

CRS Report for Congress

Congressional Staff: Duties and Functions of Selected Positions

June 25, 2008

R. Eric Petersen
Analyst in American National Government
Government and Finance Division



Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Congressional Staff: Duties and Functions of Selected Positions

Summary

The United States Congress conducts several types of activities for which it employs staff. These activities include assisting Members in official responsibilities in personal, committee, leadership, or administrative office settings. Congressional career tracks generally mirror common stages of other professional careers, but with adaptations to the congressional workplace. These adaptations include relatively short career ladders on which staff may acquire substantial responsibilities in a relatively short period of time, and close support of a Member's legislative and representational responsibilities.

This report focuses on positions in House and Senate personal offices (Member staff), and provides sample position descriptions for 14 positions with similar job titles in each chamber. As with all congressional entities with employing authority, individual Members of Congress have wide discretion in setting many workplace policies, including procedures for establishing the duties and functions of staff positions. Staffing decisions may be determined by the priorities and goals of a congressional office, and the preferences and needs of a Member's constituents.

This report, which will be updated as warranted, is one of several CRS products focusing on various aspects of congressional operations and administration. Others include CRS Report RL33220, *Support Offices in the House of Representatives: Roles and Authorities*, by Ida A. Brudnick; CRS Report RL34188, *Congressional Official Mail Costs*, by Matthew Eric Glassman; CRS Report RL34495, *Continuation of Employment Benefits for Senate Restaurant Employees*, by Jacob R. Straus; and CRS Report RL33686, *Roles and Duties of a Member of Congress*, by R. Eric Petersen.

Contents

Introduction	1
Sources of Position Descriptions	4
Data Collection Issues	5
Organizing Data by Position Titles	5
Duties and Functions of Selected Staff Positions in	
Congressional Personal Offices	10
Chief of Staff	10
Alternate Job Titles	10
Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker	10
Alternate Job Titles	11
Counsel	11
Alternate Job Titles	11
District or State Director	11
Alternate Job Titles	11
District or State Scheduler	11
Alternate Job Titles	11
Executive Assistant	11
Alternate Job Titles	12
Field Representative	12
Alternate Job Titles	12
Grants and Projects Coordinator (House), Director of Special Projects and/or Grants (Senate)	12
Alternate Job Titles	12
Legislative Correspondent	13
Alternate Job Titles	13
Legislative Director	13
Alternate Job Titles	13
Office Manager (House), Administrative Director/ Office Manager (Senate)	13
Alternate Job Titles	13
Press Secretary/Communications Director	14
Alternate Job Titles	14
Scheduler (Washington, DC)	14
Alternate Job Titles	14
Systems Administrator	15
Alternate Job Titles	15

List of Tables

Table 1. Accuracy of Position Descriptions Proffered in House and Senate Studies, by Position	8
--	---

Congressional Staff: Duties and Functions of Selected Positions

Introduction

The United States Congress conducts several types of activities for which it employs staff.¹ Congressional employees are retained to perform public duties that include assisting Members in official responsibilities in personal, committee, leadership, or administrative office settings.² Organized to support Members of Congress in their various duties and functions in Washington, DC, and constituency offices around the United States, staff are involved in virtually all elements of the work of Congress.³

Individuals in congressional staff positions may come from a wide range of training or professional backgrounds. These might include the law, business, medicine, political campaigns, engineering, the social sciences, or fine arts. Nevertheless, congressional staff are seen by some as a professional cohort. Congressional career tracks generally mirror common stages of other professional careers, but with adaptations to the congressional workplace. These adaptations include relatively short career ladders on which staff may acquire substantial

¹ Examples of Congress-specific activities are those related to legislative, representational, or political duties of a Member of Congress, or collective responsibilities to debate or enact national legislation, or to oversee the implementation of laws. Some of these duties are carried out in several staff positions, including legislative directors, caseworkers, committee professional staff, parliamentarians, or reading clerks.

² Congressional staff may not perform nonofficial or personal duties. Campaign duties on behalf of a congressional employer may not be carried out by House staff. With the exception of three designated staff members per Member office who may carry out limited campaign duties on behalf of their employers, most Senate staff are prohibited from campaign duties in the course of their Senate employment. When they are not in official duty status, congressional staff may participate in political campaigns. See, generally, U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Ethics, *Senate Ethics Manual*, 108th Congress, 1st sess., S. Pub. 108-1 (Washington: GPO, 2003), pp. 139-147 and 193-196, available at [<http://ethics.senate.gov/downloads/pdf/manual.pdf>]; and U.S. House, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, *House Ethics Manual*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington: GPO, 2008), pp. 121-142, and 267-298.

