

*TheCapitol.Net's Executive Conference:*  
**Writing Congressional Correspondence**

**Sample Agenda**

*(To have a program tailored for your organization, contact us.)*

Washington, DC

*Instructor: Writer/editor experienced with congressional correspondence*

**9:00 Welcome and Introduction**

**9:05 Congressional Inquiries and Determining Priority**

The different categories of congressional correspondence, inquiries, and responses, and how to determine priority level of each category, and establish due dates.

**9:30 Before Putting Pen to Paper**

What to think about before responding to congressional inquiries. Questions to ask.

**10:00 Break**

**10:10 Format Issues**

Developing a standard format that will decrease turnaround time for responses. Use a checklist to ensure that letters are completely accurate, from correct titles and addresses, to spelling, enclosures, envelopes, and more.

**10:30 Style and Tone Issues**

The best—most positive-- way to present an issue. Responding to all questions asked, providing the most current information. The importance of tone, avoiding absolute statements, avoiding the use of "today," "tomorrow," and "yesterday," and avoiding the use of first person statements.

**11: 10 Content Issues**

The importance of considering how a Member or constituent will react to the response. Several do's and don'ts provided for an array of correspondence situations.

**11:30 Break**

**12:00 Coordination Issues and Approval Cycle of Congressional Correspondence**

The elements that should be considered to determine if, and how, correspondence needs to be coordinated within your division, agency, and/or outside your agency. Tips to make the coordination process faster and smoother.

**12:30 Special Concerns**

Special issues such as how to handle identical inquiries from several Members of Congress or constituents and sending courtesy copies to Ranking members of congressional committees and to chairmen of subcommittees, when an interim letter is appropriate, maintaining confidentiality, and the legislative correspondence and clearance requirements of the Office of Management and Budget

**1:00 Complete Evaluations and Conclude Program**

*Depending on staff experience, a half-day to one-day session of a writing refresher can be added.*

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