

# Engaging with Congress: Additional Resources

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## 1. Council on Foundations - "Roles of Congressional Staff Members"

Link: <https://cof.org/content/roles-congressional-staff-members>

This practical guide breaks down the key staff positions in congressional offices and their specific responsibilities, making it an essential companion to your course's emphasis on understanding your audience. The resource details roles from Chief of Staff to Caseworker, explaining that "the legislative director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues."

## 2. Congressional Management Foundation - "Additional Professional Development Resources for Staff"

Link: <https://www.congressfoundation.org/resources-for-congress/staff-training/1200>

The Congressional Management Foundation provides ongoing professional development resources specifically for congressional staff, offering insights into how staff members are trained and what they prioritize. This resource helps advocates understand the perspective and constraints of their key audience—congressional staff—which directly supports your course's rule about making engagement "accessible" and "easy." Understanding what staff are learning and focusing on can inform more effective advocacy strategies.

## 3. OpenSecrets - "Federal Lobbying Data Summary"

Link: <https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying>

OpenSecrets provides comprehensive data on federal lobbying activities, spending, and trends. The platform shows that "companies, labor unions, trade associations and other influential organizations spend billions of dollars each year to lobby Congress and federal agencies." This resource is valuable for understanding the competitive landscape that advocates operate within and reinforces your course's emphasis on being realistic about what can be achieved.

## 4. Government Accountability Office - "2024 Lobbying Disclosure: Observations on Compliance"

Link: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107523>

This recent GAO report examines lobbying disclosure requirements and compliance patterns, providing current insights into the regulatory framework governing congressional engagement. The report covers requirements for paid lobbyists to "register with Congress" and "file quarterly reports on who lobbied."

## 5. MultiState - "Lobbying vs. Political Activity: What's the Difference?"

Link: <https://www.multistate.us/insider/2024/11/5/lobbying-vs-political-activity-whats-the-difference>

This November 2024 guide clarifies the important distinction between lobbying and political campaign activity. It explains that "lobbying is an attempt to influence legislative, administrative, or executive action" while "political activity is regulated separately from lobbying, and subject to campaign finance laws." This resource is crucial for policy professionals who need to understand compliance requirements and helps reinforce being realistic about what approaches are appropriate in different contexts.

## 6. Bloomberg Government - "Balance of Power in the U.S. House and Senate"

Link: <https://about.bgov.com/insights/congress/balance-of-power-in-the-u-s-house-and-senate/>

This current analysis of congressional leadership and newly elected members provides essential context for strategic engagement. The resource notes that "lobbyists and advocates can use congressional directories to identify fresh opportunities to reach out, introduce issues, and start relationships that may be pivotal." This supports relationship-building and timing, while providing practical tools for identifying new opportunities as congressional composition changes.

## 7. Bloomberg Government - "Direct Lobbying and Government Advocacy"

Link: <https://about.bgov.com/insights/public-affairs-strategies/direct-lobbying-and-government-advocacy/>

This January 2025 strategic guide focuses on how government affairs professionals can effectively partner with policymakers. It positions itself as "a guide to lobbying state governments, and how government affairs professionals can act as strategic partners to their organizations and policymakers." While broader than just Congress, this resource talks about building authentic relationships and taking a partnership approach rather than an adversarial one, extending the principles to multi-level government engagement.