³ See, e.g., David E. Price, *The Congressional Experience*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004), pp. 66-69; and Michael J. Malbin, *Unelected Representatives: Congressional Staff and the Future of Representative Government* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980), pp. 3-7.

responsibilities in a relatively short period of time, and close support of a Member's legislative and representational responsibilities.⁴

This report focuses on positions in House and Senate personal offices,⁵ and provides sample position descriptions for 14 positions with similar job titles in each chamber.⁶ Identifying congressional staff duties and job descriptions is complicated by the highly decentralized nature of congressional employment practices. The House of Representatives is composed of as many as 500 entities that set job criteria and employ staff;⁷ in the Senate, there are about 135 such entities.⁸ Congressional staff may work in a Member, committee, or leadership office; in positions under the authority of chamber officers;⁹ or in chamber support entities with specialized

⁴ Barbara S. Romzek and Jennifer A. Utter, "Congressional Legislative Staff: Political Professionals or Clerks?" *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 41, no. 4, Oct. 1997, pp. 1251-1279; and Barbara S. Romzek and Jennifer A. Utter, "Career Dynamics of Congressional Legislative Staff: Preliminary Profile and Research Questions," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, vol. 6, no. 3, July 1996, pp. 415-442.

⁵ This report excludes consideration of congressional staff positions under the direction of House or Senate leadership offices, committees, officers, and support entities.

⁶ No congressional entity proffers authoritative staff position descriptions. There are resources available to congressional offices seeking staff, but those resources generally do not offer detailed assistance in determining position titles or duties. In the Senate, the Senate Placement Office provides informational interviews to prospective applicants, and provides a weekly bulletin of available positions for offices wishing to advertise vacancies. The office will deliver resumes and applications of potential job candidates to Senate offices upon request. See U.S. Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, *United States Senate Handbook* (Washington: 2006), pp. I-1 — I-2, hereafter *Senate Handbook*, available to Senate offices at [<http://webster.senate.gov/rules/handbook>]. In the House, the Committee on House Administration provides a model employee handbook template, available on the committee's website at [http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=51&Itemid=37]. The template is silent on procedures to determine the actual job duties and responsibilities of an employee. The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF), a private organization interested in congressional management issues, provides a series of core functions that it argues must be carried out in a congressional office. CMF also ascribes cursory job descriptions to some specific job titles, but does not argue that specific tasks must reside in specific positions. See Congressional Management Foundation, *Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide*, 10th ed. (Washington: Congressional Management Foundation, 2006), pp. 68-80.

⁷ Entities that may hire House staff on their own initiative include Member, leadership, and committee offices; party conferences; the Clerk of the House; the Sergeant at Arms; the Chief Administrative Officer; the Chaplain of the House; the Parliamentarian; the House Legal Counsel and other legal offices; the Inspector General; and the House child care center.

⁸ Entities that may hire Senate staff on their own initiative include Member, leadership, and committee offices; party conferences and secretaries; the Secretary of the Senate; the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate; the Chaplain of the Senate; Senate Legal Counsel; the Senate child care center; and the Senate library.

⁹ House officers include the Clerk, the Sergeant at Arms, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Chaplain. Senate officers include the Secretary, and the Sergeant at Arms and
(continued...)

duties.¹⁰ Additional challenges of the congressional personnel environment may include the absence of some practices common in many professional environments, including the widespread use of position descriptions, or the absence of formal personnel practices and guidelines or clearly established lines of authority for personnel issues in some congressional offices. In offices where personnel practices and guidelines are developed, practices could vary from office to office.

All decisions regarding activities and operations in a Member's office are within the discretion of the Member, subject to chamber rules¹¹ and relevant statute.¹² As with all congressional entities with employing authority, individual Members of Congress have wide discretion in setting many workplace policies, including procedures for establishing the duties and functions of staff positions. Staffing decisions may be determined by the priorities and goals of a congressional office, and the preferences and needs of a Member's constituents.

⁹ (...continued)

Doorkeeper.

