



AIAA Public Policy – Guide for AIAA Sections

AIAA Key Issues

Each year the Public Policy Committee (PPC) establishes key issues that become the focal points of the Institute’s engagement with congressional decision makers, the administration, and state and local officials. Our key issues provide the supporting pillars of the Congressional Visits Day (CVD) program, drive panel sessions at our annual forums, underpin our state-level advocacy efforts, and form the basis of smaller focused events and activities.

The PPC is always looking for input on key issues from various communities within the Institute. Sections with policy issue ideas should submit them via the AIAA website (<https://www.aiaa.org/advocacy/Key-Issues/submit-key-issue-ideas>). Please be sure that your suggestions are timely and pertinent to the entire aerospace community.

Note: AIAA is transitioning toward a domain approach to ensure that the aerospace community’s needs are met and to keep moving aerospace systems forward. Our annual key issues will align with the domains, which are 1. Aeronautics, 2. R&D, and 3. Space.

Engaging Your Members of Congress

Building and strengthening relationships with members of Congress and their staff is essential to AIAA’s public policy efforts. Engaging with your senators and representative(s) can take place in Washington, DC, during CVD, and/or through one-on-one meetings while home in their district, such as during a congressional recess.

Congressional Visits Day (CVD)

Every year, AIAA members – engineers, scientists, researchers, students, educators, and technology executives – gather to advocate and raise awareness for the aerospace community with national decision makers. CVD has been held both in person in Washington, DC, and more recently in a virtual format. CVD is a great opportunity for local AIAA section members to participate in the national aerospace public policy discussion. The event is typically held in mid-March. To participate, sections should:

- **Identify Section Members Interested in Attending CVD**
Engage your section members as early as possible at meeting(s) by sharing the opportunity for members to talk with national decision makers about our key issues at CVD. Start collecting names of members who are interested in attending or serving as a State Captain.

For in-person CVD events, AIAA offers limited financial subsidies to assist members in their efforts to attend the CVD program. Applications will be subject to review by the PPC. See the AIAA CVD webpage (<https://www.aiaa.org/advocacy/congressional-visits-day>) for information on application dates for subsidies. Sections may also apply for “Category 3” funds to help cover

travel expenses for members as well. Contact the local section chair or regional director for more information regarding “Category 3” funding opportunities.

- **Register for CVD**

Interested participants can easily register via the AIAA website. The Institute’s government relations staffer will communicate directly with registrants, sharing important information, in the weeks leading up to the event.

- **Contact Your State Captain**

The PPC’s Advocacy Working Group co-chairs will help identify and recruit an appropriate participating member to serve as a State Captain. Those individuals will be responsible for coordinating all the activities of the State Team. CVD registrants will coordinate with their State Captain to plan for the event. For sections whose territory covers multiple states, each attending member should contact the corresponding State Captain for their voting district. In all cases, the Regional Deputy Director of Public Policy can assist with enabling contact with the appropriate state captains.

- **Participate in the CVD Training**

AIAA is committed to appropriately informing and educating lawmakers on the importance of the aerospace engineering profession and its role in this vital sector. It is critical that in performing this valuable and sought-after service, the information presented is compatible with the diverse interests of our membership and consistent with Institute policy.

CVD training covers the Institute’s key issues, how to prepare for the event, and how to schedule and host meetings. Registrants will be contacted directly about the training schedule after registering for CVD. Participation is strongly encouraged.

- **Make Appointments with Your Congressional Delegation**

The AIAA Headquarters staff does not make appointments for the State Teams. It is the responsibility of the State Captain and delegated team members to reach out to the congressional offices to schedule CVD meetings. If a State Captain has not been identified for your state, work with your Regional Deputy Director of Public Policy to make appointments.

“Find your Representative” by entering your zip code at <http://www.house.gov/>. The list of U.S. Senators can be found at <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>.

- **Hold Your Meeting and Report Back**

Please remember that you are representing the Institute, so you should always conduct yourself in a professional manner. Being prepared and polished will help get our message across and leave the lawmaker with a positive impression about AIAA. The key issues should drive much of the conversation. State Teams should provide details about your meeting(s), including any follow-up requests, in the individual meeting reports that are submitted to AIAA Headquarters.

NOTE: The 2021 and 2022 CVD events were entirely virtual out of an abundance of caution due to the COVID-19 pandemic. AIAA hopes to gather members in Washington, DC once again, in 2023. However, a virtual component is likely to continue in future years to provide flexibility for members.

For more information, visit: <https://www.aiaa.org/advocacy/congressional-visits-day>

Section Activities

Outside of our CVD program, AIAA members should continue to promote the Institute's key issues and strive to be "everyday advocates" for the aerospace community. The best chance to meet directly with your member of Congress is while they are at home during a congressional recess. This is an opportune time for sections to build on relationships formed during CVD or to begin an ongoing dialogue to highlight our key issues and subjects of interest to the local aerospace community.

