



Workforce Development Professionals Month Toolkit

A Toolkit is provided in the following pages to help you and/or your organization participate. The Toolkit includes ideas on what to post to social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and how to reach out to elected officials and the business community to request meetings or invite them to your events.

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be possible to host or attend in-person events asvlisted in this Toolkit. These in-person events can be easily converted into virtual events through the use of Zoom or other platforms.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Table of Contents	1
Messaging 101	2-3
Social Media Tips	4-5
Sample Meeting Request / Site Visit Invitation Letter	5
The Resolution	6-7
Guide for Congressional Visits	8-11
Media Relations Tips – Op-Ed	12
Media Relations Tips – Letter to the Editor	13
Media Relations Tips – Press Release	14-15
Tips for Participating in Town Hall Meetings	16-17

Messaging 101

Background to Guide You

September is **Workforce Development Professionals Month**. The purpose of this initiative is to recognize, honor, and publicize the contributions of our nation's workforce professionals. This is the time to prepare for local activities.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce development funding decisions slowly moving their way through Congress, now is the time to step up efforts to educate elected officials about the importance of workforce development and job training programs.

Messaging Questions to Ask Yourself and/or Your Team

As you swing into action, you will want to ask yourself a few key questions.

1. **What do you want to communicate?** Identify three main points that you want to convey and let that guide your activities. Is it your overall success rates with your job seekers? Maybe you had a successful engagement with a local employer. Do you simply want to promote the variety of services that you provide?
2. **Who needs to hear the message?** Is it local officials, the public, federal policymakers? Determining this key factor will help you define the issues and create the message in a way that will resonate with the audience. (See specific examples on Members of Congress tip sheet)
3. **How should that message be delivered?** Will it be an open house at your center? An op-ed piece in the local newspaper? A speech at the local chamber of commerce or rotary club? A letter writing campaign to educate federal policy-makers about the impact your program has on the local community?
4. **Who is the best messenger?** Maybe it is you. Maybe a better strategy would be to let your business partners and job seekers tell their story. Perhaps you may want to consider partnering with other local workforce organizations.

Messaging 101 (cont.)

What Should I Do with My Messages?

Once you have these basic questions answered, it is time to take action! Whether large or small, it is important to have a coordinated effort across the nation. Here are some ideas to get your creativity flowing.

- **Ask your local/state officials** to proclaim September as Workforce Development Professionals Month.
- **Conduct an open house** at your center to highlight the valuable services that you provide to jobseekers and employers
- **Write an op-ed** that illustrates your contribution to the local community
- **Create a fact sheet** highlighting key statistics about your program or initiative. Send that fact sheet to your elected officials and their staff as a resource.
- **Utilize social media!** Write a note on policymakers' Facebook pages highlighting a local success story. Ask your customers to do the same!

Social Media Tips

Do You Need a Template to Promote Your Workforce Development Professionals Month Activity Via News and Social Media?

Remember, keep it simple, and answer: **Who? What? Where? When? and Why?**

The 2020 social media hashtags to use are: #WorkforceDevelopmentMonth or #WorkDev-Month.

A photo caption for Facebook, or your website, might read (keep it concise, and info packed):

- John Doe, president of AnyTown Workforce Council, joined Mayor Joe Smith at the AnyTown Chamber of Commerce luncheon celebrating both Workforce Development Professionals Month, and recent graduates of the XYZ Skills Training Program. Date: September 15, 2021. The “Resolution in Support of Workforce Development Professionals Month” was created by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. This is the first year the city of AnyTown officially participated in the program.

A photo caption, or a tweet, for Twitter, might read
(keep it under 140 characters):

- John Doe, president of AnyTown Workforce Council, joined Mayor Joe Smith to celebrate #WorkforceDevelopmentMonth. Date: Sept. 15, 2021. #yourorg
- Use the suggested text to tailor to your needs!

