

CONSTITUENT SERVICES GUIDE

Constituent services refers to the work that an elected official performs in support of the people or organizations they represent. Constituent service (often called “casework”) is often done on behalf of citizens seeking help with a federal agency. The employees working in this capacity are based in congressional field offices; they’re part of your community and a powerful ally for those working to navigate the new federal funding environment.

Getting Started

1. Gather your documentation:

- grant application
- grant agreement, if applicable
- grant information: federal agency, grant program name, grant ID number
- important upcoming dates: bills or payments due, enrollment deadlines, deposit payments for facilities, etc.
- if you are receiving a subgrant, you need the subgrantor’s information, too

2. Contact constituent services

Visit your congressperson’s website, and look for something like “Services,” “Casework,” or “Help With a Federal Agency.” In many cases, you can submit a request for help electronically via their websites or by fax.

Due to variations in state laws, you may be asked to print, sign, and mail a release form. If you’re asked to mail anything, send it to your nearest field office, NOT the DC office. Mail sent to DC congressional offices is subject to additional screening and delays.

Make your request as specific as possible. An example: “My organization received a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant from HUD, and I need help getting a status update on grant award payments for this program.”

Email and/or fax any requested documents, and keep copies of everything.

Ask for a case number and the name, phone number, and email of a constituent services staffer for follow ups.

Staying Engaged: What To Do Next

Be persistent. Call your constituent services contact frequently and regularly. Set a reminder for yourself to get in touch every week until your case is resolved.

Don’t go it alone. Find other organizations in your community whose funding has been impacted, and go together to meet with constituent services staff. The other organizations don’t need to be impacted by the same grant or agency—you just need to underscore the impact of halted federal funds on your state or district. Expansive coalitions of organizations that are not necessarily directly linked are compelling.

Be patient. Constituent services staff are members of your community, too.

Be gracious. If you have good news to share, let your contact know! Many of the constituent services staff and interns are doing this work to make a difference. Not only does your update allow them to close your case, it gives them encouragement to keep at it and continue serving your colleagues in the same situation.

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