describe yourself and why?
- How would you handle a situation where you are balancing multiple responsibilities?
- Where do you see yourself in five years, and how do you hope this job will prepare you?
- What are the top three qualities you possess that will help you serve as a Congressional intern?
- You get a call where the constituent is very angry about Rep. Blunt Rochester’s stance on immigration, saying that he is upset that Rep. Blunt Rochester promotes open borders. He starts yelling at you. How do you respond?
- What do you like to do for fun?

“*I typically choose 5 from this list. However, I provide the candidates with the full set of questions prior to their interview. I find this to be a good method because it gives the candidates an opportunity to prepare. I can see how this can have a downside, but I’ve been in several interviews where I look back and think “I have experience a. b., and c. that I could have mentioned, darn it!”*. Also, sometimes the candidates aren’t prepared for the questions, and there’s no excuse for that seeing as they have access to the questions beforehand so it helps me narrow down the search.”

- Andrea Calderón
- Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester
**Weekly Legislation Project**

Suggestions from Andrea Calderón, Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester

1. If it is a session week then pick a bill that will be discussed in the upcoming week. This information can be found on the House Majority Leader’s Weekly Schedule.

   If it is a non-session week then pick a bill that was voted on during the 116th Congress that interests you and rather than looking forward to the unfolding of the vote then you can research what happened and watch the old debates online.

2. Before they have debate on the bill of your choosing, write up a summary of the bill including:
   a. The sponsoring Member
   b. Members who have cosponsored the bill
   c. How you think the constituents of DE lean on the bill
   d. How you believe the Congresswoman will vote on this legislation and why
   e. How you would vote on the bill

3. During the week, watch the debate on the CSPAN website. If you cannot watch the debate live, read and review the transcript.

4. Take note of which Members get up to speak on the bill from both parties and a key argument for 3 Members.

5. Take note, how many amendments are introduced on each bill. Pick up to 5 amendments (if applicable) that you find most interesting or important to the legislation, note the Member who introduced that amendment, and provide a summary of the key points/impact to the overall legislation.

6. Mention the rule structure the vote is under. Different bills have different rules and procedures. You can find this information on the Rules Committee: rules.house.gov/.

7. After votes, note how Congresswoman Blunt Rochester voted. You can find this information at the clerk.house.gov/ or on congress.gov.

8. At the end of the week, summarize what you learned about this bill.
   a. Mention anything noteworthy that may have happened during the debate or vote.
   b. Talk about your views on the bill. Did your views change during the week as you studied it further?

*Please keep the weekly reports to two pages maximum. We are working towards a clear and concise grasp of these important pieces of legislation. Deadline: Reports are due to Staff Assistant via email every week on Friday by COB.*

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**CAPITOL HILL WORK FROM HOME GUIDE**

**INTERN MANAGEMENT**

“**One thing that I’ve done with interns is professional development days. I review their resume and encourage them to network with people from webinars or elsewhere.**

— Margah Thompson, Rep. Gwen Moore

**“Our office does an Intern Legislative Project. Basically, the interns are tasked with coming up with a new idea for the Congressman to support, be it a bill idea, approps or other amendment, or letter/committee idea. They work with members of the Legislative staff to refine their ideas and it culminates in a presentation to the Congressman at the end of the interns' semester. The staff also gain their own assigned intern to help with research and administrative tasks. So it's a win-win.” Other offices also have their interns present a bill that they’d like your Rep. to cosponsor and see if he or she will sign on!”**

— Andrea Valdes Valderrama

Rep. Darren Soto
College to Congress is a nonprofit aimed at supporting congressional interns. College to Congress recently launched C2C-U, a self-paced, online curriculum, mentorship program, and intern resource hub designed to help college students and recent graduates secure and succeed in internships on Capitol Hill. Lessons include Hill Etiquette, Roles & Responsibilities of a Hill Intern, Dressing for the Hill, and more. The course is free to all students and interns here.

Remote interns miss networking!

Readers of the new weekly Capitol Hill Intern Update (over half of whom are remote) were asked: “what could offices provide to improve your internship experience?” Responses included:
- “An in-person experience so that I could hustle for more coffee dates, virtual has been hard and lacking to get staffers not in our office to reply!”
- “Being able to build in person connections and having more opportunities to network.”
- “I wish there was more opportunities to meet with other interns on the hill. I feel like I would have more interactions between the offices in I had been in-person and that would have been a great way to build networks.”

Make Internships Engaging

- Host regular intern meetings/check-ins
- Have interns present weekly fun powerpoints on topics of their choice, such as favorite movies
- Set up virtual team trivia or game nights between staff and interns
- Create an “intern and staff Facebook” document with pictures, backgrounds, and fun facts of team members to get to know one another
- Set up virtual coffees with other staffs or have remote meetings with other interns in your state
- Have both DC and DO staffers do “lunches” with interns and explain their roles
- Create more overlap between DC and DO responsibilities! This is a great opportunity to take advantage of the changing roles and greater collaboration between offices
- Allow interns to sit in on constituent meetings
- Encourage interns to visit Hill Happenings and attend briefings or hearings that interest them

Help interns stay connected!

