

Acknowledgments

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Contents

- Acknowledgments..... 2**
- Section I: Introduction to Academy Advocacy 5**
 - Introduction.....6
 - Your Role as a Grassroots Advocate7
 - Academy Policy Priority Areas8
 - Taking a Stand: Academy Positions, Consensuses and Stances 9
 - The Academy Speaks with One Voice on Policy Issues 9
- Section II: Getting Started..... 10**
 - The Academy’s Policy and Advocacy Framework..... 11**
 - Academy Policy Initiatives and Advocacy Team..... 12
 - Legislative and Public Policy Committee 12
 - Dietetic Practice Group Involvement in Legislative and Public Policy Issues..... 13
 - Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee 14
 - Affiliate Public Policy Panel 14
- Section III: The Basics: Federal 22**
 - The Basics: How the Legislative Process Works..... 23**
 - The United States Congress – The House and the Senate..... 23
 - Leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives..... 24
 - Leadership in the U.S. Senate 24
 - Committee: The Legislative Work Room 25
 - Tiered Approach to Advocacy..... 27
 - How a Bill Becomes a Law..... 28
 - Federal Appropriations and Budget Process..... 31
 - Federal Legislative Staff: Who’s Who 33**
 - Working with Congressional Staff..... 34
 - The Regulatory Process: Implementation of a New Law 35
- Section IV: The Basics: State 36**
 - State Legislatures and the Legislative Process 37**
 - Preparing for the Legislative Session 37
 - The State Legislative Process..... 39
 - The State Regulatory Process 40
 - Who’s Who? 40

Section V: Advocacy in Action	42
Working with Your Elected Officials	43
Email Your Elected Official	44
Connect on Social Media	45
Speak at a Public Meeting or Town Hall.....	46
Meet Your Member of Congress In–District	48
Take Your Congress Member to Work.....	53
In-District Events and ANDPAC.....	54
Working with Coalitions	55
Following Up and Staying In Touch.....	56
The Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit	57
Principles of Effective Advocacy	58
Additional Tips for Advocacy Success	60
Section VI: Tools of the Trade	61
Advocacy Resources	62
Glossary	65
Legislative Terms	65
Federal Agency Acronyms	68
Academy Acronyms	69
Appendix	70
Position Descriptions	70

Section I:

Introduction to Academy Advocacy

Introduction

Representing more than 107,000 registered dietitian nutritionists, nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered, and advanced degree nutritionists, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest association of food and nutrition professionals and is committed to creating a world where all people thrive through the transformative power of food and nutrition.

Public policy and advocacy are core functions of the Academy and are critical to achieving our mission, vision and goals. Not only does public policy significantly shape the public image of the Academy, but it also shapes the nutrition and dietetics profession, positioning registered dietitian nutritionists and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered, as the food and nutrition experts. Advocacy efforts enhance the value of the RDN and NDTR credentials and bring nutrition professionals to the forefront of the policy process by supporting enactment of effective legislation and regulations that support the Academy's priorities.

This Grassroots Advocacy Guidebook provides public policy leaders and members of affiliates and dietetic practice groups with guidance for policy and advocacy work.

*The Academy
is dedicated to
improving health
and advancing the
profession through
research, education
and advocacy.*

Your Role as a Grassroots Advocate

Grassroots advocacy is defined as any advocacy activity that takes place at the local or community level. Grassroots advocacy involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause to shape public perception or influence public policy; it is a process by which stakeholders make their voices heard.

Grassroots advocacy has become increasingly effective for associations such as the Academy to harness the thoughts, ideas, relationships and actions of members to generate change within the public policy sphere of influence. Direct lobbying includes decision makers, a specific policy and asking for a vote. Grassroots advocacy relies almost entirely on volunteers, rather than professional lobbyists, to educate legislators and other government officials on how legislation and regulations impact stakeholders and the public. Examples of grassroots advocacy include meeting with and educating a member of Congress in-district on how a proposed policy will affect constituents or writing an opinion editorial – also known as an “op-ed” – in local media outlets on the impact of a specific policy change.

The power of grassroots advocacy can be extremely effective when many individuals come together. From issues such as improved Medicare and Medicaid coverage to dietetics licensure, the Academy’s dedicated grassroots advocates use their voices at the local, state and federal levels to make a difference in shaping the future of our profession and America’s health.

As nutrition experts, it is up to us to advocate for our profession. If we do not use our collective voice on critical health and nutrition policies and share our personal experiences in practice, legislators and regulators are less likely to have the information they need to create and implement sound legislation or regulation that supports our profession and our community.



Academy Policy Priority Areas

To achieve our vision of “a world where all people thrive through the transformative power of food and nutrition,” the Academy works with policy leaders, affiliates, dietetic practice groups, member interest groups and all Academy members to promote health and reduce the burden of chronic disease through nutrition services and interventions in the focus areas outlined in the [Academy’s Strategic Plan](#). Through 2025, the Academy will utilize advocacy as a core strategy to prioritize programs and initiatives for the following areas of focus:

Focus Area	Impact Goals
<p style="text-align: center;">Prevention and Well-Being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and advocate for policies that support prevention and well-being initiatives • Increase equitable access to nutrition and lifestyle services • Reduce prevalence of overweight and obesity and associated chronic diseases • Decrease all forms of malnutrition
<p style="text-align: center;">Health Care and Health Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate the role of nutrition status in quality health care throughout the lifecycle • Identify and treat all forms of malnutrition • Leverage data to demonstrate effectiveness of dietetic and nutrition interventions • Improve health equity, including through access to medical nutrition therapy services
<p style="text-align: center;">Food and Nutrition Safety and Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase equitable access to and utilization of safe, nutritious food and water • Advance sustainable nutrition and resilient food systems • Leverage innovations in the reduction of food waste and loss • Champion legislation and regulations that increase food and nutrition security throughout the lifecycle

Taking a Stand: Academy Positions, Consensuses and Stances

Supportive research has been identified for each of the Academy's policy priority areas, including topics addressed in the [Evidence Analysis Library](#) and current [Academy position papers](#). Academy **positions** are formed based on systematically reviewed, high-quality, scientific evidence and are published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. Position statements are active for five years, at which point they are reviewed, updated or retired based on the best evidence available.

If only limited evidence is available, a **consensus statement** may be generated, but this statement may not be used to guide practice. More information on the Academy's position paper process can be found [here](#).

In the absence of an official position or consensus statement, the Academy's Legislative and Public Policy Committee develops a **stance**, often through a task force of experts who examine policy considerations and use the best available evidence to assess implications for members and the public at large. Once approved by LPPC, stances are delivered to the Academy Board of Directors for approval.

The Academy uses position papers, consensus statements and stances to determine whether to support, refute or remain neutral on a policy issue. A neutral position or stance is different from not having one; remaining neutral on an issue area allows the Academy to share evidence, information and concerns related to a policy issue.

The Academy Speaks with One Voice on Policy Issues

Affiliates, dietetic practice groups and member interest groups are contractually obligated to conform to a position, consensus or stance that aligns with the Academy. Affiliates, DPGs and MIGs are asked to consult with the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team before making a statement on a policy issue. Please contact the Academy's [Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy](#) for more information.

It is vital for the Academy to speak with one voice on policy issues.