Ideas for Photo or Video Sharing

- Use your smart phone or tablet to take a photo or video of your training program in action or even a meeting of your key community partners discussing local workforce challenges and strategies for addressing them.
- Use your smart phone or tablet to record footage of your training program in action.
- Use your smart phone or tablet to record current and former program participants discussing how training programs have impacted their lives.
- Use your smart phone or tablet to record employer partners discussing their workforce challenges and how training programs and systems help address these challenges.
- Attach photos or emails to Twitter and Facebook posts via Instagram or URL shorteners such as owl.ly, bitly.com or goo.gl.
- Upload photos and videos to your YouTube accounts and link your accounts to NAWDP’s to reach an even bigger audience.

Social Media Tips (cont)

Sample Posts to Facebook Pages of Members of Congress

- How do I use these tips? Your Facebook post to the Facebook page of your Member of Congress might say something similar to the samples below. We've even included placeholders for you to enter the name of your Member of Congress and other helpful information such as an event photo or video link.
- How to find out the name of my Member(s) of Congress?
For Senator search, click: <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>.
For House of Representatives search, click: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find>.
For state legislatures, search Google with keywords, e.g.: Maine state legislature directory
- Where do I find employment current, national and state employment numbers? See the U.S. Department of Labor website: <https://www.dol.gov> (especially press release section.)(Note: This toolkit was updated in Aug. 2021 and reflects data available at the time.)

Thank you Post

- <Your Org name> thanks <Rep. Name>, <Sen. Name> for supporting the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Such critical support allowed us to serve our state/city. <succinctly describe a success, number of people helped, a program created and implemented, or business partnership created>

Urgency Post

- There are 8.4 million unemployed Americans, yet employers across the country report that they struggle to find qualified workers to fill the 10.7 million current jobs openings. Workforce development professionals help connect employers with jobseekers, and jobseekers with training resources to bridge this divide. <Rep. Name>, <Sen. Name>: Keep Supporting WIOA.
- Protect workforce funding in FY21! <Insert link to photo or video of training program in action or employer partners talking about how training programs help their business' labor challenges. >

Education/Training Post

- Federal employment and job training programs help U.S. workers obtain the education and training services they need to get back to work and help businesses find the workers they need. Businesses and workers can't afford the cuts. <Rep. Name>, <Sen. Name>: Support WIOA
- Training Matters! <Insert link to photo or video of training program in action or employer partners talking about how training programs help their business' labor challenges. >
- Will you stand up for investments in America's workers? <Insert link to photo or video of training program in action.

Economic Development Post

- Accelerate the economic recovery by investing in us. <Insert link to photo or video of training program in action.>

Sample Meeting Request/ Site Visit Invitation Letter

How do I use this letter? Workforce Development Professionals Month is an opportunity to meet with elected officials, or invite them to a workforce event. **Write a letter that reflects what you want to do, what you wish to ask of them, and why** – requesting funds, showing them your successful program, showing them a reality that demonstrates a specific need, or showing them via a tour or event what was made possible by their vote or legislative action.

SAMPLE

[On your own organizational letterhead]

[DATE]

Office of the Honorable [Member's full name]
[District Office Address]

Dear [Member's Name]:

I am writing to request a meeting at your district office [or to invite you and your staff to our training program]. Federal investments in the public workforce system continues to be a life line for workers who face systemic barriers to employment. The practical skills development such funding makes possible has proven invaluable to residents in [city, region, or community].

Still, more than 8.4 million Americans remain out of work, yet employers across the country report that they struggle to find qualified workers to fill 10.7 million jobs.

Deep cuts to workforce programs will stifle the ability of U.S. businesses to find the skilled workforce they need to take advantage of new markets and emerging economic opportunities, putting our nation at a competitive disadvantage at a time when other countries are ramping up their own investments in human capital. These cuts will also shut the door on millions of hardworking individuals, significantly limiting their access to the skills and credentials needed to succeed in today's labor market.

[Your organization name] wants to show you [why continued funding is needed and/or a success story via a tour or invite to an event.] Now is not the time to stop investing in our nation's primary system for getting people back to work.

I look forward to discussing these important issues with you in greater detail, including how our local economy has improved from [specific funding or can be improved by xyz].

I will be joined by: [list names and organizations of those intending to you join in this meeting or site visit].

Thank you for considering our request. I will be in touch with your staff to determine your availability.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Remember to take photos: Post your photos to your organization's social media pages.