Encourage them to sign up for the weekly Capitol Hill Intern Update
Subscription link: http://eepurl.com/g35FT5
All trainings are still required for staff members while working from home. Below is a list of where to find the trainings and whether they are also required by interns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Required for</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020 Escape Hood Training (In Person, only required once per Congress)</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>202-225-9500</td>
<td><a href="https://house.csod.com/samldefault.aspx?returnUrl=%252fDeepLink%252fProcessRedirect.aspx%253fmodule%253dlo%2526lo%253d5895419f-2fe8-448d-8026%2526locale%253d1">https://house.csod.com/samldefault.aspx?returnUrl=%252fDeepLink%252fProcessRedirect.aspx%253fmodule%253dlo%2526lo%253d5895419f-2fe8-448d-8026%2526locale%253d1</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Information Security Training</td>
<td>All staff and interns that have government devices</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cybertraining@mail.house.gov">cybertraining@mail.house.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="https://housenet.house.gov/for-staff/responsibilities/information-security-awareness-training">https://housenet.house.gov/for-staff/responsibilities/information-security-awareness-training</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If fellows or interns do not have House devices, they can still take the required trainings above as long as they have an account with the Staff Academy. First, create House email address/AD credentials for them (which they can have even if they never actually use the email account). Then, create an account on her behalf as follows:

Select the appropriate link

- If you are a contractor, unpaid intern, or detialee, please [create an account](#) before accessing the Staff Academy website. (Accounts can only be created with a “@mail.house.gov” email address.)

- If you are a full-time employee of the House, but were hired less than a month ago, please [create an account](#) before accessing the Staff Academy website.

- If you are a full- or part-time employee of the House hired more than two weeks ago and you are not able to access your Congressional Staff Academy account, please [confirm your account](#).

If the links above don’t work, you can find them on the [Staff Academy page on HouseNet](https://www.house.gov/). It can take up to three days for your account to be approved.

### Congressional IDs

- Scan your form
- Have a staffer escort the person to the ID office so they can still enter the House building
- New ID office hours: Thursdays 9 AM - 1 PM, Cannon 122
- Contact information: idservices.inboundfax@mail.house.gov or 202-225-0239

### Equipment Loan Contract example (not legally enforceable)

This contract is in reference to the loan of ___a desktop computer___. The rental period for my Equipment is from ___April 15, 2020___ to _____. I understand that it is my responsibility to pick up or receive the Equipment, and to return it to the same location at the end of my rental period unless otherwise agreed by both parties. I agree to return the Equipment in the same condition that it was in on the day I rented it, normal wear and tear excepted.

I understand that there is no charge for the rental of the Equipment. However, in the event that the Equipment is lost or destroyed during my rental period, I agree to replace the Equipment at my own expense. Also, if the Equipment is damaged during my rental period, I agree to have the Equipment fixed or replaced.
Advice on VPNs and physical equipment

“You can request a hard token on Housenet to avoid issuing phones. Hard tokens are free from OIT. Hard tokens are the analog version of the code generator app we use to access the House servers. It’s a physical keychain that has a screen on it that displays numbers that switch. All 5 of my remote interns use them. You can request them for your interns on Housenet, they are free for offices use.”

— Max Coker, Rep. Joe Neguse

“We have a hard token for both my intern and my boss, and they work great, plus once they are done with their internship you can get them back (so much better than having phones flying around everywhere). It basically looks like a flash drive and works as a VPN. Once they get it, just call tech services and they can help set it up.

I also send the interns the shipping labels – though I’ve only had laptops sent within DC – to avoid the interns fronting the cost. We have an account with UPS so it makes things a lot easier.”

— Tammy Zapata, Rep. Cheri Bustos

“The onboarding packets that staff/interns sign includes a tech form about taking care of the server/equipment, but if you want to be extra sure have them sign an office specific form about their responsibility to care for the equipment. The intern that just sent their tech back sent it to our tech administrator’s home address to avoid it having to go through the house mail processing facility, which I would recommend especially if you’re trying to turn computers around quickly for the next intern class. We then reimbursed them for the shipping costs. We sent them a computer, headsets for calls, and phones for an RSA token.”


How do you communicate with your coworkers?
(check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videoconference</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modernization Staff Association Survey of Congressional Staffers August 2020
Tours

While the majority of offices are not booking tours during the pandemic, offices are still receiving tour requests from constituents. Since tour sites will likely remain closed for at least several more months, it is worth considering developing a new policy for how to manage incoming requests.