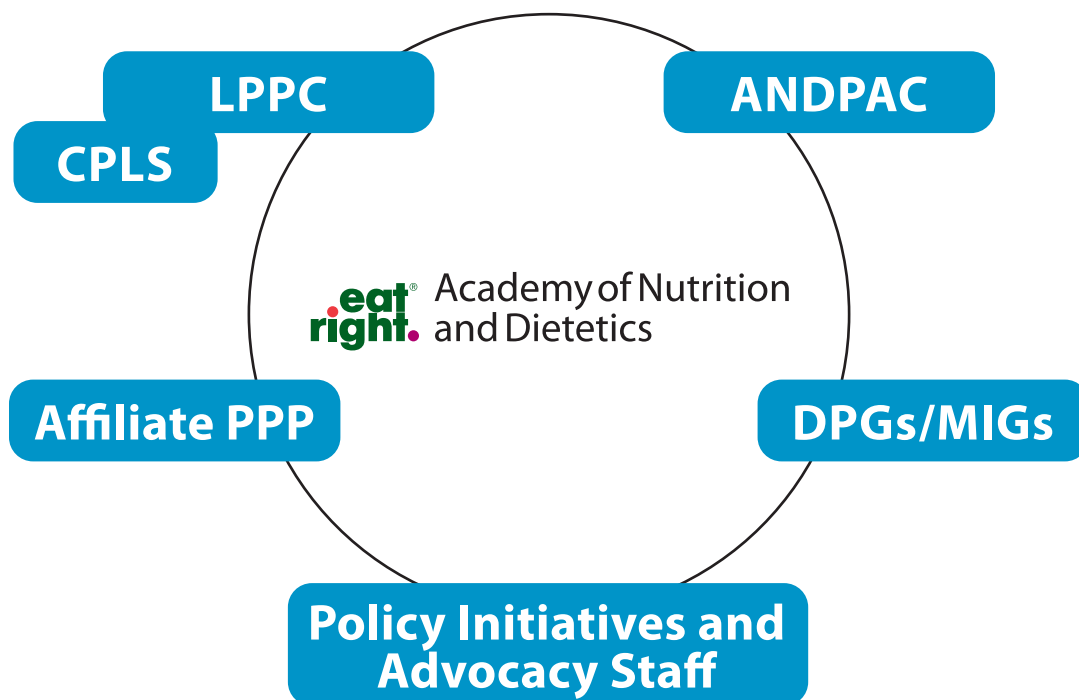
Section II:

Getting Started

The Academy's Policy and Advocacy Framework

The framework of the Academy's public policy and advocacy efforts is the result of collaboration between the following:

- Policy Initiatives and Advocacy Staff
- Legislative and Public Policy Committee
- Consumer Protection and Licensure Subcommittee
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee
- Affiliate Public Policy Panels
- Dietetic Practice Groups and Member Interest Groups



Academy Policy Initiatives and Advocacy Team

The Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy office in Washington, D.C., supports the Academy's priority areas through strategic policy efforts, identifying opportunities and challenges in legislative and regulatory activity, building effective alliances and partnerships with other organizations and maintaining relationships with elected officials. The Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team also implements the LPPC's plan of work, which includes managing the Academy's grassroots advocacy program that engages Academy policy leaders and members in grassroots activities, including soliciting member experts for input on regulatory comments, assisting affiliates with their state-level advocacy efforts, providing hands-on training and education to members at quarterly advocacy days and much more. For any questions on the Academy's policy and advocacy efforts, contact the [Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy office](#).

Legislative and Public Policy Committee

The Academy's [Legislative and Public Policy Committee](#) provides guidance for the Academy's legislative and public policy activities, including, but not limited to, activities related to federal and state public policy, legislative and regulatory issues. The LPPC oversees the Academy's stances and advocacy strategies and identifies opportunities for grassroots initiatives. This committee consists of nine volunteer leaders who serve a staggered three-year term, and three ex-officio appointed members who serve a one-year term: the Academy's President-Elect, Speaker of the House and Political Action Committee Chair. The LPPC meets once a month via conference call as well as annually at FNCE® and the Academy's Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit. The LPPC reports to the Academy's Board of Directors and House of Delegates.

Consumer Protection and Licensure Subcommittee

As a subcommittee of the LPPC, the [Consumer Protection and Licensure Subcommittee](#) assists with the Academy's efforts to ensure that consumers have access to qualified professionals who demonstrate the knowledge, skill and competency necessary to provide safe and ethical nutrition therapy. The CPLS consists of 11 Academy members, eight of whom serve staggered three-year terms, in addition to three ex-officio members representing the Academy Board of Directors, the Commission on Dietetic Registration and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, who each serve one-year terms.

Dietetic Practice Group Involvement in Legislative and Public Policy Issues

The Academy's dietetic practice groups are vital to achieving the Academy's public policy goals. DPG policy leaders work to creatively engage members to participate in local, state and national grassroots efforts for their DPG's content area, including: sharing information about policy issues affecting the DPG at meetings or on webinars; providing policy content for newsletters, social media or websites; and advocating on behalf of the DPG at state or national legislative visits. DPGs provide the expert voice the Academy needs to develop stances and positions, write regulations and comment on policy issue areas.

In order to ensure effective collaboration in Academy policy and advocacy efforts, each DPG should:

1. Identify one member of the DPG to serve as the policy and advocacy leader for a three-year term;
2. As requested, identify members of the DPG to serve as content experts for policy initiatives – consider conducting an annual survey and networking at conferences and meetings to assess member expertise;
3. Collect and compile content expertise on behalf of the DPG for Academy public policy initiatives at the local, state and federal levels, including regulatory comment submissions, stance or position development and review and legislation language development;
4. Connect with affiliates to provide support and guidance in policy areas and serve as a local resource to members. The DPG PAL should always be connected with their state affiliate public policy panel, but a best practice among DPGs is also to develop a liaison program where DPG content experts are identified in each state affiliate to assist in promoting efforts relevant to both the DPG and state-level policy issue areas;
5. Communicate the DPG's public policy goals annually to the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team through the development of a Public Policy Plan of Work, outlining the regulatory, legislative and other policy goals of the DPG;
6. Collaborate and confer regularly with Academy staff on the Academy's public policy priority areas and emerging public policy issues;
7. Engage DPG members and policy leaders (especially chair, chair-elect, past chair, DPG delegate, PAL and reimbursement representative) in grassroots advocacy efforts that align with Academy strategic measure goals;
8. Support the Academy's public policy positions and stances. DPG-developed messaging materials that are practice-area specific must be submitted to the director of DPG/MIG/affiliate relations and to Academy Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff for approval; and
9. Communicate with the director, DPG/MIG/affiliate relations and the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team prior to advocating on a position or stance. ***DPGs are restricted from publicly advocating for a position/stance that is not consistent with the Academy's official position, including submitting regulatory or other public comments.***

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee is a financially-separate arm of the Academy that works to advance the Academy's legislative and public policy priorities. ANDPAC is the only political action committee broadly focused on food, nutrition and health, supporting federal candidates who align with Academy policy priorities.



ANDPAC educates Academy members about the political process and encourages participation in advocacy. ANDPAC is funded only by member contributions; ANDPAC does not receive any support from member dues. The ANDPAC Board of Directors oversees the Academy's political action committee and consists of nine Academy members who serve three-year terms, and the following ex-officio members: an Academy Board of Directors Liaison and LPPC Liaison, and Academy's Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer.



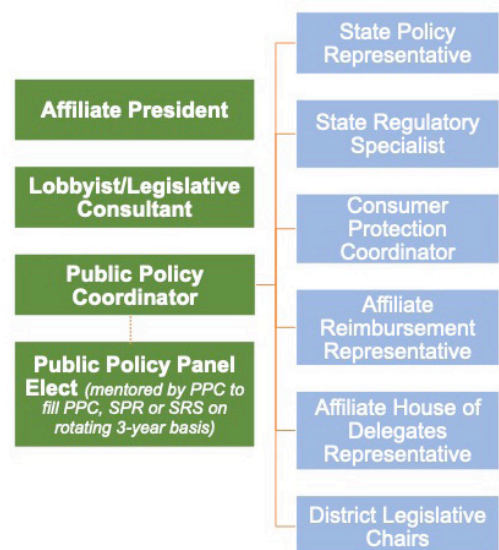
Affiliate Public Policy Panel

The suggested public policy panel structure provides affiliates with a minimum to meet the Academy's policy and advocacy goals through grassroots engagement at the local, state and federal levels. The panel should consist of at least seven member leaders who work together to affect policy change; however, affiliates may choose to add additional members. For example, when licensure is at risk, the affiliate may choose to add a task force to work specifically on this issue area. The Academy recommends that the affiliate public policy coordinator serve as chair of the public policy panel, with support from the affiliate president.