Below is a list of steps AIAA members should use to identify their congressional representatives, learn when the representative may be in their district office, and schedule meetings with your delegation members:

- **Identify Your Member of Congress**
"Find your Representative" by entering your zip code at <http://www.house.gov/>. The list of U.S. Senators can be found at <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>.
- **Look Up Your Representative's (District) Contact Information**
Contact information for your representative's local district office is usually located on their official website.
- **Check the Congressional Calendar**
Try to schedule meetings while your representative is home during a district work period (recess). The 2022 House and Senate calendars are posted at:
<https://www.majorityleader.gov/calendar>
https://www.senate.gov/legislative/2022_schedule.htm
- **Schedule Your Meeting**
Contact your representative's district office and request a 30-minute meeting with the member. The member's schedule is quite busy so be flexible when making the appointment. Do not be discouraged should the member not be available because we can be equally effective when meeting with a district aide. When making the appointment be sure to:
 - State your name and affiliation (AIAA)
 - Explain what you would like to discuss (reason for meeting)
 - Explain why your meeting is relevant to the member
- **Educate Yourself on the Key Issues and Know Your Audience**
As is necessary ahead of CVD, it is important for AIAA members to be properly prepared ahead of any formal meetings with their elected officials. One should first review the lawmaker's biography on their website and have a general understanding of their stances on relevant issues. Next, review the key issues, located on the AIAA website, and select the issues that resonate best with that member of Congress. Feel free to reach out to your Regional Deputy Director of Public Policy, your CVD State Team Captain, or AIAA's government relations staffer should you need additional background on the key issues. You may also coordinate with the PPC on any

additional issues that you would like to bring up that are pertinent to the aerospace community in your state.

- **Hold Your Meeting and Report Back**

Please remember that you are representing the Institute, so you should always conduct yourself in a professional manner. Being prepared and polished will help get our message across and leave the lawmaker with a positive impression about AIAA. The key issues should drive much of the conversation. Be sure to provide the results of your meeting(s), including any follow-up requests, to your Region Deputy Director of Public Policy and/or AIAA's government relations staffer.

Invite Congressional Delegation to Section Events

Sections should also strive to enhance and expand the Institute's public policy efforts by engaging your congressional representatives in your outreach activities. You may want to:

- Organize a panel session with your local policymaker(s) about a key issue or other pertinent matter of interest to your section membership,
- Hold a "Meet & Greet" happy hour with your local representative(s),
- Invite your member of Congress to a section dinner and have them speak about one of our key issues,
- Hold a gathering where a subject-matter expert educates your lawmaker(s) about one of our key issues,
- Invite a legislator or group of legislators to visit and tour a local aerospace facility,
- Meet with your lawmaker(s) in their local office to review the Institute's key issues,
- Create a new section event that fits your membership and state.

When contacting your congressional office about these types of events, be sure to disclose how many participants (constituents) you anticipate will attend the event and explain the event format when making these types of requests.

The PPC's Advocacy Working Group and AIAA's government relations staffer are available to help your Section in planning for the event. Sections are encouraged to share information and lessons learned from your event with the Advocacy Working Group to help other sections in planning their future events.

Note: Sections are more than welcome to hold policy-related events without lawmakers. These may include discussions about the key issues or panel sessions on a policy topic.

Engaging Your State Leadership

Building and strengthening relationships between the section and state leadership can also contribute to AIAA's public policy efforts. Specifically, sections can make local leadership more aware of national and local aerospace issues that impact our industry and membership by:

- **Identifying a State PP Coordinator**

The AIAA Headquarters staff is small, especially for public policy, and lacks the ability to support events in many different states while still resourcing national events. Consequently, it is recommended that sections select a State Coordinator.

- For states with only one section the Section Public Policy Officer can serve as the coordinator.
- For states with multiple sections the sections are encouraged to work together to select a State Coordinator.
- For sections whose territory covers multiple states, you can select State Coordinators for each state so long as you have sufficient member interest. If you have few members participating, then you may decide to focus on just one state in your territory. This is usually the state with the highest membership representation.

- **Participating in State Aerospace Days**

Many states hold an "Aerospace Day" to educate state leaders on the impact of the local aerospace industry. AIAA sections should work collaboratively with other local aerospace groups to present a unified industry message. Many states have specific state aerospace organizations and chapters of other national groups, such as the Aerospace States Association. AIAA does not always have to be in the lead if it is a key event contributor. Identifying a key person, or persons, who belong to AIAA, and other groups, can help smooth the coordination process.

- **Sharing Best Practices**

Gather best practices from the sections and provide "how to" resource materials to help the sections grow local public policy activities.

State Fact Sheets

AIAA has developed fact sheets highlighting key aerospace statistics and assets in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The documents are a useful reference tool for members when educating policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels. Each fact sheet is posted on the AIAA website (<https://www.aiaa.org/advocacy/Grassroots-Engagement>).

Public Policy Resources for Sections

Each AIAA region is represented on the PPC by a Regional Deputy Director of Public Policy who also are members of the Advocacy Working Group:

Region I Kerri Phillips
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