



## 2019 August District Meetings

### 10 Steps to Scheduling a Congressional Meeting

1. Identify your members of Congress. Visit [www.govtrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us) to find out who represents you in Congress. Unless you are from Washington, D.C. or a U.S. territory, you have one Representative and two Senators.
2. Decide who you want to meet with. Do you want to meet with all three of your members of Congress, or only one or two? No matter how many meetings you are interested in holding, we recommend prioritizing the meeting with your Representative.
3. When are you available to meet? Determine which day or days you are available for each of the meetings you are interested in holding. The more flexible you can be, the better your chances are of getting a meeting scheduled.
4. Complete the [August Planning Worksheet](#). Create a copy of the worksheet, and in separate columns, enter the names of each member of Congress you are interested in meeting with. For each member, enter the date you are available to meet- if you are available on multiple days, enter the first one (i.e. if you are available the entire week of 8/12-8/16, enter 8/12 on the planning worksheet. It is always better to start scheduling earlier than later). If the date you enter returns 'ASAP' for when you should submit your scheduling request, get the request in and then replace 'ASAP' in that cell with the date you submitted the request.
5. Add the dates from the Planning Worksheet to your calendar. The Planning Worksheet will tell you when you should submit your scheduling request and when you should follow up with the office. Through the sheet, you can add those dates directly to your Google calendar.
6. Submit your scheduling request. When it is time to submit your request, navigate to your member's website and look for the "Request a Meeting" section, which is most often in the "Contact Me" or "Constituent Services" tabs. Follow the process laid out on that page- most often, they will ask you to submit an online form with details about your meeting and yourself. Pay special attention to the option for location of the meeting, and be sure to select their district office, or if they have multiple, the one most convenient for you.
  - a. Occasionally, offices will ask that you send an email to the office's scheduler. If so, here is sample language for that email -just fill in your details and contact information:

Hello,

My name is [Name] and I am constituent of [Title-Senator or Representative] [Their last name] from [city, state].

I am interested in meeting with [Title] [Their last name] during the August recess to discuss issues of importance to the lupus community, including funding for critical research and education programs at CDC, DoD, OMH, and NIH.

Lupus is an unpredictable and misunderstood autoimmune disease that ravages different parts of the body. It is difficult to diagnose, hard to live with, and a challenge to treat. Lupus is a cruel mystery because it is hidden from view and undefined, has a range of symptoms, hits out of nowhere, and has no known cause and no known cure. Its health effects can range from a skin rash to a heart attack. Lupus is debilitating, destructive and can be fatal.

I am available to meet with the [Congressman / Congresswoman / Senator] in [his/her] district office on [insert your availability]. Please let me know when the [Congressman / Congresswoman / Senator] is available to meet, and /look forward to the opportunity to discuss these important issues in person.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Home address]

[Email address]

[Phone number]

7. **Follow up as necessary.** If you don't hear back from the office after a week, follow up based on the schedule laid out in the Planning Worksheet. It is not unusual to have to follow up with the office multiple times to get a meeting scheduled- congressional offices are extremely busy, and even in the district, member and staff schedules are very packed. Remember to always be polite and flexible!
8. **Tell us when you have scheduled your meeting!** Once you've scheduled the meeting, please send an email to [info@lupusga.org](mailto:info@lupusga.org) to let us know. It's important for us to know when meetings are happening and where, and it also gives us an opportunity to make sure you have everything you need and feel fully prepared to hold a powerful, informative meeting.
9. **Prepare for your meeting.** Think creatively about how you are going to tell your story and structure your meeting (the document you received titled *Preparing for a Congressional Meeting* will help with that!), familiarize yourself with the policy issues we want to talk about, and print out the documents for the leave-behind. Remember to bring copies for yourself as well!