Affiliate public policy panel positions include:

- Affiliate President
- Public Policy Coordinator
- State Policy Representative
- State Regulatory Specialist
- Consumer Protection Coordinator
- Reimbursement Representative
- Delegate – Affiliate

Affiliate Public Policy Panel



Sample of what an affiliate's public policy panel may look like

Public Policy Positions at a Glance

The public policy panel matrix below provides an overview of the positions that are vital to the Academy's grassroots advocacy success.

NOTE: Detailed descriptions for each panel position can be found in the appendix.

Public Policy Panel Matrix			
Panel Position	Position Description	Key Relationships	Staff Contacts
Affiliate President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides support and guidance to the PPP Appoints members of the PPP, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC Affiliate board, PPP and affiliate leaders U.S. Senators, Representatives and their staff Governor State legislators and their staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy Senior Manager, Affiliate and Practice Leader Relations
Public Policy Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads federal legislative initiatives for the affiliate and serves as the federal legislative connection with Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff Coordinates the PPP Meets with members of Congress and their staff, reporting back to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff, the affiliate board and the PPP Supports other affiliate legislative advocacy and policy-related activities, as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliate board, PPP and affiliate leaders, including Affiliate President U.S. Senators and Representatives and their staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy
State Policy Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors state legislative issues, with or without the support of a lobbyist or legislative consultant Coordinates affiliate state legislative activities, member education and advocacy efforts Meets with members of the state legislature and their staff, and reports back to the affiliate board and PPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP and affiliate leaders Affiliate lobbyist or legislative consultant Governor State legislators and their staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy

Public Policy Panel Matrix

Panel Position	Position Description	Key Relationships	Staff Contacts
State Regulatory Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads state regulatory initiatives, monitoring the state register and identifying regulatory comment opportunities Meets with regulatory agencies and reports to PPP and affiliate board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP and affiliate leaders Affiliate lobbyist or legislative consultant State Regulatory Board State agencies and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs
Consumer Protection Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors in-state and nationwide consumer protection and licensure/certification issues Monitors licensure activity and coordinates reporting for stories of success and potential incidents of harm Monitors the state credentialing board, as necessary Attends licensure board meetings and communicates items of importance and relevance to affiliate BOD and Academy Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP and affiliate leaders Licensure/certification board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager, Consumer Protection and Regulation
Reimbursement Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliate Reimbursement Representative serves as coordinator of advocacy efforts to expand state nutrition coverage policies DPG Reimbursement Representative supports national advocacy efforts to expand federal and state nutrition coverage policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP and affiliate leaders or DPG Executive Committee Affiliate -State Insurance Commissioner Third party payers State Medicaid Agency Medicare Administrative Contractors (Affiliate and/or DPG RRs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Advocacy and Communications Nutrition Services Coverage
Delegate – Affiliate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as the affiliate voice in HOD Ensures alignment of public policy activities with Academy policy priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliate board, PPP and affiliate leaders Academy House Leadership Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, HOD Governance
Content Experts			
Delegate – DPG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as the DPG voice in HOD Ensures alignment of DPG policy activities with Academy policy priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPG Executive Committee DPG PAL and PPP leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, HOD Governance
DPG Policy and Advocacy Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as the DPG link with Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff Provides expert content to PIA staff or advocacy efforts, messaging and regulatory comments Connects with the affiliate PPP in their state to support state and federal advocacy activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPG Executive Committee DPG PPP leaders, chair and delegate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, DPG/ MIG/ Affiliate Relations

Public Policy Position Descriptions at a Glance

Affiliate President: The affiliate board point of contact for the public policy panel. This role provides leadership and guidance to the public policy panel. The AP is responsible for appointing members to the public policy panel who are not elected by the affiliate.

Public Policy Coordinator: Educates and engages affiliate members on federal legislative and public policy issues, and coordinates grassroots activities. This role is the key connection between the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff and affiliate leaders. The PPC is encouraged to lead and facilitate the public policy panel meetings and is responsible for annual submission of the affiliate public policy plan of work to Academy staff.

State Policy Representative: Monitors state legislation relevant to the affiliate and keeps affiliate members informed on key state legislative issues. The SPR takes the lead in coordinating meetings with the state legislators who serve on committees with jurisdiction over legislation impacting food, nutrition, health and licensure, and is often responsible for organizing an affiliate's state legislative or lobby day with the support of others on the PPP.

State Regulatory Specialist: Leads state regulatory initiatives and works in coordination with the public policy panel to keep affiliate members informed. The SRS also identifies opportunities to provide input during the regulatory process to advance the Academy's and the affiliate's public policy priorities. This role may be the lead on issues relating to health care reform.

Consumer Protection Coordinator: Leads the affiliate's consumer protection and licensure initiatives; advises and updates affiliate leaders and members on local, state-level and nationwide consumer protection issues. The CPC coordinates the reporting of professional success stories, incidents of harm or hypothetical harm and effective practice to responsible parties. This role monitors and advances state licensure activities, while maintaining key relationships with the state credentialing board and other parties related to state licensure.

Reimbursement Representative: Serves as coordinator of state-level or DPG-specific advocacy efforts to expand nutrition coverage polices in policies in public (Medicare, state Medicaid/MCOs, state employees) and commercial/private payer health plans. This role is the local resource for affiliate or DPG members who have questions about coding, coverage and payment issues. The RR reports to the public policy panel affiliate board or DPG executive committee and the Academy's Nutrition Services Coverage team.

Affiliate Delegate: Represents the affiliate in the House of Delegates and ensures alignment of public policy activities with Academy legislative priorities.

DPG Delegate: Represents the DPG in the House of Delegates and ensures alignment of public policy activities with Academy legislative priorities.

DPG Policy and Advocacy Leader: Oversees DPG-specific content area in the policy and advocacy space. The PAL coordinates the submission of DPG members' expert content to the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team for advocacy efforts, position and stance development, regulatory comments and nominations to authoritative bodies.

For a detailed position description, refer to the appendix.

Benefits of Serving as an Academy Policy Leader

Academy policy leaders become strong advocates, effective leaders and build a network that will serve them well into the future. Below is just a sample of the benefits of serving in a policy and advocacy leadership position:

Train

- Learn to advocate effectively by attending public policy webinars and in-person meetings while earning more than 15 free continuing professional education units in the process
- Participate in leadership training at the annual Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C.
- Receive a Policy and Advocacy Certificate of Training at no cost

Advocate

- Share evidence-based nutrition information with policymakers and their staff to demonstrate the pivotal role nutrition professionals play in creating health and wellness, preventing chronic disease, treating patients and reducing health care costs
- Positively impact nutrition policy at the state and federal levels and help shape the Academy's future policy initiatives
- Shape Academy policy positions and stances through coordinating and consolidating member input

Lead

- Represent your affiliate at state conferences, national webinars, Academy meetings and visits with members of Congress and their staff
- Provide the Academy with expertise on behalf of your affiliate or DPG
- Build a leadership brand and professional niche in policy and advocacy

Network

- Connect with public policy leaders from your own state, other states across the country, national Academy leadership, as well as members of Congress and their staff. These connections can often lead to future professional opportunities!
- Develop strong relationships with members of Congress, state legislators, state regulatory officials and political staffers to advance Academy policy priorities
- Collaborate with other organizations and associations to build coalitions around key policy issue areas

Creating a Successful Public Policy Panel

Public policy panels are encouraged to invite other Academy members join the team to help enhance volunteer participation in advocacy activities. Panels should hold monthly or regular meetings to discuss relevant policy priorities specific to the affiliate or dietetic practice area. The PPC is encouraged to chair public policy panel meetings for affiliates and the PAL is encouraged to chair meetings for DPGs. Public policy panel members should serve for three consecutive years to provide continuity and the time needed to develop leadership skills.

