HOW TO
CONDUCT A MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

CONTACT YOUR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICE
Not sure what to ask? See APSA’s frequently asked questions here.

SCHEDULE THE VISIT
Call the Member of Congress’ DC office to connect with the Member’s scheduler. If you are making a visit in the Member’s home district, check the House and Senate legislative calendars and suggest a date when Congress is in recess. Explain that you are a constituent who is interested in meeting with the Member or their staff (in DC or the member’s district) to discuss the importance of federal support for political science.

PREPARE
You may need to inform the staffer or Member about the issues, so be prepared with concise talking points and relevant materials. Look up NSF and NEH grants in the district or state. Use APSA’s talking points for messages connected to political science funding and develop your own message connected to your specific research. Be sure to bring business cards.

ARRIVE EARLY
Plan for time to pass through security and to find the appropriate room. Long lines are common at Senate and House office buildings in Washington, DC. Maps are available here.

KEEP IT BRIEF
Lead with your main points. Clearly state the action you’d like the Member to take.

TAKE YOUR CUES
In some cases, your meeting may be a back-and-forth conversation with the elected official or staffer. In other cases, you may be expected to lead the conversation. If this is the case, use your time to convey your key points concisely, include any requests, and thank the Member or staffer for their time.

EXPLAIN BROAD EFFECTS
While many political scientists do not receive federal grants, federal support for basic research funding in the social sciences and humanities is crucial for the professional development of the discipline and the health of higher educational institutions.

FOLLOW UP
After your meeting, send a thank you note via email to the staffer or Member you met with. Provide any follow-up materials you think might be useful.