¹⁰ House support entities include Office of the General Counsel; Office of Legislative Counsel; Office of Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Operations; Office of Inspector General; and the Parliamentarian. Senate support entities include Senate Legal Counsel, Legislative Counsel, and the Senate Library.

¹¹ In the House, an employing authority may not retain staff who do not perform official duties commensurate with the compensation they receive (House Rule XXIII, cl. 8). A House employing authority may not discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, due to their race, color, religion, sex (including marital or parental status), disability, age, or national origin. The rule allows House employing authorities to consider residency or political affiliation in employment decisions (House Rule XXIII, cl. 9). In the Senate, an employing authority may not discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or state of physical handicap (Senate Rule XLII).

¹² Employing authorities in the House and Senate are subject to two statutory provisions: an anti-nepotism statute, 5 U.S.C. 3110, and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (CAA), as amended, P.L. 104-1, 2 U.S.C. 1301. 5 U.S.C. 3110 generally prohibits congressional employing authorities from hiring, or recommending for employment, a family member. The CAA generally prohibits discrimination in congressional employment decisions based on an applicant's or employee's age; disability; race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or past or present duty in the uniformed services. Additionally, the act requires that congressional employees must get paid at least the current minimum wage, and that certain employees are entitled to overtime pay. Congressional employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of leave from work for certain family and medical reasons. With some exceptions, congressional employees cannot be required to take a polygraph test. Workplaces in the legislative branch must be free of hazards that are likely to cause death or serious injury. Some congressional employees, but not staff in Member, committee or leadership offices, are also entitled to notification of office closings or mass layoffs, or to form labor organizations to bargain with congressional employers. The CAA established an Office of Compliance to oversee implementation of the act. For more information, see the Office of Compliance website at [<http://www.compliance.gov/>]. Finally, some House officers may employ staff who are subject to the House Employees Position Classification Act, 2 U.S.C. 291, and regulations on applicable employment standards issued by the Committee on House Administration.

Sources of Position Descriptions. In 2006, two salary and employment surveys, the *2006 House Compensation Study: Guide for the 110th Congress* (House study), and the *2006 U.S. Senate Employment, Compensation, Hiring and Benefits Study* (Senate study), were conducted for the House and Senate, respectively.¹³ The studies focused on staff in the personal offices in each chamber, and provided data on salary, work experience, and position duties and functions. Data in the surveys were organized by position titles. Of 18 positions in the House study and 25 positions in the Senate study, there are 14 positions that have roughly congruent position titles and descriptions in both chambers. Those positions included the following:

- Chief of Staff
- Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker
- Counsel
- District or State Director
- District or State Scheduler
- Executive Assistant
- Field Representative
- Grants and Projects Coordinator (House), Director of Special Projects and/or Grants (Senate)
- Legislative Correspondent
- Legislative Director
- Office Manager¹⁴
- Press Secretary/Communications Director¹⁵
- Scheduler (Washington, DC)
- Systems Administrator¹⁶

Summaries of those positions' functions and duties as proffered by the House and Senate studies' administrators¹⁷ are provided below. This material should be

¹³ ICF International, *2006 House Compensation Study: Guide for the 110th Congress*, prepared for the Chief Administrative Office (sic), House of Representatives (Washington: 2006); and U.S. Senate, Secretary of the Senate, *2006 U.S. Senate Employment, Compensation, Hiring and Benefits Study* (Washington: 2006).

¹⁴ In the House study, this position is reported as "Office Manager." In the Senate study, this position is reported as "Administrative Director/Office Manager." Position descriptions proffered in the House and Senate studies for the positions appear comparable.

¹⁵ In the House study, data for the positions of press secretary and communications director are combined and jointly reported. In the Senate study, data for the positions are reported separately. Position descriptions proffered in the House and Senate studies for the positions appear comparable.

¹⁶ Neither study provided data for positions commonly found in House and Senate offices, including staff assistant, and legislative assistant. Both of those titles, however, appear as alternate job titles for one or more of the positions identified in both chambers and presented in this report.

¹⁷ House positions included in the House study and excluded from this analysis due to difficulties in identifying a comparable Senate position include Legislative Aide; Senior Legislative Aide; Staff Assistant (District); and Staff Assistant (Washington, DC). Senate
(continued...)

interpreted with care. Using data from the House and Senate studies raises concerns for several reasons related to data collection, and the potential consequences of organizing data by position title.

