



Quick Start Guide to Educating Policy Makers

A guide for members of the AUCD network and our allies providing suggestions for improving the effectiveness of their interactions with policymakers.

*October 2017
For the 115th Congress*

Contributing Staff

Kim Musheno, Director of Public Policy

Christine Grosso, Policy Analyst

Liz Weintraub; Advocacy Specialist

Publication

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000

Silver Spring, MD 20910

www.aucd.org aucdinfo@aucd.org



Table of Contents

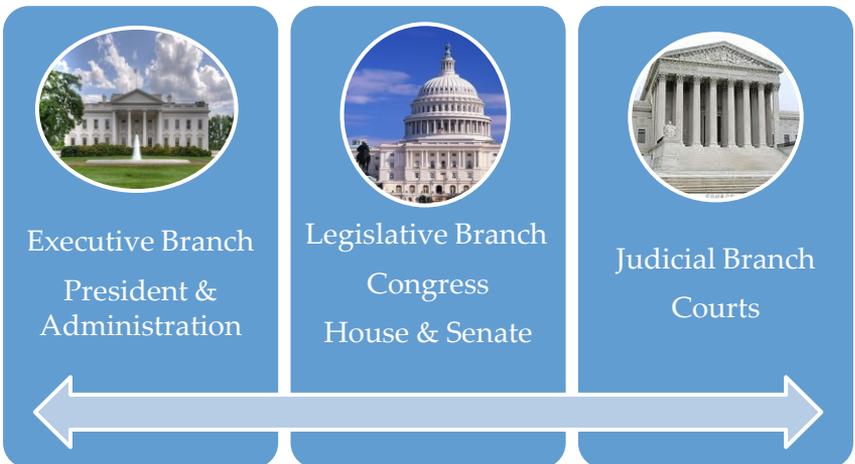
Purpose of this Guide	1
What is Federal Advocacy?	1
Lobbying vs. Educating	2
Legislative Branch: Congress	3
Budget and Appropriations Process	5
Administrative Branch	7
Additional Resources	13

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide AUCD members and its allies suggestions for improving the effectiveness of their interactions with policymakers.

What is Federal Advocacy?

Simply put, federal advocacy is influencing any federal public policy. This includes legislation being developed, amending current laws, the law's corresponding regulations, federal guidance or policy positions, and the federal funding (appropriations) for the programs within the laws. Policies also include judicial oversight through the Supreme Court. This guide will focus on the U.S. Congress and the Administration.



In order to be good at advocating, it is helpful to understand the legislative and regulatory processes, who the key policymakers are, the political climate, and the key policy issues for the current Congress and Administration.

Lobbying vs. Educating

Members of the AUCD Network have a Congressional mandate to educate policy makers. Some AUCD network members worry that efforts to educate will be in violation of laws regarding federal lobbying, however there are important differences between *lobbying* and *educating*.

Lobbying is an attempt to influence any legislation or public policy by communicating with a policymaker or administration official and encouraging others to take action. Lobbying does not include non-partisan analysis, study, or research, or the communication of research findings to the general public, officials, or governmental bodies.

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) mandates UCEDDs to educate policymakers. Specifically, it says “University Centers must strengthen and increase the capacity of states and communities to achieve the purposes of the Act, including the analysis of public policy in areas that affect or could affect, either positively or negatively, individuals with developmental disabilities and their

families (Purpose, Section 101(b)).” The DD Act further requires UCEDD staff to:

- **Advise** federal, state, and community policymakers
- Provide **training and technical assistance** for policymakers
- Conduct **research**, including the **analysis of public policy**
- **Disseminate information** and serve as a national and international **resource** that include specific substantive areas of expertise
- Serve as a **research-based resource** for federal and state policymakers