The Resolution

(What NAWDP members ask elected officials to sign)

What do I do with the Resolution? See next page for a formatted version or cut and paste this version onto your own letterhead, and please do also include the NAWDP logo. **The remaining tip sheets offer suggestions for meeting with elected officials to talk about or show them workforce development in action – and hopefully gain their support to sign the Resolution.**

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the economic development of every region in our country and the ability of our businesses and industries to compete in the global economy are more than ever before dependent on the availability and quality of a skilled workforce and robust talent pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the complexity and fast-paced change in our economy and labor markets puts new demands on individuals and employers at all levels; and

WHEREAS, employers depend on similar levels of professional services to help them recruit and retain a competitive workforce and continually upgrade the skill sets of their incumbent employees;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AND IT IS RESOLVED that (XYZ County Board of Commissioners, ABC Governor, etc.) joins with the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals in designating the month of September as Workforce Development Professionals Month to honor all those individuals in all the Workforce Development organizations and partnerships who play such a vital role in our economy.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2021

The Resolution

Resolution Supporting Workforce Development Professionals Month

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the economic development of every region in our country and the ability of our businesses and industries to compete in the global economy are more than ever before dependent on the availability and quality of a skilled workforce and robust talent pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the complexity and fast-paced change in our economy and labor markets puts new demands on individuals and employers at all levels; and

WHEREAS, employers depend on similar levels of professional services to help them recruit and retain a competitive workforce and continually upgrade the skill sets of their incumbent employees;

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ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2021.

Guide for Congressional Visits

Why should my organization pursue a Congressional visit?

There are many challenges currently facing workforce development system: funding, increase in demand for services, questions regarding program effectiveness, and more customers with multiple barriers are just a few of those challenges.

- **What is the best way to get your message ahead of the myriad of other worthy programs vying for the attention of your elected officials?** Have your elected official visit your program and hear directly from your customers.
- You, and your staff, are the workforce development experts. Policymakers, job seekers, employers and education providers need you to help guide their investments in workforce development.
- Policymakers also need to hear from and see your workforce development clients – **their constituents** – in action.
- All you need is a bit of time, some local resources, great customers and the ability to clearly state how your efforts specifically support economic recovery, business expansion, and your local community

How do I contact a congressional office?

1. If you do not already have a relationship established with your federal official, the first step is to place a call to his or her Washington, D.C. office. **Request to speak with the scheduler.**
 - Be aware that some legislators handle their schedule out of the local offices. If you don't already have a relationship with the legislator, you may want to have the initial invitation come from someone who does have a relationship.
2. Start early and have a few dates and times in mind.
 - Be sure to make the invitation when legislators are scheduled to be in their home districts.
3. Do your homework! Link your invitation to the legislators' priorities. Look at the Member of Congress's bio, committees he/she serves on and his/her **voting record on issues related to economic recovery and workforce development.**
 - Places to look include: www.Congress.gov, www.House.gov, and www.Senate.gov.
 - Also visit their Facebook and Twitter feeds, as well as Google to research the representative.

Guide for Congressional Visits (cont.)

Build Excitement! – Tell your Stakeholders

Leverage the media. Reach out to local reporters and invite them to the visit. You will want to reach out to your legislators' communications staff to ensure coordination of these efforts.

- Don't forget about utilizing the power of social media by announcing the visit via Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

Consider asking your local elected officials to issue a press release.

Thoughtfully create your guest list of local officials, business customers, successful job seekers, and community leaders. Match the guests to the legislators' priorities.

- If your official is primarily concerned about local business growth, put your business customers in the spotlight. If your legislator has gone on the record about the need to serve transitioning veterans, make sure that a successful veteran is part of your group.

Prepare for Your Congressional Visit

Determine the three key points that you want to make and create your agenda around those points. Trying to cover more than three will dilute your efforts and the overall meaning of your visit.

- Suggestion include: current success despite financial constraints, the need for consistent funding, stop cutting our damn programs (ok the last part is to see if you noticed!)

Clearly define the issue in terms that will resonate with the decision-maker. Couch your arguments in support of your legislator's priorities.

