Disability Policy Seminar 2021: AUCD Hill Visits Toolkit

Disability Policy Seminar and AUCD

The Disability Policy Seminar (DPS) 2021 will be a virtual event from April 19, 2021 – April 22, 2021. It is an opportunity for advocates, self-advocates, experts, and professionals in the field to come together and learn about key issues in disability policy. Participants will provide education to Members of Congress through virtual Hill visits.

AUCD is one of eight co-hosts for DPS. AUCD network attendees are encouraged to engage in the DPS learning sessions and socializing hours. Attendees are also welcome to participate in the DPS state captain system, **however we suggest that all AUCD attendees schedule Hill visits separately in order to focus Hill meetings on the important work of your centers and AUCD policy priorities.**

*Action steps:*

* [Register](https://app.certain.com/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x3239805abcd&_ga=2.229286297.402528138.1615486450-495672124.1615226050) online for Disability Policy Seminar.
	+ Please mark ‘AUCD’ as your primary affiliation.
	+ For the ‘Virtual Hill Meetings’ option, only mark ‘Yes’ if you plan to participate in the DPS state captain system. Mark ‘No’ if you will be scheduling a Hill meeting independently or through your AUCD network center.
* Visit the [Disability Policy Seminar website](https://disabilitypolicyseminar.org/) for information on pricing, schedule, accessibility, and more.
* You can connect with other [UCEDDs](https://www.aucd.org/directory/directory.cfm?program=UCEDD), [LENDs](https://www.aucd.org/directory/directory.cfm?program=LEND), or [IDDRCs](https://www.aucd.org/ddrcportal/directory/directory.cfm) in your state to coordinate Hill meetings.

Requesting a Virtual Hill Meeting

We recommend you contact your Congressional Offices as soon as possible to set-up a meeting. While Disability Policy Seminar lists Thursday, April 22nd as the scheduled day for Hill visits, we recommend you provide 2-5 options for days and times to meet. You may not receive an immediate response to your email request. Congressional staffers are busy and it is **normal** to need to follow-up on emails. If you do not receive a response after one week, you can send a follow-up email. If you continue to have difficulty arranging a virtual Hill visit, contact the AUCD Policy Team at rrodgers@aucd.org.

*Action steps:*

* Find email addresses for the Congressional Offices you plan to meet with as part of DPS:
	+ Find an email address on your [Senators’](https://www.senate.gov/general/contacting.htm) or [Representatives’](https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative) websites.
	+ Or email Rylin Rodgers at rrodgers@aucd.org.
* Email your Congressional Offices as soon as possible to schedule a virtual visit. See our [sample email script here](#script).
* Send a follow-up email if you do not hear from the Office after one week.

Preparing for a Virtual Hill Meeting

We recommend that you prepare for your virtual Hill Meeting(s) by familiarizing yourself with AUCD’s policy priorities and policy issues affecting the disability community. We also recommend sharing data, publications, programs, or research from your center to educate your Member of Congress on the important work you do to support the disability community in your state.

*Action steps:*

* Check out [AUCD’s 2021 Policy Priorities](https://www.aucd.org/docs/Policy_Priorities_2021_AUCD.pdf), available also in [plain language](https://www.aucd.org/docs/PL_Disability%20Policy%20Priorities.pdf).
* Learn more about policy issues affecting the disability community on [AUCD’s website](https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=507) and by subscribing to [Disability Policy News](https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=164).
* Find more resources on how to conduct a Hill meeting on [AUCD’s website](https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=27).



Follow-up

Send a ‘thank you’ email to the staff member(s) with whom you met after your meeting, ideally on the same day or the next day. In addition to thanking the staff, you can attach links and materials, and expand upon the topics you discussed. Your follow-up email can be an important part of the policy education process!

*Action steps:*

* Consider sharing [AUCD’s 2021 Policy Priorities](https://www.aucd.org/docs/Policy_Priorities_2021_AUCD.pdf) and your [AUCD state profile](https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=1092) in your follow-up email.

## lightbulbTips

* If several members of your center are attending the meeting together, we recommend you plan out who will say which pieces in advance. This will reduce confusion in the meeting and allow you to make the most of your meeting time.
* Confirm if your virtual meeting will take place via video platform or conference call. Make sure every attendee has the meeting id number and password, if applicable.
* Have everyone on the call introduce themselves by saying their name, position, and relationship to AUCD.
* Thank the staff member for meeting with you at the end of the call.

***For any questions about Disability Policy Seminar or virtual Hill visits, please contact Rylin Rodgers at*** ***rrodgers@aucd.org******.***

**Subject: Request for Virtual Meeting**

Dear Click or tap here to enter text. [scheduler/staffer name]:

My name is Click or tap here to enter text. and I am a constituent of [Sen./Rep.] Click or tap here to enter text. from Click or tap here to enter text. I work with the Click or tap here to enter text. [Your Center], which is a network center of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) network. As part of the 2021 Disability Policy Seminar, we are requesting the opportunity to virtually meet with the Click or tap here to enter text. [Representative’s or Senator’s] office to share our work in the disability community. We are available to meet at the following dates and times: [insert 2-5 timeslots at which you are available]

* Click or tap here to enter text.
* Click or tap here to enter text.

Please let us know if any of these times work for you. There will be up to Click or tap here to enter text. [insert number] of us attending the meeting depending on schedules.

As federally funded under the Click or tap here to enter text. [Developmental Disabilities Act, Autism CARES Act, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Higher Education Act], we would like to share more with you about the pressing research, evidence-based practices, and lived experiences of people with disabilities in Click or tap here to enter text. [your state]. Specifically, we would like to discuss:

[Insert 2 to 3 bullets of main topics you wish to address and educate your Member about]

* Click or tap here to enter text.
* Click or tap here to enter text.

Thank you for considering our request. We will follow up with your office to set up the meeting. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Click or tap here to enter text. [Your Title]

Click or tap here to enter text. [Your Center]

Click or tap here to enter text. [Your Center address]

Click or tap here to enter text. [Contact Information – phone and email]