Some examples of messages letting constituents know that tours are not currently available:

**Requesting a new tour:**

Unfortunately, at this time, we are unable to offer tours, as the Capitol, White House, FBI, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and US Treasury are all closed for tours. If you have any questions regarding your itinerary, please contact our office at __________. We encourage you to schedule a tour next time you visit Washington. If the tour sites are open at that time, we would be more than happy to schedule those for you.

**Update on previously booked tour:**

We know that you had tours that were originally scheduled for the next few days but, unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all tours have been cancelled. Hopefully, once we are able to provide tours again, we can reschedule for a time that works for you. If you have any questions regarding your itinerary, please contact our office at __________.

**Scheduling resource:**

TourTrackr is a digital tool that makes the tour management process easy. You can easily track each request and send automated itineraries. No more Excel or manual copy/paste itineraries emails!

A great system compatible with IQ and Fireside21 for booking and tracking tours and conducting all related correspondence.

**Current status of when sites are reopening:**

- Closed - US Capitol
- Closed - White House
- Closed - Treasury
- Closed - FBI
- Closed - BEP
- Closed - Supreme Court
- Closed - Washington Monument
## Tour Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White House</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 202-456-2322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:VisitorsOffice@who.eop.gov">VisitorsOffice@who.eop.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US Capitol (USC)/ Dome tours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(202) 593-1762 (Capitol Tour Questions and Reservations)</td>
<td>Accessibility Services: 202-224-4048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Liaisons:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Ward – <a href="mailto:bward@aoc.gov">bward@aoc.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202-593-1782</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Ann Brackett (training) — <a href="mailto:lbracket@aoc.gov">lbracket@aoc.gov</a></td>
<td>202-593-0048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FBI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202-323-0367</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:FBIOUTS@FBI.gov">FBIOUTS@FBI.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEP - Bureau of Engraving and Printing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Office Phone: 202-874-2330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll free: 1-866-874-2330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:TourScheduler@bep.gov">TourScheduler@bep.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US Treasury</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202-622-0146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique Nelson <a href="mailto:Monique.Nelson@treasury.gov">Monique.Nelson@treasury.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library of Congress</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202-707-4683 (Constituent tours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cong <a href="mailto:tours@loc.gov">tours@loc.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Liaison:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Ott – <a href="mailto:kott@loc.gov">kott@loc.gov</a> 202-707-6577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supreme Court</strong></td>
<td>(202) 479-3499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Department</strong></td>
<td>(202)-647-3241 [Voice Mail]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Pentagon</strong></td>
<td>(703) 697-1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kennedy Center</strong></td>
<td>202-416-8341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Cathedral</strong></td>
<td>(202) 537-5700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:tours@cathedral.org">tours@cathedral.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smithsonians</strong></td>
<td>202-633-5125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Tours: 202-226-2055</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Archives</strong></td>
<td>Chrissa Rich (202)-357-6816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)</strong></td>
<td>Kathleen Mead, <a href="mailto:meadk@si.edu">meadk@si.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washington Monument</strong></td>
<td>(202) 426-6841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour Contacts</strong>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing and Being Managed

One recurring theme in the survey released with Version 1 of this guide was the need for managers to better communicate better and implement processes to help these staffers succeed professionally and personally while working remotely. Here are some management ideas from staffers for staffers:

Lisa Sherman, Chief of Staff for Rep. Susan Davis:

- The key is to think beyond yourself: What does it look like from your boss’s side of the table? (How many staff is he/she supervising and what are their abilities and needs? What does the long-term big picture for the office look like and how do you fit in? How tight is the office budget? What jobs might come open?) Too many junior staff don’t realize that personnel decisions are about a lot more than themselves. Once there is more work to be done, supervisors will be looking for people to do it. Promotions don’t come out of thin air.
- Then look in the mirror: How is my performance? What does my boss care about and am I doing that well? How is my communication with my supervisor? Where else can I help? What should I ask for that makes sense given what I’ve done so far and what the office needs?
- Think about supervisor/your office: How and when have other people gotten more responsibility? How does my supervisor like to communicate with?
- It’s often the last thing people think of but the best idea to just ask your supervisor directly and early how people move up. Too many people ask everyone (friends, people in other offices, their parents) rather than just asking the person making the decision.
- Show your skills and motivation but don’t be annoyingly pushy and never act like you don’t like your current job.

Most supervisors will want to reward good work and teamwork—be sure you’re doing well at these every day. If you are not working well with others it will be hard to move up even if your individual work is good.

Ask for feedback regularly.

Ask in the context of wanting to do more to help the office—never, never, never say you need more money/title for your lifestyle—always make it about the team and doing more and better work.

Be patient. People move up on different timelines depending on what’s happening around them and their own performance. Offices have different turnover rates and you can’t really compare them and people shouldn’t be comparing how long it’s taking them to move up vs. their counterparts or friends. Good workers always move up though sooner or later because bosses need good people to get the job done.