Legislative Branch: Congress

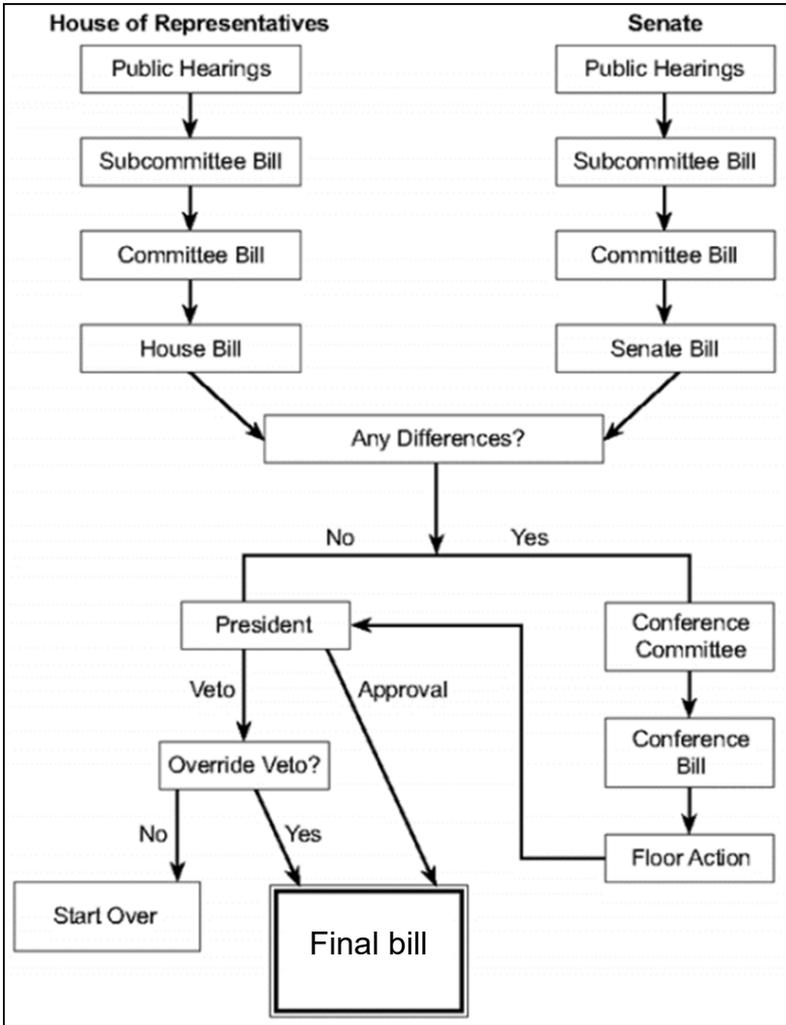
How a Bill Becomes a Law

The following steps the usual steps for a bill to become a Law:

- Introduced by Member of Congress
- Sent to Committee/Subcommittee
- Hearings and markups held
- House or Senate debates
- Conference Committee meets
- House and Senate approve compromise
- President signs into Law



Here's the process in a diagram:



However, we all know that the steps are a little more complicated than that. There are many steps in between and every step is complicated by the political context, timing, cost, individual relationships, and outside influences, to name a few. This is why you have AUCD

policy staff! AUCD staff monitor the federal policy issues with and for you and will inform the network when the timing is right to influence individual policies.

It's important to remember that you are the expert when it comes to many important issues that impact individuals with disabilities, families, and communities; policymakers want the research results and evidence-based information you have to offer. AUCD may request your help when expert witnesses are needed for hearings or when we get requests for specific data or research findings. If you have completed a research project that you think might inform policymakers, please share it with AUCD staff as well as your congressional delegation.

Budget and Appropriations Process

The budget and appropriations process is a separate process and works a little differently than the way an authorizing bill becomes a law.

Once a bill becomes a law, the Appropriations Committee is responsible for deciding how much money will be provided for the programs or activities authorized by the law. The Budget Committee writes an overall budget blueprint that decides how the federal government will spend the revenues it brings in through taxes. Here are the steps and a general timeline that the Budget Act provides to guide Congress through this process:

- President submits budget request to Congress – 1st Monday in February
- House and Senate create separate budgets or budget resolutions – March-April
- Concurrent Budget Resolution is due by April 15
- Budget Committees provide allocations (called 302(b)) to 13 appropriations subcommittees
- House and Senate complete action on 13 appropriations bills in September and the President signs them into law
- A new fiscal year begins – October 1

Mandatory spending refers to spending enacted by law, but not dependent on an annual or periodic appropriation bill. Most mandatory spending consists of transfer payments and welfare benefits such as [Social Security](#) benefits, [Medicare](#), and [Medicaid](#).

Unfortunately, this process and these timelines are rarely met, and in the past several years, none of the 12 annual appropriations bills were signed into law. In the case of any bill not passing by

October 1, a “continuing resolution” must be agreed to in order to keep the program going until a bill is finally passed. Sometimes, several or all of the bills are put together and passed in an “omnibus” bill.

Sometimes, the Budget Committees will provide [reconciliation](#) instructions to the various authorizing committees; that is, they will ask committees to make changes to mandatory programs that will result in

enough savings to meet the overall budget resolution number.

Administrative Branch

AUCD doesn't just work with Congress. Staff also work with the Administration: The President and the Cabinet leaders. The Administration is responsible for implementing laws and providing oversight. The President also has the power to veto laws and to influence the public through the "bully pulpit" through his/her access to the media and other news outlets.

Most importantly, the Administration writes the regulations that implement the laws. After a law is passed or renewed, the administering agency will develop rules that provide more details about how the law will work in the real world. AUCD often provides input into the regulations as they being developed. Again, Administration officials appreciate the help of experts "in the field" who understand how the laws can and should work at the state and local levels. The process for developing rules is generally as follows:

- Advocates and experts meet with federal officials
- Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) → the agency accepts public comments and holds meetings
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) → more comments/meetings

- Final review at Office of Management and Budget (OMB) → there may be more comments/meetings at this stage, but not always
- Final Rule is published

The Cabinet agencies AUCD works most closely with are the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Justice (DOJ), Education (ED), Labor (DOL), Transportation (DOT), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The DD Act programs, including UCEDDs, are administered through the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) within the Administration on Community Living (ACL) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The LENDs are administered through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) within the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) within HHS.

The IDDRCs are administered through the National Institutes for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) within HHS.