- Is s/he interested in global competitiveness? Economic development? Veteran transition? Show how your program supports these efforts.

Make sure that all members of your group are prepared. Do not assume that everyone has experience or a comfort level in speaking with elected officials.

- Make sure that your employer representatives have successfully used the one-stop to solve a staffing problem and are able to provide specifics
- Job seekers need to be able to relate their personal stories. They do not need to be experts in workforce or quote national statistics.

Guide for Congressional Visits (cont.)

Prepare for the tough questions. Legislators are facing intense pressure to bring the federal deficit down and streamline programs – *and/or prove they work*. Be prepared to respond respectfully and professionally and tell the story of what workforce development means in your city, state, or community. **Think of points to make that reflect your community. You and your community are constituents of the representative.** Example points:

- **Long-term unemployment and systemic barriers to employment continue to keep capable people out of jobs.** Tell the story or stories – show how recent funding has aided workforce development or how cuts would hurt the community, or why the region continues to need workforce development funds.
- **Research demonstrates that individuals who receive services through the workforce system show positive outcomes for both employment and earnings gains.** Talk about specifics in your city, town, or region. Create simple, clear, graphics to leave behind, or photos of people working and thriving due to workforce development efforts. (Get permission to use people's photos first.)
- **Speak to context – your region. Be prepared to explain workforce development at the local level but also understand the bigger pie in case you need to explain it.** Workforce development typically factors: vocational rehabilitation grants to states; WIA dislocated workers; WIA youth activities; TANF; job corps; WIA adult programs; and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services.

Did you Invite an Elected Official? – Host with Confidence!

Make it an event. Arrange to have satisfied customers available to speak to the legislators including employers and job seekers.

- Have a Plan B if the legislator is late or cancels. Legislators sometimes have to change plans at the last minute. So, be sure that you have a back-up plan if you have invited media. Have your local elected official speak.

Make sure that the center is busy during the visit so that the legislator can see how things really operate and why resources are so critical.

Have your key statistics ready in a one-page fact sheet that covers such areas as

- The number of job seeking customers you see, how many get jobs, their earnings, how many customers you helped that are now off welfare, the impact you have had on unemployment in your community, number of businesses you serve, types of services, business outcomes, and how your Career OneStop has helped local economic development efforts.

If you do not know the answer to a question, it is fine to say that you don't know the answer. In fact, not knowing the answer and promising to get back to him/her provides you an excuse to do our next step.

Guide for Congressional Visits (cont.)

Follow Up – Thank the Elected officials and Staff

Send a thank you note immediately to both the member and their staff. Too often we forget this simple step and it really goes a long way.

E-mail thank you with pictures from the event and post them on your website and Facebook pages.

Maintain an ongoing relationship with the staff. Put them on your distribution list for press releases and newsletters.

Become their personal resource. Let them know that you can be used to provide insight into local condition and proposed legislation.

Media Relations Tips

Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed): Tips for Writing and Submitting

Submitting an opinion piece to your local or state press is a great way to bring attention to workforce funding issues and/or highlight the great work that your program is doing to help re-train or employ workers in your city.

Writing Your Op-Ed

Remember, an op-ed is short. The publication typically tells you the word count cap, e.g., 750 words. Think of op-eds you've read. They're to the point, impactful, and written in clear language.

- Get to the point. The first sentence should be 12 words or less summarizing what's at stake. One of the biggest mistakes in op-ed writing is using the first paragraph (or the entire op-ed) to build to the point. Most editors read 2-3 sentences before making a decision to go on.
- Who is often more important than what. Op-eds can have more impact — and a greater chance of publication — if you have the right people listed as authors. In the current battle, the voices of employers are crucial. Consider having industry partners submit your op-ed. Having an op-ed co-signed by business and labor representatives packs a particularly good punch.
- Mind your word count. Check the op-ed guidelines for the paper you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they don't, 750 is generally considered the maximum length. Many papers will not consider op-eds over their word count. If the paper accepts your op-ed and edits it to meet their guidelines, you'll have no control over what they cut.
- Make it relevant and accessible. We've provided sample language but it's essential that you tailor your submission with local examples of impact. It's also essential to avoid workforce jargon and acronyms.
- Learn from others. A number of outstanding op-eds have been published over the last month in response to proposed elimination of workforce funding.