The affiliate president or DPG chair appoints members to the public policy panel. The success of the panel requires ensuring the right person is in each role, a member who is both interested in the opportunity and has the time necessary to fulfill policy and advocacy work. It is recommended that affiliates and DPGs have an “elect” position or co-leaders during the third year of a panel member’s term to facilitate a smooth transition once the new panel member’s term begins.

The Academy recommends affiliates develop a mentoring program and engage members in policy initiatives to build a pool of involved participants. Establishing this group of interested members will help identify future leaders and ensure a smooth transition in leadership roles. Inviting district-level or regional leaders who are passionate about policy and advocacy to participate in a monthly public policy panel meeting is a great first step to recruitment. More ways to recruit members interested in policy and advocacy include hosting a state legislative or lobby day, or an advocacy networking event. During these opportunities, gauge members’ interest to determine their commitment to advocacy efforts. Engage students and dietetic interns in policy and advocacy to build future leaders and consider every meeting a chance to recruit new members.

Public Policy Plan of Work

Each year, PPCs and PALs are responsible for leading the development of the public policy plan of work, which must be submitted to the Academy’s manager of Grassroots and State Advocacy by September 1. This plan of work outlines the public policy panel’s goals for the fiscal year, June 1 through May 31.

The Academy recommends establishing at least three public policy goals. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound. Plans should include strategies to achieve each goal, implementations steps, resources needed, timeline and responsible individuals. Finalized public policy plans of work must be submitted for affiliate or DPG executive board approval before being sent to the Academy. The next page features a sample policy plan of work; a blank template is available [here](#).

Sample Public Policy Plan of Work

Public Policy Goals (Select at Least 3 Goals)	Strategies or Implementation Steps	Responsible (Who Will Do It)	Resources	Timeline (Deadline)
Goal 1. Advocate for improved coverage and reimbursement of MNT services at the federal level	Coordinate a meeting with both U.S. Senators' offices in-district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congressional scheduling form 	May 31
	Coordinate a meeting with U.S. House Representative in-district, biannually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congressional scheduling form 	November 30 and May 31
	Send communications quarterly to U.S. Senators' and House Representatives' in-district offices and key congressional staffers on current Academy policy issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy website PPWN Academy Staff 	Quarterly
	Host a Take Your Congressman to Work Day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Policy Panel Site locations TYCTW Webinar and handouts 	October 1
	Request funds from ANDPAC to attend a fundraising event for a member of Congress supportive of the Academy's issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANDPAC ANDPAC Toolkit 	May 31
	Submit a proposal for a policy presentation or training session at the annual affiliate conference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC SPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy website Sample policy presentation on the COI 	December 31
	Attend the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC Affiliate President 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliate budget Time for team prep and Hill visit scheduling 	July 11 and 12
	Send policy updates in monthly newsletter to all affiliate members; share regularly with affiliate e-team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant Contact Mailing list 	Monthly

Public Policy Goals (Select at Least 3 Goals)	Strategies or Implementation Steps	Responsible (Who Will Do It)	Resources	Timeline (Deadline)
Goal 2. Strengthen state licensure	Assess licensure landscape. Identify opportunities for strengthening the licensure statute in consultation with public policy panel and Academy staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPR • SRS • CPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Policy Panel • Academy staff 	August 31
	Attend licensure board meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy website 	Quarterly
	Collect and summarize at least five instances of harm (or document lack of submissions) to the state licensure board and report findings to the affiliate public policy panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy website 	December 31
	Cultivate a state-level bill sponsor, working with her/him to introduce a Model Practice Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy staff • Lobbyist 	February 15
	Submit at least one state-related regulatory or licensure comment or provide a verbal testimony on behalf of the affiliate during the public comment timeframe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State tracking sheet 	April 30
	Host annual state legislative day focused on licensure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPR (with assistance from PPP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual funding 	May 31
Goal 3. Build strategic partnerships with at least two outside stakeholder groups	Explore strategic relationships with other health organizations, allies, and agencies to promote policy goals and the profession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPC • SPR • Affiliate President • PPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Policy Panel relationships 	August 31
	Reach out to at least two potential partners who share a common goal or vision with the affiliate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affiliate President 		November 30
	Host a joint webinar with at least one partner group to educate members on a shared policy of interest at the state or federal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPC • SPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WebEx 	April 30

Section III:

The Basics:
Federal

The Basics: How the Legislative Process Works

U.S. Congress – The House and the Senate

The U.S. Congress begins its session in January of odd numbered years. A congress lasts for two years, with each year constituting a separate session. Congresses are numbered sequentially; for example, the session of Congress from January 2019 through December 2020 is referred to as the 116th Congress.

The U.S. Congress consists of a lower house, the U.S. House of Representatives, and an upper house, the U.S. Senate. In the U.S. House of Representatives, members are elected for a two-year term of office from one of 435 population-based districts. In the U.S. Senate, voters of each state elect two senators who serve staggered six-year terms (i.e. only one-third of the chamber is up for election in any given election cycle).

In America's two-party system, most elected officials in congress are members of the Republican or Democratic parties. However, there are a few Independents who are not affiliated with a political party. The party with the most members in a chamber of congress is referred to as the "majority party," while the other party is referred to as the "minority party."

If a bill does not pass in a two-year congressional cycle, it will have to be reintroduced in the next one. This is why you may see action alerts on a similar bill from year to year.

Leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives

Speaker of the House

This Speaker of the House is determined through a two step process: first each major party nominates a candidate then a majority vote is held in the full House of Representatives to determine who will be the speaker (or their designee). The speaker presides over all sessions, the scheduling of votes and who is recognized to speak. This role also has the responsibility of referring bills to the appropriate committees, appointing members to conference committees and chairing the majority party committee, which makes all party assignments and nominates committee chairs. Committee chairs must be approved by a vote of their party's members. The Republican and Democratic parties have different rules for selecting chairs and how long they may serve as chair of particular committees.

House Majority Leader

The House Majority Leader serves as the majority party's major spokesperson for its legislative agenda. Working with the Speaker of the House, the House Majority Leader develops and coordinates the party's legislative platform. This role holds the same position for the minority party in the House but has less power than the House Majority Leader. The House Majority/Minority Leader does not typically co-sign legislation, but can be a key player in the passage of a bill.

House Majority Whip

The House Majority Whip is responsible for winning party support for legislation championed by their party leadership. The House Majority Whip conducts head count votes to determine the level of support for a bill before an actual vote. These votes are used by leadership to influence members who remain undecided. The minority party has an identical position called the House Minority Whip.

Leadership in the U.S. Senate

Senate Majority Leader

The Senate Majority Leader is elected by members of the majority party and guides the process of determining legislation that will be debated or up for a vote in the Senate. The Senate Majority/Minority Leader does not typically co-sign legislation, but can be a key player in the passage of a bill.

Senate Majority Whip

The Senate Majority Whip serves the same function as the House Majority Whip. The minority party has identical positions called the Senate Minority Leader and Senate Minority Whip.

President of the Senate

The Vice President of the United States will act as the President of the Senate only as a tie-breaker on a vote in the Senate.

Committees: The Legislative Work Room

Members of Congress typically serve on a small number of committees, often for many years, allowing them to become highly knowledgeable in certain policy areas. Committee chairs hold some of the greatest power in U.S. Congress. A member of the majority party chairs all committees, and often works closely with the committee's ranking member, the most senior member of the minority party on the committee.

Thousands of bills are introduced in each congressional session, created primarily by House and Senate committee members and their staff. Once introduced, bills are referred to committee for research and debate. A committee can bring a bill to a vote quickly, instruct the relevant subcommittee to consider the bill, or decide to take no action. Committees hold hearings while they debate a specific bill, providing opportunity for expert and public testimony. Hearings enable outside groups, like the Academy, to provide input to the committee on a proposed bill.