Data Collection Issues. Electronic versions of the chamber-appropriate survey were sent to 440 House Member offices and 100 Senate personal offices. The House study indicated that its data were based on the responses of 141 (32.0%) Member offices, while the Senate study indicated that 81 Senate personal offices replied. The House study asserts that its information “allows for stable conclusions to be drawn about the policies and practices of the current Member offices.”¹⁸ The potential precision of that assertion is not clear, since the report provides none of the supporting evaluations or qualifications of how well its data sample might represent the whole population of House personal offices. Similarly, the Senate study provides no explanation of how representative its data are. With an 81% response rate, differences between the survey results and actual practice are likely to be smaller than differences in the House report. Nevertheless, Senate data could be affected by the challenges of surveying samples of relatively small populations and the potential diversity of employment and compensation practices in Senate offices. As with any survey based on a sample of self-selected respondents, there is a risk that the resulting data may not be representative of the population as a whole.

Finally, a survey of the type conducted for the House and Senate requires reliance on respondents. Some problems may arise due to lack of timely responses to the questions, and in having to rely on the survey respondents to be forthcoming in responses, knowledgeable about the choices from which they select, and in possession of complete information. Questions concerning who in each Member office responded to the survey, and how potential differences among individual respondents might affect the final data, are not addressed in either report. Neither report provided any information regarding the characteristics of survey respondents.

Organizing Data by Position Titles. Categorizing congressional staff positions by position title¹⁹ relies on an assumption that similarly titled positions in House and Senate personal offices carry out the same tasks under essentially similar circumstances. While personal offices may carry out similar activities, the assumption might be questionable given the differences in staff resources in House and Senate offices, as well as potential differences within offices of each chamber.

¹⁷ (...continued)

positions included in the Senate study and excluded here include Assistant Administrative Director/Assistant Office Manager; Assistant to the Chief of Staff; Constituent Services Representative Supervisor/Casework Supervisor; Data Entry Clerk/Mailroom Staff Assistant; Deputy Chief of Staff/Deputy Communications Director/Deputy Press Secretary; Mailroom Supervisor; Receptionist/Staff Assistant; and State Office Manager.

¹⁸ ICF International, *2006 House Compensation Study*, p. I.

¹⁹ A Senator may establish position titles in his or her office by written notification to the disbursing office of the Senate, 2 U.S.C. 61-1(d)(1)(C)(2). No similar explicit authority for a Member of the House was identified.

For example, a House office that supports an At Large Representative (a Representative from a state with one seat in the House) attends to the same constituency as that of a Senate office from the same state, but the Senator would have at his or her disposal a budget that could potentially support up to twice as many staff as would the Representative.²⁰ At the other end of the spectrum, there may be differences in the nature of operations in the offices of Senators from states with large populations, with staffs as much as five times larger than those of their House colleagues who represent districts of considerably smaller populations within those states. Since an element of staff position responsibilities might be based on organizational size and complexity, the differences between House and Senate Member offices could result in differences in job duties between incumbents in similarly named positions. Within the Senate, there might be differences in the nature of position duties in the offices of Senators from states with larger or smaller populations. Within either chamber, there may be differences in staffing approaches due to varied approaches to the work of a congressional office, or because Members have a wide range of varying priorities that particular staff positions serve. Acknowledging the imprecision inherent in congressional job titles, an older edition of the *Senate Handbook* states, “Throughout the Senate, individuals with the same job title perform vastly different duties.”²¹

Other concerns regarding the organization of data according to job title are related to the unique congressional employment environment as well as the aggregation of position data in the surveys. These factors might have an effect on the validity and reliability of any of the congressional duties and functions presented for any position in either chamber’s studies. The analytic reliability of information contained in the surveys may be questionable, due in part to the following:

- differences between the surveys’ position descriptions and what incumbents in those positions actually do. Of concern in both surveys is the question of how well position descriptions proffered by the survey administrators matched day-to-day activities performed by incumbents in those positions. Table 1 summarizes responses to questions that attempted to distinguish differences between the proffered position descriptions and the activities respondents actually carry out.