If your office has regular performance reviews that can be good time to check in and get a sense of whether you’re in line for the next bump.

You never know when the people ahead of you are going to leave. Life happens. Don’t game it out. Just work hard and you will move up quite possibly when you don’t expect it.

Christy Wagner, Legislative Director for Rep. Seth Moulton:

- Ask your leadership for weekly or regular opportunities to sync. Our LA’s recommendation to start biweekly virtual leg team office hours has been a great way for me to have one-on-one syncs in a more informal setting, and to discuss issues as they come up. I can also get caught up on other work if no one ends up joining office hours. Our daily 15-minute virtual leg team syncs haven’t replaced our office discussions, but that dedicated time is useful to share updates we would have normally talked about in the office, and to have a regular feedback process for decisions we need to tee up through the week.
- Ask for feedback often, and frame the feedback you give to others. Expecting to give and receive feedback is a productive habit that Seth models for the rest of us, which makes giving and receiving constructive feedback feels like an expectation rather than a criticism. The best tool that our COS flagged for us is framing feedback to others with a simple phrase: “Are you open to some feedback?” Use this phrase with your leadership to initiate uncomfortable or tougher conversations.
- Be kind, and remind. It’s hard for everyone to remember what happened yesterday when every day feels the same. If a process isn’t working, or your leadership isn’t being responsive about a decision, keep in mind that everyone on your team is dealing with their own challenges working from home. You may need to remind your leadership or peers about something in order to shake a decision loose, don’t assume it’s not a priority for them. To enforce decisions about process, identify early on what may not be working and be proactive to take responsibility for offering solutions. Everyone needs help.
Tim Hysom, Chief of Staff for Rep. Alan Lowenthal:

• “The days where LCs can do it all themselves are gone. It takes issue area experts to write or review drafts. If you don’t have a culture where the LD cares, it is an uphill battle. I wouldn’t suggest undermining them to go to the member. I would say come armed with data, examples and information that make the case for you, because people respond to data. Come with a mail report that shows the average turnaround time, how many messages are over a certain late threshold, how many letters you’re writing on average per week as the LC, and how much staff time it takes. Ask to virtually sit down with the LD or chief and remind them that we’re in an election year and this is really important—we need to be as responsive as possible, especially if constituents are saying they are unhappy. Propose mild changes at first, and always put it in terms of the boss’ responsiveness to constituents, not in terms of your work as an LC.”

• “Propose ideas that other offices are doing and that are working for them, like weekly meetings. Some sort of group interaction, no matter what form it takes, is helpful since we aren’t constantly talking around the office anymore. Don’t just say there are problems; come armed with potential solutions.”

• “Always show that you learn from edits and mistakes. If you correct something once, make sure you fix it moving forward.”

Staying Healthy

Mental Health Resources

Office of Employee Assistance: Free, confidential counseling is available for both House staff and interns through the Office of Employee Assistance, which is offering appointments over the phone during the pandemic. Schedule appointments by calling 202-225-2400 or by emailing employee_assistance@mail.house.gov.

Other Resources

- Mental Health Screening Tool
- LifeCare
- Self-Care Tips During Times of Heightened Uncertainty
- Healthy Teleworking as an Employee
- TIPS FOR TELEWORKING while Caring for Kids
- Reaction to Action: Resilience through COVID-19
- Compounded Stress Infographic

Tips on Work-Life Balance

- 6 Tips For Better Work-Life Balance - Forbes
- Work-life balance: Tips to reclaim control - Mayo Clinic
- Work Life Balance I Mental Health America
- The Best Way to Achieve Work-Life Balance - The Atlantic

The House Wellness Center is available online at wellnesscenter.house.gov. Under “Services” you can access the following sections:

- LifeCare
- Financial Wellness
- General Health
- Healthy Nutrition
- Quiet Rooms
- Physical Fitness
- Support for Stress
- District Support
- Nutrition Solutions
- StressStop

Nutrition Solutions has access to Diet ID and Zipongo, “digital nutrition solutions for House staff to help address one of the most difficult aspects of well-being: healthy eating.” Zipongo offers access and discounts to Sun Basket, Plantable, Instacart, Amazon Fresh, and Grubhub!
Submit Feedback

If you would like to submit feedback on information listed in this guide, share resources or ideas that you would like included in future updates, or if you have problems or questions you would love addressed in future guides, please submit it here.

The Modernization Staff Association (MSA) is a bipartisan group that focuses on internal reform issues that primarily affect junior Hill staffers. Our mission is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Congressional staff by modernizing systems that affect their day-to-day operations. For more information or to join, please contact Ananda Bhatia at ananda.bhatia@mail.house.gov or 703-728-4293.

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Vice President, Jared Wood
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Outreach Director, Diala Qasem
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