



AIBS Congressional Visits Day Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is the cost to participate?

The event is free, but space is limited and priority is granted to individuals participating in the supplemental communications and advocacy training program. Participants are responsible for paying for their own travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses.

The AIBS communications and advocacy training program is in Washington, DC, on April 20-21. This program trains scientists to translate scientific information for non-technical audiences and to engage with the news media. The cost for this training is \$495 per participant for a general registration and \$440 for individuals nominated by an AIBS Member Society or Organization (MSO). For any group or organization that sponsors the participation of four or more individuals, the registration rate will be reduced by \$30/participant in the group. Please contact membership@aibs.org for details. The registration fee covers instruction, materials and resources, lunch on April 20-21, and a reception on April 20.

2) What can I expect to get out of the event?

Participants learn how to effectively engage with policymakers, how science policy is formulated, and trends in federal research spending.

Participants generally take part in five to eight meetings with members of Congress or their staff. This includes two or three meetings with the participant's congressional delegation and several more meetings with other congressional offices.

The event is an opportunity to meet other scientists with an interest in science policy and communications.

3) What are my responsibilities as a participant?

Participants are responsible for arranging and paying for their travel, lodging, and meals.

Participants are encouraged to spend about an hour in advance of the event to research and prepare talking points on the benefits of federal investments in science, especially to their local region.

4) Where will the event take place?

The training program will take place at 1201 New York Avenue NW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC. The congressional meetings will take place on Capitol Hill.

5) When should I arrive in/depart from Washington, DC?

The Congressional Visits Day and training take place on April 20-22, 2020. Participants can expect to finish with their congressional meetings by 4:30 pm on April 22, but are welcome to stay for an optional happy hour afterwards. It is recommended that individuals not book departing flights on April 22nd from Washington Reagan Airport (DCA) prior to 5:30 or 6:00 pm and from Washington Dulles (IAD) prior to 6:30 pm.

The science communications and advocacy training program will take place on April 20 from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm and will continue April 21 from 8:45 am to 5:00 pm. (These times may adjust slightly as the program agenda is finalized.)

6) What is the closest airport?

Two airports service Washington, DC. Washington Reagan National Airport (DCA) is the closest to downtown DC and is about a 30-minute Metro ride from Capitol Hill. Dulles International Airport (IAD) is located west of DC; although it is not connected to a Metro station, shuttles are available between the airport and Wiehle/Reston Metro station. Taxi and shared ride services are also available from IAD to downtown Washington, DC.

7) Where should I stay?

The training and congressional meetings take place in downtown Washington, DC. Capitol Hill is serviced by two Metro stations: Union Station and Capitol South. The location for the training, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, is serviced by McPherson Square and Metro Center Metro stations.

There are numerous hotels in downtown DC from which to choose. Budget conscious travelers may prefer to stay at a hotel adjacent to a Metro station in suburban Virginia (e.g. Arlington). Airbnb and similar services may also offer lodging options.

8) What is the best way to get around the city?

Metro rail and bus serves the greater Washington, DC area. More information is available at <http://wmata.com/>. Taxis and ride shares are abundantly available.

9) What should I wear?

Participants should wear business attire for their congressional meetings. For gentlemen, this includes a suit, dress shirt, and tie. For ladies, a suit or blazer with skirt/slacks is appropriate. Business or business casual attire is acceptable for the trainings.

10) How can I prepare for the congressional meetings?

Participants should spend time in advance of the event to prepare talking points for the congressional meetings. Resources from the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) can be accessed at www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressional_district_visits_resources.html. More guidance will be sent closer to the event.

11) Can I bring along handouts?

Participants are welcome to bring along a document to distribute to congressional staff. Appropriate examples of handouts include information about your organization/institution or a policy-relevant paper that is understandable by non-scientists. AIBS policy staff can help you to select appropriate documents.

12) Should I bring business cards?

Yes. It remains the custom in Washington, DC to exchange business cards during meetings. This is particularly true when meeting with congressional offices, where members and staff may talk to dozens of individuals a day. A business card is one way to strengthen the impression you make and to initiate a relationship.