²⁰ Each Member of the House may employ no more than 18 permanent employees. As many as four additional part-time employees may be designated by the Member in any of the following categories: (1) part-time employees; (2) employees drawing compensation from more than one employing authority of the House; (3) interns receiving pay; (4) employees on leave without pay; and (5) temporary employees. See U.S. Congress, House, *Statement of Disbursements of the House*, as compiled by the Chief Administrative Officer, from April 1, 2007, to June 30, 2007, part 3 of 3, H.Doc. 110-52, 110th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2007), p. 3421. Senators are not bound by limits on the number of staff they may hire. Overall staff compensation levels may not exceed the amounts provided for the Senators’ Official Personnel and Office Expense Account. See U.S. Senate, *Senate Handbook*, p. IV-9, available to Senate offices at [<http://webster.senate.gov/rules/handbook>].

²¹ U.S. Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, *Senate Handbook* (Washington: 1996), p. I-13, available from the author.

- imprecision and lack of consistency of job titles in Congress. The House and Senate surveys identified several alternate titles for each of the 14 positions. The lists were created by asking respondent offices for alternate titles. In the Senate, respondents identified 118 alternative titles to the 14 titles offered by the survey administrators and appearing in both surveys. In the House, similar questions identified 69 unique titles applicable to the sample job descriptions provided by the survey administrator.
- similarity of tasks carried out by staff with similar or dissimilar titles. It may be the case that congressional staff in some positions with vastly different job titles perform similar duties. In several instances, alternate titles match one or more of the 14 titles evaluated here, as well as several of the positions that were identified in only one chamber.²² Cross listed job titles are presented with each position's duties and functions.
- breadth of roles carried out by incumbents in addition to their primary position title. In the House study, respondents were asked to identify any roles they carried out in addition to their primary duties. Respondents identified 131 roles, identified in the House survey by job title.

²² This finding excludes partial job titles that do not match one of the 14 titles, as well as compound titles, such as legislative counsel, legislative aide and counsel, etc. If a systematic approach to including partial matches to the 14 titles were pursued, the number of alternate titles for each position could rise substantially.

Table 1. Accuracy of Position Descriptions Proffered in House and Senate Studies, by Position

Position	House	Senate
Chief of Staff	Very Well 73.0% Somewhat Closely 27.0%	Very Well 85.2% Somewhat Closely 14.8%
Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker	Very Well 71.6% Somewhat Closely 27.9% Not At All 0.5%	Very Well 72.8% Somewhat Closely 17.3% Does Not Describe 1.2% No Position 4.9%
Counsel	Very Well 37.5% Somewhat Closely 50.0% Not At All 12.5%	Very Well 23.6% ^a Somewhat Closely 27.8% Does Not Describe 6.9% No Position 41.7%
District/State Director	Very Well 73.0% Somewhat Closely 27.0%	Very Well 67.9% Somewhat Closely 22.2% Does Not Describe 2.5% No Position 4.94%
District or State Scheduler	Very Well 58.8% Somewhat Closely 38.2%	Very Well 35.8% Somewhat Closely 22.2% Does Not Describe 1.2% No Position 38.3%
Executive Assistant	Very Well 38.7% Somewhat Closely 54.8% Not At All 6.5%	Very Well 43.2% Somewhat Closely 19.8% Does Not Describe 6.2% No Position 29.6%
Field Representative	Very Well 57.3% Somewhat Closely 39.8% Not At All 1.9%	Very Well 67.9% Somewhat Closely 23.5% Does Not Describe 1.2% No Position 4.9%
Grants and Projects Coordinator (House) Director of Special Projects and/or Grants (Senate)	Very Well 31.6% Somewhat Closely 57.9% Does Not Describe 10.5%	Very Well 24.1% ^b Somewhat Closely 38.0% Does Not Describe 2.5% No Position 35.4%
Legislative Correspondent	Very Well 75.0% Somewhat Closely 23.6% Not At All 1.4%	Very Well 80.2% Somewhat Closely 19.8%
Legislative Director	Very Well 78.8% Somewhat Closely 21.2%	Very Well 83.4% Somewhat Closely 11.1% No Position 3.7%
Office Manager/ Administrative Director	Very Well 34.1% Somewhat Closely 61.0% Not At All 4.9%	Very Well 57.8% ^c Somewhat Closely 36.6% Does Not Describe 4.2% No Position 1.23%