Submitting Your Op-Ed

Many newspapers have specific format requirements, so please check the paper's website before submitting. Always include full contact information for the author(s).

- Road rules. In general, if you have multiple papers in one media market, you cannot submit the same op-ed to more than one paper at a time. Submit to one and if it gets rejected, submit it to the other outlet. This applies to national outlets as well. If you are submitting to different markets throughout your state (but not within the same city), you can typically submit to all papers at once. That said, some papers will have it in their guidelines that you cannot submit anything that has been submitted to another paper.
- Follow up. Once you have submitted the op-ed, you can follow up with a call 24 hours later to pitch the piece and find out if it will be printed.

Media Relations Tips

Letter to the Editor (LTE): Tips for Writing and Submitting

A Letter to the Editor is an easy way to make a BIG impact. While editors do not publish every letter, they do pay attention — especially to letters that are well-written and connected to an article they just published.

Writing Your Letter to the Editor

Remember, LTE's are concise and to the point. The publication will tell you the word count cap, e.g., 200 words or 450 words. Do not go over the word count cap.

- **Make it relevant.** Relate your LTE to an issue recently (within the last day or two) discussed in the publication to which you are writing. Most outlets are writing about the budget situation, so it shouldn't be difficult to find an article to that concerns funding cuts to job training programs.
- **Be concise.** The first sentence should summarize your position. One of the biggest mistakes in LTE writing is using the first paragraph (or the entire letter) to build to the point. Most editors read 2-3 sentences before making a decision to go on.
- **Mind your word count.** Check the LTE guidelines for the paper you are targeting. If they give a word count, follow it. If they don't, 200 is generally considered the maximum length. Many papers will not consider LTEs over their word count.

Submitting Your Letter to the Editor

Many newspapers have specific format requirements, so please check the paper's website before submitting. Always include full contact information for the author(s).

- **Follow the guidelines.** Follow the outlet's rules regarding letters and make sure to adhere to the guidelines on length.
- **Spell everything correctly and pay close attention to grammar** — letters are not usually edited, rather the outlets select well-written letters that meet their guidelines.
- **Email your letter by pasting the text into the body of the email** — DO NOT SEND AS AN ATTACHMENT. You may also fax it, but sending it electronically is generally the preferred way to receive letters.
- **Follow up.** Once you have submitted your Letter to the Editor, you can follow up with a call 24 hours later to find out if it will be printed.

Media Relations Tips

Why Should I Issue a Press Release and How Do I Write One?

In the world of social media Tweets, Facebook posts, and photo captions that are posted to Twitter and Facebook, there still exists a need for the press release – or news release, if you're also sharing it with broadcast news outlets.

Your news announcement should be concise, fact-filled, and easy for editors and reporters to read and utilize.

At the very least, it needs to answer: **Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why?**

To increase your chances of having it used, think of it as a package:

- Keep it to one page when possible
- Quote must be one a person would actually say (not extra text with quotes around it)
- Utilize links to include a photo
- Utilize URLs (website address) to draw the editor or reporter to key information
- Avoid attachments (many news organization email systems treat as spam)
- Use Associated Press Style, if you know it, and if you don't, simply stick to clear writing.

See next page for a sample press release/news release.

Media Relations Tips

SAMPLE – Pre-event PRESS RELEASE

123 Jobs Council Announces Two Events for Workforce Development Professionals Month

Beaumont, Texas – Sept. 5, 2021 – In recognition of Workforce Development Professionals Month, the 123 Jobs Council will hold two events: [type of event or event name] on [date and time]; and a [describe second event] on [date]

The [first event] will feature four clients placed in jobs with Company A, Company B, and Company C. Executives from Company A will also attend the event.

The Mayor and members of his/her staff have also been invited.

The [event] will be held at [location].

The [second event] will feature [describe it, e.g., a private tour of XYZ Company] and several employees hired through a partnership between the company and 123 Jobs Council.

The tour is open to invited members of the Mayor's office, the Governor's office, city council members, and several public school officials.