Committees of Importance

Committees and their subcommittees have specific jurisdiction over legislation. The committees that are typically involved with nutrition and health-related issues of importance to the Academy include:

House Committees and Subcommittees of Importance to Academy Policy Issues



Senate Committees and Subcommittees of Importance to Academy Policy Issues

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

- Subcommittee on Nutrition, Agricultural Research and Specialty Crops

Senate Committee on Appropriations

- Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Senate Committee on Finance

- Subcommittee on Health Care

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

- Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security
- Subcommittee on Children and Families

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

- Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Produce Safety and Insurance

Senate Special Committee on Aging



A staff of legal and technical experts and other aides advises legislators for each committee. These staff members seek outside sources when doing their research, so it is critical for Academy policy leaders to build relationships with committee staff members. For data on the economic impact of legislation, committee staff members rely on studies from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office.

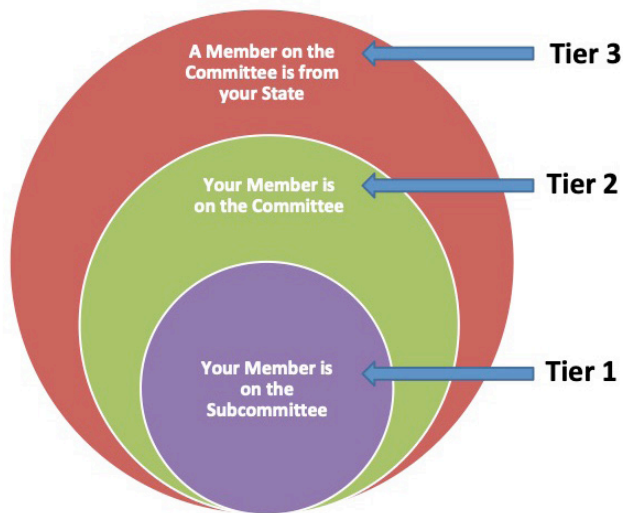
Tiered Approach to Advocacy

The Academy maintains close relationships with congressional offices and encourages Academy members to do the same. Building relationships with members of Congress and their staff is an important strategy for advocacy efforts. Academy member leaders have the unique position to speak as both an expert and as a constituent.

To help member leaders develop relationships with congressional offices, the Academy developed a tiered approach to advocacy. PPCs and PALs are the key grassroots policy leaders the Academy relies on to advocate on advocacy priorities, in addition to LPPC, CPLS and ANDPAC Board members.

For each priority area (e.g., child nutrition), the membership of the committees and subcommittees of jurisdiction (e.g., Senate Agriculture and its subcommittee on nutrition) are cross-referenced with our members' U.S. Representatives and Senators to create three tiers of outreach:

This strategic approach allows member leaders to focus their efforts on building the most impactful relationships with congressional staff.

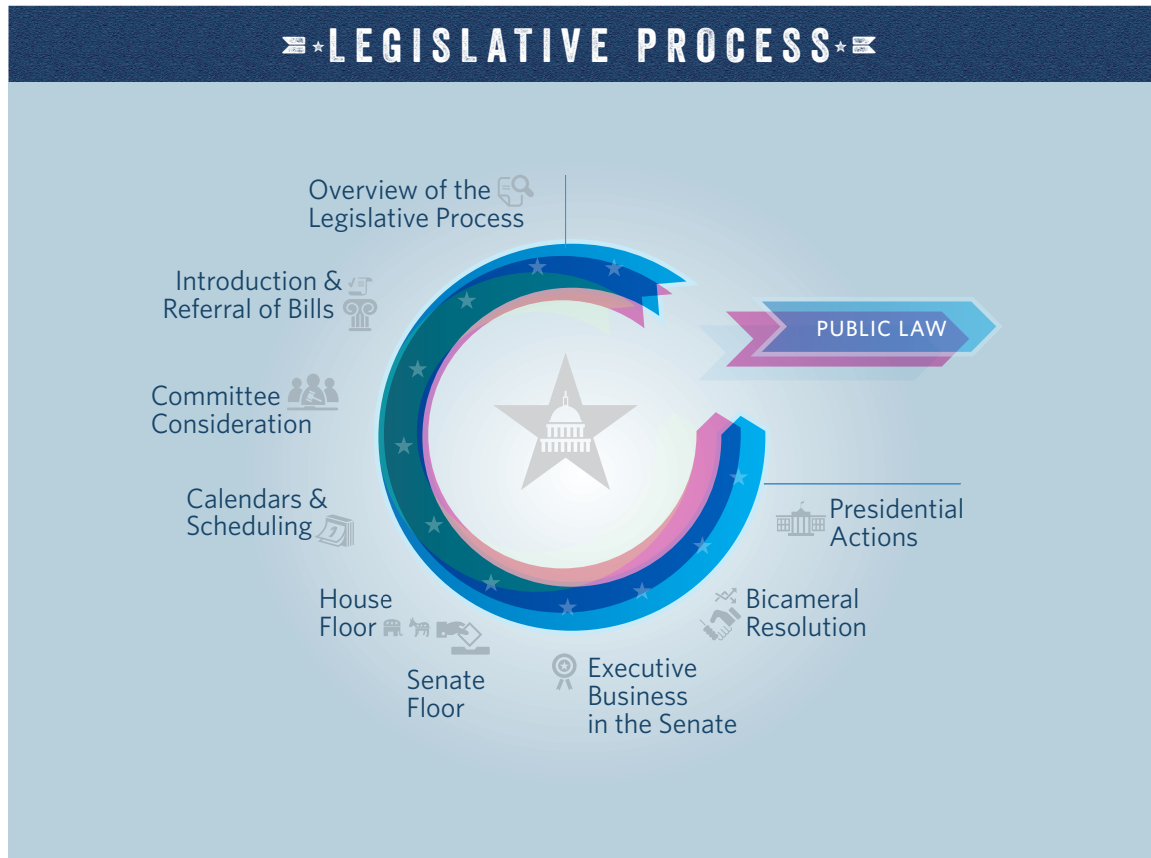


Tier 1 Advocates: Academy member leaders who have member(s) of Congress on the subcommittee of jurisdiction for the bill(s) or issue(s) the Academy is focusing. Advocacy from these members is poised for the greatest impact because their representatives have, on average, the greatest say on whether key bills get a hearing, markup or vote.

Tier 2 Advocates: Academy member leaders who have member(s) of Congress on the full committee of jurisdiction but not the subcommittee of jurisdiction. While these members of Congress have less say in the overall direction of a bill, these are still strategically important targets as full committee members may be able to influence subcommittee members and may eventually vote when a bill comes to the full committee or the floor.

Tier 3 Advocates: Academy member leaders who live in the state of a committee and/or subcommittee member. While not technically constituents, these member leaders still speak on behalf of RDNs and NDTRs in their state, including those in the member of Congress' district.

How a Bill Becomes A Law



For a video walk-through, visit [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).

Step 1: Introduction of the Bill. A bill is introduced by a member or group of members in either the U.S. House or Senate. The Academy has an opportunity to directly influence the language and the introduction of a bill by working with original bill co-sponsors. After the bill has been introduced, it is assigned a number and then referred to a committee. Oftentimes after a bill has been introduced in one chamber, members of the other chamber will introduce the same version of a bill, which is referred to as a “companion bill” (e.g., H.R. 1530 Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2019 in the House and S. 595 Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2019 in the Senate). The original sponsor or co-sponsors of the bill take responsibility for adding additional co-sponsors onto their bill and, if they are on the committee or subcommittee of jurisdiction, for guiding a bill through the legislative process. The ideas for proposed legislation and the language in bills are often developed in collaboration with constituents and organizations like the Academy.

If an introduced bill has been identified as relevant to the work of the Academy, the Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff review the bill language and conduct an analysis to determine its alignment with the Academy’s policy priorities. This bill analysis is reviewed by the LPPC, which decides if the Academy should support or advocate for or against a specific bill. At this point, the Academy reaches out to grassroots leaders including the PPC and PAL to leverage their relationships and request that their members of Congress co-sponsor a bill. Typically, the greater bipartisan support a bill has, the greater the chance it has of passing.