Position	House	Senate
Press Secretary/Communications Director ^d	Very Well 80.0% Somewhat Closely 20.0%	Very Well 56.8% Somewhat Closely 27.2% Does Not Describe 1.2% No Position 9.9%
Communications Director (Senate only)	—	Very Well 63.0% Somewhat Closely 19.8% Does Not Describe 2.5% No Position 13.6%
Scheduler (Washington, DC)	Very Well 58.7% Somewhat Closely 39.1% Not At All 2.2%	Very Well 69.1% Somewhat Closely 19.8% Does Not Describe 2.5% No Position 7.4%
Systems Administrator	Very Well 42.9% Somewhat Closely 57.1%	Very Well 72.8% Somewhat Closely 19.8% Does Not Describe 2.5% No Position 3.7%

Sources: ICF International, *2006 House Compensation Study: Guide for the 110th Congress*, prepared for the Chief Administrative Office (sic), House of Representatives (Washington: 2006); and U.S. Senate, Secretary of the Senate, *2006 U.S. Senate Employment, Compensation, Hiring and Benefits Study* (Washington: 2006). The House report indicated that its data were based on the responses of 141 (32.0%) Member offices, while the Senate report indicated that 81 Senate personal offices replied. Not all respondents answered all questions in either survey. The House column reports responses to the question, by percentage, “How well does the job title and summary of duties listed above describe the primary responsibilities of the employee in this position?” The Senate column reports responses to the question, by percentage, “Does the summary of primary duties listed above accurately describe the responsibilities of the incumbent in your office?” in one of the following categories: Describes responsibilities very well (Very Well); Describes responsibilities somewhat closely (Somewhat Closely) Does not describe the responsibilities (Does Not Describe); and We do not have this position in our office (No Position). Categories for which no response was reported are excluded from the table. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Notes:

- a. Nine Senate offices did not respond to the question. Percentages are based on 72 responses.
- b. Two Senate offices did not respond to the question. Percentages are based on 79 responses.
- c. Ten Senate offices did not respond to the question. Percentages are based on 71 responses.
- d. In the House study, data for the positions of press secretary and communications director are combined and jointly reported. In the Senate study, data for the positions are reported separately.

Duties and Functions of Selected Staff Positions in Congressional Personal Offices²³

Chief of Staff

An incumbent in this position typically acts as the Member's chief policy advisor, and may also undertake political advising. An incumbent may also

- develop and implement all policy objectives, strategies, and operating plans for a Member's office;
- manage and direct all activities and staff of the Member's Washington, DC, and field offices;
- coordinate the activities of the Member with the leadership of the appropriate chamber and committees; and
- oversee the Member's office budget.

Alternate Job Titles. House: *Legislative Director*, and Administrative Assistant. Senate: *Counsel, District Scheduler, District Director, Executive Assistant, Field Representative, Grants and Projects Coordinator, Legislative Director, Office Manager, Press Secretary/Communications Director, Scheduler (Washington, DC), Systems Administrator, Legislative Aide, Senior Legislative Aide.*

Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker²⁴

An incumbent in this position typically acts as a liaison with federal, state and/or local agencies on behalf of constituents. In the course of employment, an incumbent may

- respond to casework inquiries from constituents,
- act as the grassroots representative for the Member within in assigned areas of responsibility, and
- monitor and update the Member and district director on district and local issues.

²³ Congressional position description and salary data are based on information provided in ICF International, *2006 House Compensation Study: Guide for the 110th Congress*, prepared for the Chief Administrative Office (sic), House of Representatives (Washington: 2006); and U.S. Senate, Secretary of the Senate, *2006 U.S. Senate Employment, Compensation, Hiring and Benefits Study* (Washington: 2006). The House report indicated that its data were based on the responses of 141 (32.0%) Member offices, while the Senate report indicated that 81 Senate personal offices replied. This information should be interpreted with care due to the inherently imprecise comparability of congressional positions of the same title. Italicized alternate job titles are one of the other positions listed in this report that have roughly congruent position titles and descriptions in both chambers.

²⁴ Further information on the duties of a caseworker is available in CRS Report RL33209, *Casework in a Congressional Office: Background, Rules, Laws, and Resources*, by R. Eric Petersen.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Casework Manager, Constituent Advocate, District Aide, District Representative. Senate: *District Scheduler, Field Representative, Grants and Projects Coordinator, Legislative Correspondent, Office Manager, Systems Administrator, Senior Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (District), Staff Assistant (Washington, DC).*

Counsel

An incumbent in this position is typically an attorney who advises the Member on legal issues and ensures compliance with the law and chamber Rules, including ethics guidelines.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Legislative Counsel, Legislative Counsel & Director. Senate: *Legislative Director, Legislative Aide, Senior Legislative Aide.*

District or State Director

A district director typically oversees all district office operations for a Member of the House; represents the Member, or assigns appropriate staff to do so, in the district; and travels within the district to keep abreast of local concerns.

