

Invite Your Member of Congress for a Language Program Visit

What can you gain from doing a program visit and what are the measurable outcomes:

- A strong connection to Member of Congress's staff so that they recognize you as a resource on language learning
- A photo of the Member at your school that you can showcase to others

Inviting your senators or congressmen to your language program is a great way to build a connection to their office. Seeing a high-quality 21st Century language program in action will illustrate the importance of language learning and let you and your school or university showcase the great work you are doing.

Action Steps

- 1) **Meet internally** with school staff to make a plan for a Member of Congress to visit your school. His or her visit should include a conversation with school leadership, time to visit a language classroom, and time for a photo-op with students, school leadership, and teachers/professors. A sample schedule could look something like this:
 - 15 minute visit with school leadership to introduce the Member to the school
 - 10-15 minute observation of a language classroom. If your school has any immersion program, uses technology in your language classes, has programs for young students, or has programs that serve high-need students, those will be particularly important to show the Member.
 - 10-15 minute observation of a second classroom.
 - 20 minute conversation with select students, teachers, and the principal about the benefits of language learning and the importance of language programs in your school.
- 2) **Compose a letter** telling them about your program and its importance to students, parents, and voters in his or her district or state. Have a school or program leader sign the letter with his or her name and title.
- 3) **Email the letter** to both the scheduler in Washington DC office and the scheduler in the district office. For more information on contacting your Members of Congress:
 - Senate: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
 - House: <http://house.gov/> and enter your zip code
- 4) **Remain flexible**, Members of Congress often have busy schedules and are only in the district or state for a few days a month. Sometimes a Member of Congress will be unable to attend but will send a member of his or her staff. These connections are also beneficial because staff have a direct line to the Member of Congress.
- 5) **Follow up** with the staff by phone with the Member's Washington DC office. When you call, ask to speak with the Member's scheduler. If you do not get through, leave a detailed message. Schedulers will often give instructions on their voicemail messages with the information they need, follow these instructions. If the message does not have instructions, be as detailed and clear as possible in your message. Some members will direct you to speak with the district scheduler instead of the DC scheduler.
- 6) **Finalize a date** with the Member's scheduler. Be sure to confirm the visit a few business days before the Member of Congress is scheduled to be at your school. Be sure to notify the local media and take your own photos as well.
- 7) **Follow Up** with the Member and their staff to thank them for visiting the program and offer to be a resource for them on language programs in their state or district.