Step 2: The Committee Process. The committee process usually determines if a bill is passed, defeated or ignored. Committees typically select bills for consideration based on feedback from members of the committee, so it is crucial for the Academy to maintain relationships with the committee members' staff. When a committee or subcommittee selects a bill for consideration, legislative staff begins preliminary research to determine how to proceed. This is a critical time for Academy policy leaders to be in touch with committee and legislative staff, to point them toward important sources of information and expert witnesses. If the bill is recommended for further action, the committee may conduct one or more public hearings to become aware of varying opinions about the bill, and the Academy works with committee staff and relevant DPGs to recommend registered dietitian nutritionists as expert witnesses. The Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team also works with committee staff to help legislators draft the questions they will ask the witnesses during a hearing.

Next, the bill is scheduled for "markup," which is when the committee discusses the bill and holds votes on amendments to the bill. Markup is another important time for phone calls and letters to legislators. After markup is completed, the subcommittee votes on whether to report the bill out to the full committee. In cases of full committee markups, the committee then votes on whether to report the bill out to the full chamber for a vote. The committee issues a report on each bill it fully considers. The report includes an explanation of the bill, its implications and a full range of the opinions expressed.

Step 3: Floor Action. In the House, the House Rules Committee determines how a bill is treated, how much time will be devoted to debate, as well as how and if amendments can be proposed and timing of the vote. In the Senate, the Senate Majority Leader works with other leaders to determine how the bill will be considered. It is recommended to contact your elected official before a floor vote.

Step 4: Bicameral Conference Committee. A bill that has been passed by both the House and Senate moves to a conference committee, which is made up of members of each chamber. The committee works out any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The revised bill is sent back to both chambers for their final approval. Before a bill can be sent to the President of the United States to be signed into law, it must pass both the House and Senate in identical form.

Step 5: The President's Options. The United States Constitution gives the President 10 days to sign or veto a bill. The President has the following options for action:

- Veto the bill and send it back to Congress for further debate and consideration. It takes two-thirds of both bodies to override a presidential veto.
- Leave the bill unsigned. If Congress is in session for 10 consecutive days (not including Sunday) and the president does not sign the bill, it automatically becomes a law. If Congress breaks for Congress recesses during the 10-day period, the bill is automatically vetoed.
- Sign the bill into law and direct it to the appropriate agencies for implementation.

Most state governments operate in a similar fashion, although each state has its own unique process for how and when bills may be introduced and considered, as well as responsibilities the governor has during this process.

Differences Between Legislation and Regulation

	Legislation	Regulation
Introduced By	<p>Lawmakers Any U.S. Senator or Representative can introduce legislation.</p>	<p>Federal Agencies A federal agency may draft a regulation after reviewing or finding ambiguity in a law and realizing a clarifying regulation is necessary; regulations must be based in laws already passed.</p>
Altered By	<p>Congress Committees in either chamber can alter proposed legislation through the amendment process.</p>	<p>The Public The public and interested parties may attempt to influence a proposed regulation by submitting comments, which require consideration and response by the agency.</p>
Can Be Stopped By	<p>Stalling/Falling in Congress Legislation may stall if the committee of jurisdiction declines to consider it, if it fails a vote or cloture motion, is not brought up by the other chamber or is vetoed by the President. All bills also expire at the end of the two-year Congress.</p>	<p>Congress/The Public A proposed regulation may be stopped in its tracks by strong, nearly unanimous or very influential public comments, or a resolution of disapproval by Congress (which can be vetoed by the President).</p>
Finalized When	<p>Signed by the President or Congress Overrides Veto The President can sign the bill into law, or Congress can override a presidential veto by two-thirds majorities in both chambers.</p>	<p>Published After consideration of public comments and suggestions relative to a proposed rule, a final rule is published in the Federal Register.</p>
Has The Effect Of	<p>Law Finalized legislation has the binding force of law.</p>	<p>Law Finalized legislation has the binding force of law.</p>

Federal Appropriations and Budget Process

Federal Budget Key Terms

President's Budget

This budget request is developed in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget and federal agencies to outline the President's recommendations for federal spending. It signals the administration's spending priorities, but is not legally binding.

Mandatory Spending

Mandatory – or direct – spending includes spending for entitlement programs (ex. Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, Social Security) and certain other payments to people, businesses and state and local governments. Mandatory spending is generally governed by statutory criteria; it is not set by annual appropriation acts. Mandatory spending accounts for about two-thirds of all federal spending.

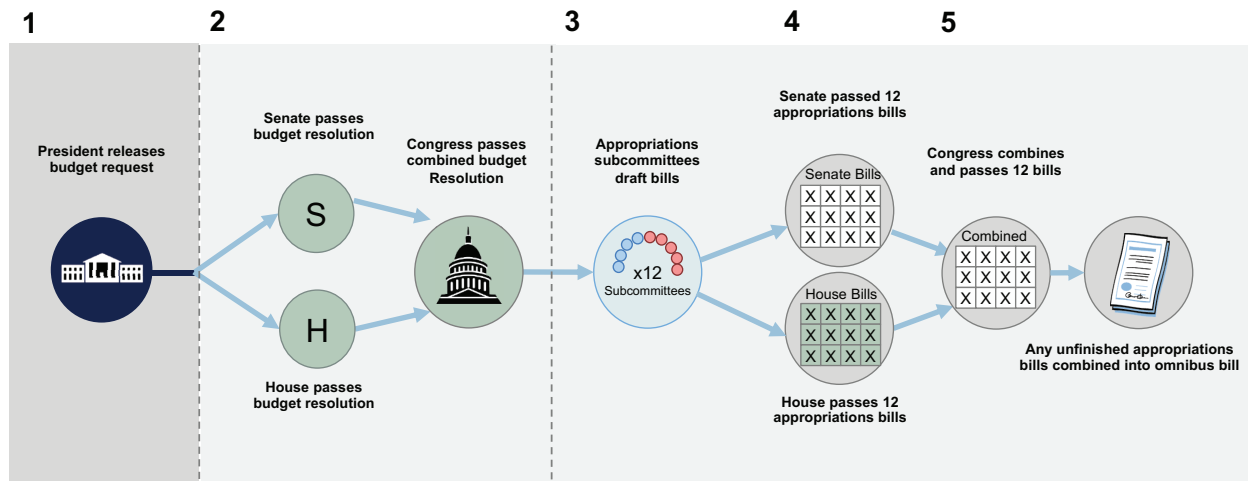
Discretionary Spending

Set by annual appropriations acts and is under the control or discretion of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Discretionary funding accounts for about one-third of all federal spending and is divided equally between defense and non-defense spending.

Congressional Budget Resolution

A non-binding framework used by Congress and cannot be signed into law or vetoed by the President. The resolution establishes budget enforcement procedures by setting forth rules for applying budget points of order to various legislative proposals.

The Appropriations Process – Discretionary Funding



1. When Congress is operating as intended, the budget process begins with the release of the President's budget. The **President's budget** is not legally binding but rather a statement flagging the administration's priorities that should be considered by Congress.
2. Next, Congress passes a **budget resolution**, which is a guideline document where congress lays out its spending priorities. This document is not signed by the President and has no force of law, but it represents Congress' agreed-upon spending levels for the broad categories of government spending (e.g., defense, agriculture and nutrition). The Appropriations Committees in both the House and Senate use the budget resolution to guide their work.
3. Each of the 12 appropriations subcommittees in both chambers produce a bill that appropriates money. Each bill is discussed and amended at the subcommittee level, and then again at the full committee level.
4. The appropriations committees in both the House and Senate produce 12 different bills and then each bill goes to the floor for a vote.
5. Once it passes both chambers, the bills must go to conference. In conference the chambers must come to an agreement on every line item before the final package can be sent to the President for signature. Sometimes these bills are considered individually or combined into an 'omnibus bill' in order to make it to the President's desk.

