UOAA's Guide to Federal Advocacy

Washington, DC

What to Pack



The single most important thing to pack is **comfortable shoes**! You will be doing a significant amount of walking during the day, depending on how many meetings you have and where they are located. Though loafers and heels may look better with business casual attire, you will be in good company wearing a good pair of exercise shoes or trainers.



Bring an umbrella, and a sweater or blazer to wear to manage the temperature differences from AC to heat to chilly weather.



Please wear business casual clothing for your meetings.



You might consider bringing a refillable water bottle and snacks.

Day of Meeting Checklist



Put your phone on do-not-disturb.

Review your talking points and notes.



Arrive at least 5 minutes early.

Introduce yourself at the start of the meeting.





Confirm how much time the staffer has for the meeting.

Take notes if needed.





Monitor your time and do not go over the time limit.

Thank the staffer for their time.





Ask for a photo.

Send a thank you email the next day.

Getting to and around Washington, DC

Airports

There are three major airports accessible to Washington, D.C., as well as train service through Amtrak along the Northeast corridor to Washington Union Station.

The closest airport is **Reagan National Airport (DCA)**. You can get into the city center in about 15-30 minutes by cab or rideshare. It also has a Metro line that connects to D.C.

Alternatively, **Washington Dulles Airport (IAD)** is approximately 40-60 minutes away in Virginia. You can access D.C. from IAD via the Metro, rideshare or the Washington Flyer, a Dulles service that offers direct car transportation throughout the D.C. area.

Baltimore-Washington Airport (BWI) is approximately 60-80 minutes away in Maryland. You can take the MARC or Amtrak trains from the BWI station to Washington Union Station, or a rideshare to D.C.

Navigating DC

The closest **Metro** station to Capitol Hill is **Capitol South**. It has one exit/entrance and is located south of Independence Avenue at C Street SE. It is a short few-minute walk to the House Office Buildings from the station. You can also walk to the Senate Buildings in less than 15 minutes.

Rideshare options such as **Uber** and **Lyft** are commonly used to navigate longer distances in D.C. However, shorter distances are certainly walkable in all areas of Washington, D.C.

Like with all major metropolitan areas in the US, you will want to stay aware of your surroundings, stick with well-lit, well-frequented areas at night, and secure your valuables.

Washington Union Station is a few blocks north of the U.S. Capitol building and less than a mile away. It is a short approximate 15 minute walk or a 5 minute taxi ride.

Weather in DC

Weather in Washington D.C. can be unpredictable! Weather in the summer is usually very sunny, humid and hot, with occasional afternoon thunderstorms. Temperatures can be in the upper 80's, 90's or even heat indexes in the low 100's. Winter can be icy, snowy or rainy, and temperatures can get as low as wind chills in the teens and 20's, although 30-40 degrees is average. Fall and Spring can swing wildly between those two extremes. Check the weather before you come and pack for a wide range of temperatures and precipitation.

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www.visitthecapitol.gov/visit/maps-and-brochures/us-capitol-map

Navigating Capitol Hill

There are three Senate buildings on the North side of the US Capitol. And there are three House buildings on the South side of the US Capitol. Though there is a private tram that runs under the Capitol, it can only be accessed by members of Congress.

The easiest way to get between the House and Senate sides is to walk in front of or behind the **Capitol Building**. Both sides will give you fantastic views for great photos. The **Library of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Folger Shakespeare Library** are behind the Capitol, on the East. The West side in front of the Capitol has a view of the **National Mall** and **the Washington Monument**.

Both the Senate and the House buildings are connected on their respective sides by tunnels that are free to use and the easiest way to move between buildings. There are signs directing you to the tunnels and which way to access each building in most major corridors and junctions.

You will be doing a significant amount of walking during your day on Capitol Hill. Your meetings may be scheduled close together, so you may need to rush to get to different buildings quickly. Monitor your endurance and energy throughout your day, and take rests as needed. Be sure to keep track of the time in your meetings. To stay on schedule, you may need to have a member of your team leave a meeting a few minutes early in order to arrive on time for the next one. If you anticipate being delayed, contact the next office as soon as possible to let them know. Keep in mind that congressional offices are not obligated to extend your meeting time if you arrive late. Most meetings are scheduled for approximately 30 minutes, so punctuality is important to ensure you have the full time allotted.

Accessibility & Infrastructure

The Architect of the Capitol has a webpage providing a list of **accessible entrances** all across Capitol Hill. This page also includes information on accessible **parking** on Capitol Hill (which is very limited) and other accessibility details.

There are **bathrooms** in each building, but not all of them are wheelchair accessible. You should contact Congressional Accessibility Services for more information to help your specific accessibility needs: Congressional Accessibility Services at 202-224-4048.

There are several **cafeterias** and **cafes** on Capitol Hill on both the Senate and House side.

On the **House side, Longworth** and **Rayburn** both have cafeterias and Cannon has take-out options.

On the **Senate side, Dirksen** has the largest cafeteria, but there are also other take-out options in **Hart** and **Russell**.

The cafeterias have a wide variety of food, and can most often accommodate food sensitivities or allergies when requested.

Security

Be prepared to pass through **airport-like security** the first time you enter either the House or Senate buildings. Do not bring large luggage/large bags, sharp objects, or other dangerous objects. Be prepared to place your belts and bags and electronic devices through an advanced screening belt. You will also pass through a metal detector and may be selected for additional pat down screening for medical devices. **Liquids, cans and bottles** are allowed, as well as **food containers** and **snacks**. You can find a list of prohibited items by scanning this QR code.

You may find that security lines are longer depending on activity on Capitol Hill or time of day (for example at the start of the business day in the morning). Parts of Capitol Hill may be closed, and some entrances to buildings may also be closed depending on security needs of the day. Allow extra time to go through security before your first scheduled meeting.

Written for UOAA by Kelly Dwyer