A state director typically manages the principal state office and/or other state offices of a Senator, and oversees all state office operations.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Community Services Director, Deputy District Director, District Chief of Staff, District Representative, District Supervisor. Senate: *Chief of Staff, Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker, Counsel, District Scheduler, Field Representative, Grants and Projects Coordinator.*

District or State Scheduler

A district scheduler typically maintains a House Member's district schedule, travel plans, and related records; briefs the Member on all scheduling activities of the district office; and makes recommendations on proposed scheduled activities.

A state scheduler typically manages a Senator's schedule in the state.

Alternate Job Titles. House: *Office Manager, District Office Coordinator, District Representative/Scheduler.* Senate: *Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker, Executive Assistant, Field Representative, Grants and Projects Coordinator, Office Manager, Systems Administrator.*

Executive Assistant

An incumbent in this position typically acts as liaison for the Member with the Member's personal office staff, committee staff, other Members and their staffs, and the public. An incumbent may also serve as the Member's confidential assistant with respect to all matters affecting the Member's performance of his or her official responsibilities. Position duties may also include

- maintaining the Member's files, including notes, correspondence, and all information related to travel;
- logging and monitoring the Member's incoming telephone calls, taking messages, and placing outgoing calls for the Member; and
- ensuring that the Member is provided with briefing materials for various activities in which the Member participates.

Alternate Job Titles. House: *Scheduler*, Administrative Assistant, Administrative Secretary, Congressional Aide, Executive/Legislative Assistant. Senate: *Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Office Manager, Scheduler (Washington, DC), Systems Administrator*, District Scheduler, Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (Washington, DC).

Field Representative

An incumbent in this position typically acts as a liaison with federal, state, and local agencies for the Member and the Member's constituents. A field representative may also assess casework for matters that might require legislative action and make recommendations to the district or state director, or chief of staff.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Community Representative, Congressional Liaison, Constituent Liaison, Director of Public Liaison, District Liaison, District Assistant, District Coordinator, District Representative, Military Liaison, Policy Advisor, Senior Staff Assistant, Senior Community Representative, Senior Field Representative for Labor Relations, Special Assistant. Senate: *Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker, District Scheduler, Grants and Projects Coordinator, Legislative Director, Press Secretary/Communications Director*, Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (District).

Grants and Projects Coordinator (House), Director of Special Projects and/or Grants (Senate)

An incumbent in one of these position typically has primary responsibilities for special projects or grant procurement.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Community Development Coordinator, Congressional Liaison and Grants Coordinator, Director of Economic Development, Director of Special Projects, District Projects Manager, Field Representative — Grants, Grants Coordinator and Suburban Director, Outreach Director, Projects Director, Senior Field Representative for Special Projects. Senate: Legislative Assistant, Appropriations Director, Community Outreach Representative, Constituent Service Coordinator, Director of State Communications and Special Projects, Director of Research and Legislative Correspondence, Field Representative for Grants, Grants Administrator and Deputy Scheduler, Grants Coordinator, Project Manager, Projects Director, Projects Coordinator, Resource Specialist, Special Assistant, Special Project Coordinator, Special Projects Manager, Staff Assistant, State Projects Director.

Legislative Correspondent

A legislative correspondent typically provides research for and responds to constituents' correspondence. These duties might include drafting, proofreading, and printing letters, and providing administrative support to legislative aides or legislative assistants as needed.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Legislative Aide and Legislative Correspondent, Legislative Correspondent/Legislative Assistant. Senate: *Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker, Counsel, Grants and Projects Coordinator, Office Manager, Scheduler (Washington, DC), Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (Washington, DC).*

Legislative Director

An incumbent in this position typically manages office legislative activities, and may supervise a Member's legislative staff. A legislative director might assist in the development of policy positions and legislative initiatives, or monitor and report to the chief of staff or Member on floor activity.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Administrative Assistant, Deputy Chief of Staff, Legislative Counsel, Policy Director. Senate: *Chief of Staff, Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker Counsel, Legislative Correspondent, Office Manager, Systems Administrator, Legislative Aide, Senior Legislative Aide.*

Office Manager (House), Administrative Director/Office Manager (Senate)