Federal Legislative Staff: Who's Who

All members of Congress have staff in Washington, D.C. and their state. Congressional staffers have significant influence on the legislator's schedule, priorities and positions. The following are common staff member titles and their designated responsibilities.

Chief of Staff: Oversees all office operations including the assignment of work and the hiring of staff. He or she is usually involved in many political and policy decisions.

Legislative Director: Monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of issues or proposals. Works with the member of Congress and the administrative assistant/ chief of staff to determine legislative priorities, oversees development of legislative proposals and directs the work of the legislative staff.

District Director: Oversees the operations for all district offices. Implements policy objectives, strategies and operating plan for the congressman's district office. Directs all activities and staff of the district offices, including constituent relations.

Legislative Aide or Assistant: Focuses on a portfolio of policy issues such as health, education or taxes. Duties include keeping the elected official up to date on developments in a specific legislative area. In addition, legislative aides/assistants often write the elected official's speeches and position papers.

Legislative Correspondent: Answers letters and calls from constituents.

Press Secretary or Communications Director: Builds and maintains open lines of communication between the member of Congress, the media, the constituents and the general public; serves as the spokesperson for the member of Congress.

Scheduler: Makes all appointments for the elected official.

Staff Assistant: Greets office visitors, responds to constituent requests and performs general administrative duties.

Committee staff have varying titles and responsibilities, with policy analysts and legal counselors playing key roles. Contact the committee directly to determine titles, names and roles.

Working with Congressional Staff

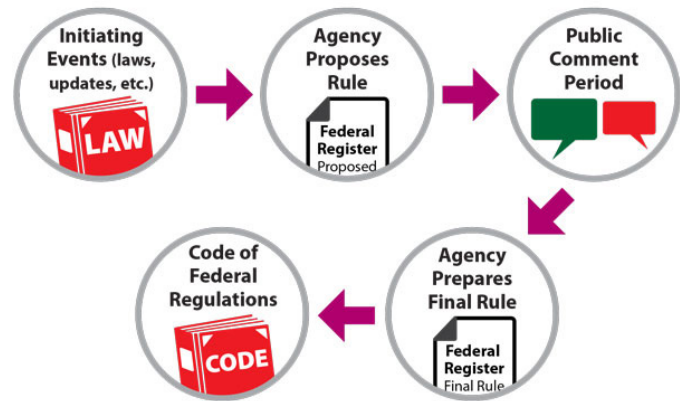
When contacting the offices of elected officials – a role the affiliate PPC or PAL is encouraged to coordinate – keep the following points in mind when working with congressional staff:

1. **Assess the staffer's understanding** of the topic being discussed. Do not overestimate what you think a congressional staffer will know. At the beginning of your conversation, ask how familiar they are with a subject so you can tailor your remarks to their knowledge level.
2. **Recognize staffers' influence.** Legislators trust their staffers and depend on them to act on their suggestions. Congressional staffers make recommendations to direct their member of Congress' position and actions. Don't underestimate the importance of building relationships with staffers.
3. **Be honest.** Provide accurate, complete information to maintain your credibility. If you don't know an answer, make sure to get back to them with the correct information.
4. **Provide summarized, useful information.** Information should be concise and have references.
5. **Follow-up.** Congressional staff is extremely busy and may forget your issue without follow-up.
6. **Be a resource and stay connected.** Maintain regular contact and offer to be a resource on which the staffer can rely. Send updates or articles you think may be of interest in keeping up to speed on key issues.
7. **Express thanks** to the member of Congress and staff.



The Regulatory Process: Implementation of a New Law

Once a federal bill becomes a law, a federal agency is authorized to draft regulations, also known as rules, to implement the law. It is imperative the Academy stay involved during this process, as the Academy can offer direct input on how a law is applied. Agencies often hold public comment periods and, sometimes, public hearings to gather input.



Agencies of interest to the Academy may include:

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration;
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services;
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
- Various units within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, such as the Food and Nutrition Service.

Regulations set specific requirements about what is legal, what is not and how a law will be enforced. For example, a regulation issued by FDA stipulates criteria for what can legally be stated on a food package, as well as what must be stated on a food package. To promulgate, or formally issue, a regulation, the agency must draft a proposal, publish it in the Federal Register for public comment, which the agency is obligated to review. Several versions of the proposed regulation may be published and open for public comment before a regulation is finalized. The agency will sometimes respond to public comments and explain why they have either decided to revise its proposed rule in accord with a suggestion, or to finalize the rule as proposed. Once the final regulation is promulgated, the agency may then publish additional documents, known as guidances to help industry, consumers and others understand and comply with the rule. Guidances may also be made available for public comment.

Example: [Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Regulatory Provisions To Promote Program Efficiency, Transparency and Burden Reduction](#)

Public comments are crucial to the regulatory process and encourage submission of written data, views or arguments regarding a proposed rule from a variety of stakeholders, such as individuals, industry, nonprofits organizations, trade associations and more. Public input helps authorizing agencies gather feedback regarding the enactment of a proposed regulation, an agency survey, a research project, or other initiative. For both written and oral comments, agencies are obligated to consider all relevant matter presented during the comment period. For more information on the specific types of regulatory comments published, consult the [Academy's Regulatory Glossary](#). The Academy frequently seeks input from DPGs and select member experts during the public review process, which means that PALs are in the unique position to collect and synthesize feedback from their member experts. By providing expert feedback to the Academy through a DPG, your voice can be heard. For more information on regulations, contact the Academy's manager of Consumer Protection and Regulation.

Section IV:

The Basics: State

State Legislatures and the Legislative Process

State legislatures function similarly to the federal legislature, though they may be referred to in some states as the General Assembly, General Court or Legislative Assembly. During a legislative session the state legislature deliberates on issues or legislation introduced by its members and approves the state's operating budget before submitting to the governor for approval. In most states, legislative sessions start in January and run for three or four months. In other states, session schedules vary.

Preparing for the Legislative Session

Before a legislative session begins, it is important to establish your affiliate's priorities, decide what issues you would like to focus your time on and monitor any legislation pertinent to your priorities.

Identify Your Key Issue Areas

As a starting point, review your affiliate's public policy plan of work. What are your affiliate and membership priorities? Consider the top issues that legislation can address to support the role that nutrition professionals play in providing quality health care services or improving public health. Which groups are likely to oppose your legislative priorities and what are their priorities? Affiliate policy leaders (SPR or CPC) should monitor potential opposition groups and guide affiliate responses, as needed.

Assess the Political Landscape

Evaluate failed legislation from last session for relevance to your affiliate's policy priorities. Determine if a bill has solid support and if continued legislative efforts in this session are worthwhile. In some cases, it may be better to wait on the political tides to turn rather than establish poorly-planned or ineffective legislative positions or priorities, especially if opponents are well-positioned.

When are State Legislatures in Session?

- **Thirty-two** state legislatures are in session for only three or four months each year, starting in January and ending no later than May
- **Six** state legislatures are in session from January through the summer (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, Maine and Oregon)
- **Nine** state legislatures (Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia) are in session year-round
- **Four** state legislatures (Montana, Nevada, North Dakota and Texas) are only in session every other year

Visit [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) to see when your state's legislature is in session!