So, be aware that AUCD may be asking network members for specific expertise and guidance as these Rules are being written.

Congressional Committees

It is important to get to know who the members are on congressional committees that have jurisdiction over important disability issues and programs. Following are a list of key committees and their current leadership.

Key Senate Committees

- [Appropriations](#)
 - Thad Cochran, MS
 - Patrick Leahy, VT
- [Labor-Health-Education Subcommittee](#)
 - Roy Blunt, MO
 - Patty Murray, WA
- [Budget](#)
 - Michael Enzi, WY
 - Bernie Sanders, VT
- [Finance](#)
 - Orrin Hatch, UT
 - Ron Wyden, OR
- [Health, Education, Labor & Pension](#)
 - Lamar Alexander, TN
 - Patty Murray, WA

Key House Committees

- Appropriations
 - Rodney Frelinghuysen, NJ
 - Nita Lowey, NY
- Labor-Health-Education Subcommittee
 - Tom Cole, OK
 - Rosa DeLauro, NY
- Budget
 - Diane Black, TN
 - John Yarmuth, KY
- Education & Workforce
 - Virginia Foxx, NC
 - Bobby Scott, VA
- Energy and Commerce
 - Greg Walden, OR
 - Frank Pallone, NJ
- Ways and Means
 - Kevin Brady, TX
 - Richard Neal, MA

Appropriations Committees

The Appropriations Subcommittees for Labor, HHS, ED and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) make funding decisions for AUCD network programs:

House L-HHS-ED Subcommittee

Majority

Tom Cole, OK Mike Simpson, ID
Steve Womack, AR Chuck Fleischmann, TN
Dr. Andy Harris, MD Martha Roby, AL
Herrera Beutler, WA John Moolenaar, MI

Minority

Rosa DeLauro, CT Lucille Roybal-Allard, CA
Barbara Lee, CA Mark Pocan, WI
Katherine Clark, MA

Senate L-HHS-ED Subcommittee

Majority Members

Chairman Roy Blunt, MS Jerry Moran, KS
Richard Shelby, AL Thad Cochran, MS
Lamar Alexander, TN Lindsey Graham, SC
Mark Kirk, IL Bill Cassidy, LA
Shelley Capito, WV James Lankford, OK
John Kennedy, LA Marco Rubio, FL

Minority Members

Ranking Member Patty Murray, WA
Richard Durbin, IL Jack Reed, RI
Barbara Mikulski, MD Jeanne Shaheen, NH
Jeff Merkley, OR Brian Schatz, HI
Tammy Baldwin, WI

Budget Control Act

In a response to the debt-ceiling crisis of 2011, the Budget Control Act of 2011 was passed into law. The Budget Control Act cut discretionary funding, reducing spending by \$1.2 trillion over the next ten years. The law also introduced a discretionary spending cap that will last until the end of the decade. If the spending caps are exceeded there is an across-the-board cut (known as sequester) of discretionary spending (with a permissible exemption for military pay) to eliminate the excess spending. The discretionary caps are written into the law and can only be changed by enactment of future legislation. The Budget Control Act affects AUCD's advocacy work and shapes the fiscal environment for the federal government for the foreseeable future.

Additional Resources

- AUCD: www.aucd.org
- AUCD's public policy pages: www.aucd.org, click "public policy"
This is the home for all of AUCD's policy-related initiatives including Disability Policy News In Brief, links to current policy actions taken by AUCD, and frequently updated resources.
- AUCD Action Center:
<http://cqrcengage.com/aucd/home>
The interactive online Action Center contains AUCD's action alerts with sample letters to make it easy to contact Congress, a full congressional directory, and information about where to vote.
- [Health Hub](#): frequently updated information on the health reform law including funding announcements.
- [HCBS Advocacy](#): a platform for the aging and disability communities to post information and resources regarding the new HCBS settings rule and steps each state is making to comply with the new rule.
- [Disability Policy News In Brief](#): a weekly update on disability policy news. Subjects cover the range of our key issues from budget and appropriations to education and employment.
- [Tuesdays with Liz: Disability Policy for All](#): a YouTube video newsletter in a fun engaging format for beginners to federal policy issues and advocacy.

- [Disability Policy Seminar](#): a yearly event where stakeholders (self-advocates, parents and family members of an individuals with disabilities, members of disability organizations, and others) are educated on priorities of the I/DD community and make Hill visits. The Seminar resource page contains all the fact sheets and other resources available to attendees and those interested in disability policy.
- [Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities \(CCD\)](#): a coalition of approximately 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.
- [AUCD's Public Policy Priorities](#): AUCD develops its policy priorities at the beginning of each session of Congress. The goals are developed by the Public Policy Committee with input from the network and then approved by the Board of Directors.

To keep up with how AUCD's policy agenda is progressing, consider subscribing to [Disability Policy News In Brief](#). This brief weekly e-newsletter summarizes what happened the prior week as well as tells you what to watch for in the days and weeks ahead.

We hope this quick start guide to educating policy makers was helpful! Please feel welcome to ask any questions or provide comments to AUCD at 301-588-8252.