An incumbent in one of these positions typically supervises Washington, DC, office staff, including monitoring personnel matters and ensuring that office policies and procedures are followed. Duties may include

- directing the administrative support staff of the office;
- maintenance of office accounts in accordance with law, chamber rules, and the regulations of the appropriate chamber administrative committee;²⁵ and
- procuring and maintaining equipment for Washington, DC, and field offices.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Assistant Office Manager (District), Deputy Chief of Staff, Director of Operations, Finance Administrator, Financial Manager, Office Manager/Executive Assistant/Scheduler, Office Manager/Scheduler, Projects Director/Office Manager. Senate: *Constituent Services Representative/Caseworker, District Scheduler, Executive Assistant, Field Representative, Grants and Projects*

²⁵ The Committee on House Administration, or the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

Coordinator, Scheduler (Washington, DC), Systems Administrator, Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (Washington, DC).

Press Secretary/Communications Director

Incumbents in either position²⁶ typically manage and coordinate all communication activities, including media contacts, for the Member and the office. Other duties may include

- developing and implementing media and communications strategies for the Member,
- acting as the formal spokesperson and media liaison for the Member, and
- writing speeches for the Member.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Administrative Assistant/Press Secretary, Assistant Press Secretary (District), Deputy Chief of Staff, Press Assistant, Press Secretary. Senate: *Counsel, District Director, District Scheduler, Executive Assistant, Field Representative, Office Manager, Scheduler (Washington, DC), Systems Administrator, Legislative Aide, Senior Legislative Aide.*

Scheduler (Washington, DC)

A Washington, DC-based House scheduler typically maintains a Member's official schedule, travel plans, and related records. In addition an incumbent may also

- brief the Member on all scheduling activities of the Washington, DC, office;
- make recommendations on proposed meetings;
- schedule staff meetings and briefings; and
- coordinate the scheduling of Member press and media interactions with the press secretary or communications director.

A Washington, DC-based Senate scheduler typically maintains a Senator's daily, weekly, and monthly schedules.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Administrative Assistant, Executive Assistant/Scheduler. Senate: *District Scheduler, Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Office Manager, Systems Administrator, Legislative Aide, Staff Assistant (Washington, DC).*

²⁶ In the House study, data for the positions of press secretary and communications director are combined and jointly reported. In the Senate study, data for the positions are reported separately.

Systems Administrator

An incumbent in this position typically updates and maintains all office computers and the office computer network. Other duties of the position may include

- development and maintenance of an information management strategy for the office;
- coordination of the filing and indexing of all correspondence and mass mailings;
- consulting with users to determine hardware, software, and/or system specifications; and
- serving as the liaison between the office and chamber technical support entities.

Alternate Job Titles. House: Director of Technology and Community Outreach, System Administrator/Legislative Correspondent, Technology Director. Senate: *Office Manager, Legislative Correspondent, Legislative Aide.*

EveryCRSReport.com "Congressional Staff: Duties, Qualifications, and Skills Identified by Members of Congress for Selected Positions, R. Eric Petersen, Specialist in American National Government, March 10, 2020: "The roles, duties, and activities of congressional staff are matters of ongoing interest to Members of Congress, congressional staff, and observers of Congress. Members of the House and Senate establish their own employment policies and practices for their personal offices. It is arguably the case that within Member offices, a common group of activities is executed for which staff are CRS Report RL34545, Congressional Staff: Duties and Functions of Selected Positions, by R. Eric Petersen. Author Information. R. Eric Petersen, Coordinator Specialist in American National Government. CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. As with all congressional entities with employing authority, individual Members of Congress have wide discretion in setting many workplace policies, including procedures for establishing the duties and functions of staff positions. Read more. Interested in research on Career Mobility? Join ResearchGate to discover and stay up-to-date with the latest research from leading experts in Career Mobility and many other scientific topics. Join for free. ResearchGate iOS App. v Staff Assistant/Receptionist The staff assistant/receptionist is most often located at the front desk of a Member's office and is responsible for greeting guests and answering the phones. Other responsibilities may include arranging Capitol and White House tours for constituents, handling general requests, opening and routing office mail and minor legislative responsibilities. In any congressional office, a substantial amount of time is devoted to nurturing political ties in the state or congressional district as well as in Washington. Staff Functions. Titles and responsibilities may differ slightly from one committee to another. Following is a description of the staff in a typical committee office.