



Responsibilities of an Effective Congressional District Leader

NARFE members, through approval of a resolution at the 2016 National Convention and in the 2017 Strategic Plan, have embraced establishing Congressional District Leaders (CDLs) and Senatorial Leaders (SLs) within their federations. The goal of a CDL is to develop and maintain a relationship with your member of Congress and his/her staff to further the NARFE Advocacy Program. This issue brief builds on the previous brief on [Establishing CDLs](#) and covers the necessary prerequisites and job duties of an effective CDL/SL.

Required Prerequisites to be an Effective CDL/SL

- Be a constituent living in the congressional district/state.
- Have an established email address and ready access to the internet.
- Be familiar with NARFE Legislative Action Center and its products.
- Possess a basic understanding of the legislative process.
- Have strong oral and written communication skills, including:
 - Being able to stay focused and on message
 - Communicating the NARFE position succinctly
 - Being comfortable meeting with and talking to people.
- Ability to be polite and assertive without being aggressive.
- Ability to remain nonpartisan and leave your personal opinions at the door to focus on NARFE legislative positions.
- Willingness to work with NARFE HQ Advocacy staff, participate in training seminars and receive guidance to advance your skills.

Job Responsibilities Duties of an Effective CDL/SL

- Keep current on NARFE top issues and advocacy positions. This requires regular check-ins with the NARFE Advocacy staff.
- Hold at least one face-to-face meeting annually with your congressional office on NARFE's priorities. Limit each discussion and handouts to no more than three items.
- Work directly with the NARFE Advocacy Department in advance of any meeting with congressional offices.
- Send or email thank-you letters after meetings and provide other recognitions for support when appropriate.
- Email the staff members of your representative or senator periodically on relevant and timely issues to work towards building a strong relationship.
- Invite your representative or senator and his/her staff to speak at federation and chapter meetings annually.
- Be ready to respond to NARFE Advocacy alerts with telephone calls and/or emails in a timely manner. Calls are best suited for when significant issues arise.

For questions or more information, including scheduling CDL/SL training, please contact Molly Checksfield, NARFE Grassroots Program Manager, at mchecksfield@narfe.org/571-483-1263.



- Report any significant interactions with the congressional office to the NARFE Advocacy Department via the [Congressional Meeting or Event Feedback Form](#) in the Legislative Action Center.
- Follow up on any commitments you make during the meeting.
- Regularly attend town hall meetings and other community events where the member of Congress and/or his/her staff will be in attendance. Face-to-face time with the legislator is most likely to occur at town halls and community events, not congressional meetings. Seek out these opportunities and invite NARFE members to join you.
- Sign up for the legislator's official congressional newsletter and campaign distribution list.
- Work with the chapter presidents and legislative chairs in the district to coordinate efforts and keep them apprised of interactions with the legislator's office. Make sure they are aware of your efforts and vice versa. Collaborate to the extent possible.
- Remember that legislation and politics are separate entities, and do not discuss political issues, such as the legislator's campaign, opponent, and NARFE-PAC contributions, while in the official government congressional office. This includes written correspondence. Unsure if something is appropriate to say? Err on the side of caution and do not say it.