

Congressional Recess

Terms to Know

Recess – When Members of Congress are in their home districts rather than in Washington D.C. The Members of Congress are working and meeting with constituents, which is you!

Members of Congress– Elected Senators and Representatives. There are 100 members in the Senate and 435 in the House. [Find your Senators or Representative.](#)

Why is a Recess Important?

A Congressional Recess is an opportunity for you to be able to meet with your Members of Congress in your community when they are less busy. A recess is a good time to talk to Members or their staff. (Sometimes, meeting with staff is just as productive, if not more!)

Meet in DC vs. Home Offices

What's the difference between meeting Members of Congress in D.C. versus their District (home) office? A meeting in D.C., will often be a meeting with staff, but the recess is a possible chance to meet directly with the Member of Congress at their home office or at events. Meetings during a recess is just as important as a meeting in D.C.

Make a Difference During a Recess

- Find out who your Members of Congress are and what issues they are currently working to address. [To learn more, click here.](#)
- Set-up a meeting. Use this AUCD guide on scheduling visits. Practice what you are going to say. Keep it short and to-the-point.
 - If you get to meet with them, thank them on social media and tag @AUCDnews on Twitter; @AUCDnetwork on Facebook; @AUCDpix on Instagram.
- Attend an event that they will attend or host.
- Invite the Member of Congress to visit your Center or Program.
- Invite them to speak at one of your events in the coming months.



What Should You Discuss

- Discuss funding for disability programs, specifically for AUCD's network centers. Tell the Member or their staff how you use federal funding to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in your state/district.
 - The appropriations process is ongoing and the budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (starting October 1st.) is currently being debated in Congress.
- The Autism CAREs Act, which funds the LEND programs, is up for reauthorization next year. It is important to educate your Members of Congress about the CAREs Act and what the LEND programs do. Many will not know that CAREs Act funds research on autism and trains the next generation of professionals to who will with autistic children and adults.
- Several other disability related bills have been introduced in the last few weeks. Read [Disability Policy News](#) here to learn more about these bills.



Things to Remember

- AUCD network centers are federally funded. This means that you cannot lobby when you are talking to policymakers – only educate them. Lobbying is when you ask an elected official or their staff to take action on a specific bill, like asking them to vote yes or no on something. Instead, you can educate them on the impacts of a bill, or on the importance of increased funded for programs. Read this Factsheet [for more information on educating vs lobbying](#).