Workforce Development Professionals Month, held in September of each year, honors workforce development organizations, professionals, and partnerships that play a vital role in the U.S. economy. It was created by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals.

To view the Resolution elected officials are asked to sign in support of Workforce Development Professionals Month, please click: [insert your link to it or the link via NAWDP site].

MEDIA interested in covering the events should contact: Name Doe, title, phone, email.

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[Insert your organization's boilerplate.]

Media Relations Tips

SAMPLE – Post Event – PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

It's not news anymore but it will be of interest to your employees, business partners, and clients. Consider the social media tips to announce your post-event news via Twitter, Facebook, newsletters, and your website.

To move from social media post to a brief article for a newsletter or blog post, adapt the sample press release.

If you still wish to reach to the media, use your photos with captions, and/or a news-specific announcement, e.g., Mayor John Doe awarded Company X the X Award for partnership with ABC Jobs Council, and hiring 12 job seekers this year. Alternatively, include a photo of the jobseekers if they allow it. Consider the brief business news announcements you've read.

Tips for Participating in Town Hall Meetings

Why Should We Consider Town Hall Meetings?

We encourage you to attend Congressional Town Hall Meetings and other public events as **an existing opportunity to get in front of** your Member of Congress and other elected officials, to express your organization's concerns about workforce development.

Town Halls in this regard are planned by elected officials. All you have to do is follow the rules for participating, prepare to participate, arrive, and voice your message.

How to Find Events Hosted by Your Elected Officials.

1. Check your elected official's website, Facebook page or Twitter feed to find out the date and location of future meetings.
2. If no information is listed on the website, call your elected official's local office in your town/state. The phone number should be listed on his/her website.
3. You can also check your local newspaper for announcements about upcoming town hall meetings, in-district "office hours" or special events for constituents. Town hall meetings are often not announced very far in advance and additional events are sometimes added to the schedule at the last minute.
4. Note any instructions about registering for the meeting or sending an RSVP and follow them carefully.
5. Be prepared to provide your name, address and phone number which will be used to verify that you are a constituent.

Preparing for the Meeting

Visit your member of Congress' website, Facebook page or Twitter feed and read their latest press releases, speeches, newsletters, and/or tweets to find out how they've voted recently and which issues they are currently following.

Write down 1 or 2 brief questions that you would like to ask your member of Congress. Make sure they are focused on a specific subject or piece of legislation. Do not include long introductory statements in your questions. Just state your name and the town where you live.

Practice asking your question(s) until you can ask them in 25 seconds or less.

Tips for Participating in Town Hall Meetings (cont.)

Day of the Meeting

- Arrive a few minutes early and make sure you have your questions ready.
- Sign-in if asked to do so by the Congressperson's staff. Introduce yourself to the staff and offer your business card or other contact information.
- Ask if you need to sign-up in advance to ask a question.
- Sit in the front of the audience. If microphones are set up in the aisle, sit as close to the aisle as possible so you can quickly get to the microphone when it is time to ask questions.
- If time is set aside for photographs afterwards, take one with your phone and upload to the NAWDP Facebook page, along with your question and the response you received.

How Do I Ask Questions?

- **Frame your question politely, professionally, and informatively.** Use the opportunity to ask a question while also educating people about the issue behind the question.
- **Ask the question in a way that informs the elected official and his or her staff about the issue so that you can get a serious response from them.** They may thank you for bringing up the issue and say they need more information. Follow up with them. This is your organization's chance to educate them.

SAMPLE

- America's economic future depends, at least in part, on the skills of its workforce. Although policymakers face difficult decisions, our nation must continue to invest in those skills to maintain our competitiveness in the global economy. **Would you oppose FY21 appropriations proposals that reduce funding for workforce development programs, or that would alter these programs' funding structure in a way that would result in less money?**
- America's economic future depends, at least in part, on the skills of its workforce. Although policymakers face difficult decisions, our nation must continue to invest in those skills to maintain our competitiveness in the global economy. **Will you work to protect funding for non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs, such as education and training programs?**

Modeled from the FASEB Guide to Participating in a Congressional Town Hall Meeting