Begin Tracking Legislation

- **Pre-filed Bills**

Pre-filed bills are formal proposals that provide legislators and legislative staff the time needed to document, package and format measures with greater detail and clarity before the legislative session begins. Thirty-four states accept the pre-filing of bills before a legislative session begins and some states even encourage lawmakers to pre-file bills. For example, Florida House members are limited to filing six bills during a regular session, with at least two required to be pre-filed no later than the “sixth Tuesday prior to the first day of the regular session.” In Louisiana, lawmakers cannot introduce more than five bills that were not pre-filed. In Virginia, there are no restrictions on the number of bills lawmakers can pre-file, but once the session begins, delegates can introduce no more than five bills and senators no more than eight bills. If your state accepts pre-filed bills, affiliate leaders are encouraged to review relevant legislation before the session begins.
- **Crossover Bills**

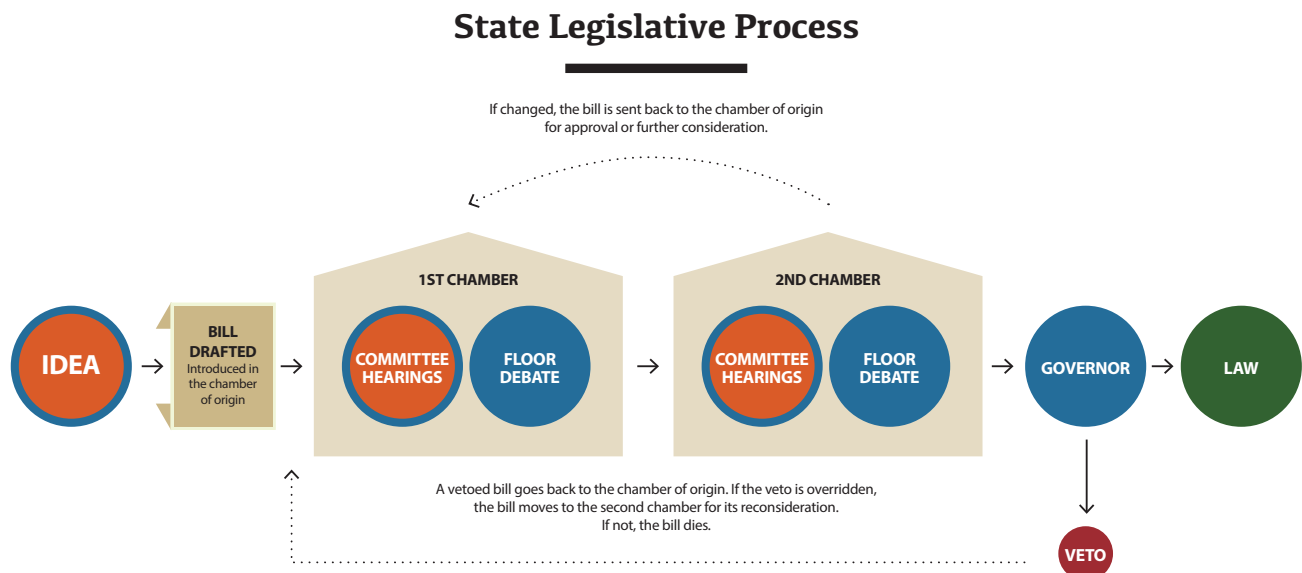
Crossover bills, also known as carry-over bills, are proposed bills introduced in the previous session that did not come to a vote. In some states, carry-over bills are automatically re-introduced at the beginning of the next year of the same legislative term.

Know Your Audience

- **Elected Officials:** Get to know your elected officials before the legislative session begins and stay in contact with them throughout the year. This is particularly important for states with sessions every other year or those with short sessions. In the off time attend local events, fundraisers or community events for your elected officials.
- **Member Advocates:** Cultivate select members to be ambassadors, and develop relationships with select legislators. You may be able to leverage these relationships to advance key nutrition policies.
- **Partners, Allies and Opponents:** Identify and cultivate relationships with partners and allies. At the same time, identify potential opponents. Even better, work with Academy staff to develop strategies to convert useful opponents into neutral parties, or even partners.

Your SPR, in coordination with your affiliate lobbyist or legislative consultant (if you have one), should track bills before and throughout the legislative session.

The State Legislative Process



The legislative process for most state governments operates in a similar fashion to the federal legislative process; however, each state has its own unique process for how and when bills may be introduced and considered, as well as responsibilities the governor has during this process.

An example of the state legislative process is as follows:

1. An idea for a bill is shared with a state legislator or their staff.
2. The bill is drafted and then introduced by the legislator championing the bill, or the primary author.
3. The bill is assigned to a committee and the committee determines if the bill should be added to the hearing calendar to schedule solicited input on the proposed legislation.
4. The committee acts on the bill by killing the legislation, amending it or voting to send it to the full chamber for a floor vote.
 - Note: Nebraska is the exception as it is has a unicameral legislature.
5. Legislators discuss the bill's merits, may amend it and take a floor vote.
 - If approved, the bill goes to the other chamber, where the process is repeated.
 - If the bill is amended by the second chamber, the first chamber must approve of changes and the bill may go to a conference committee composed of members of both houses to work out the differences.
6. After the legislature enacts the bill, the governor may sign it, veto it, or in some states, let it become law without explicit approval through signature.
 - If the governor vetoes the bill, the legislature may sustain or override the governor's veto.

Adapted from [NCSL](#)

The State Regulatory Process

Once a law is passed, an agency is authorized to issue regulations in a process similar to the federal level. Regulatory proposals are published in a dedicated medium (usually online) with an opportunity for public input by a certain deadline. The regulation may be the subject of multiple revisions and one or more administrative hearings. Affiliate engagement during this comment process is just as important as during the legislative process. Once the final version is published, the agency implements the regulation. Agencies may also subsequently update, revise, or rescind a regulation or any part of it, during which this comment process repeats.

Relevant administrative units may include departments administering programs related to health, aging, education and the licensing agency (if the state licenses dietitians or dietetics), which may be housed under any of several departments. In addition to issues surrounding regulation of the practice, relevant agencies may issue proposals for staffing standards for RDNs, school meal standards beyond minimum federal requirements, conditions for delivery or reimbursement of nutrition care services, etc. It is essential that the affiliate SRS have access to the administrative document medium announcing proposals and for the affiliate to stay engaged with the regulatory process and regulatory officials.

Who's Who?

State Legislators: As members of the legislative branch of government, the nation's 7,383 state legislators work to change existing laws or pass new legislation based on the interests of their constituents, often serving on committees or subcommittees tasked with overseeing specific policy issue areas. Legislators are not typically experts on any one issue area and rely on staff, experts and constituents with the expertise to make informed decisions.

State Legislative Staffers: There are more than 30,000 legislative staff in all 50 states combined, including permanent staff, legislative assistants and others who ensure that legislative offices run smoothly and processes and procedures run as intended. Legislative assistants are the most common legislative staff position and often provide background research on issue areas of interest to state legislators. Legislative assistants serve as a key point of contact for constituents and lobbyists visiting the legislator's office and ensure that the office functions as intended.

Governor: State governors, elected by voters in their state, are responsible for implementing new and revised policies and programs using a variety of tools, among them executive orders, executive budgets, legislative proposals and vetoes. Governors carry out their management and leadership responsibilities and objectives with the support and assistance of department and agency heads, many of whom they are empowered to appoint. A majority of governors have the authority to appoint state court judges as well, in most cases from a list of names submitted by a nominations committee.

Gubernatorial terms are four years in every state and territory except for New Hampshire and Vermont, which have two-year terms. With the exception of Virginia, all governors may run for re-election, although they may be limited to a specific number of consecutive or total terms.

Lieutenant Governor: Lieutenant governors are the only officials with specific duties and powers in both the executive and legislative branches. Lieutenant governors preside over their state senate and most pursue legislative initiatives, testify locally and in Washington D.C., serve on the governor's cabinet and maintain other duties as assigned.

In many states, the duties of lieutenant governor have been increased by legislation to include the lieutenant governor on state boards, commissions and task forces. A lieutenant governor may lead a division, commission, or department of government through gubernatorial or legislative action. In those few states where the official next in line of succession to the governor is a secretary of state or senate president, the responsibilities are those traditionally assigned.

State Agency Officials: State agency officials oversee a permanent or semi-permanent component of state government that administers specific functions with some degree of autonomy. Examples of state agencies may include health and human services, finance and environmental protection, etc. Heads of agencies or other officials may work together in groups, such as a commission, board or council to provide for the needs of the public. High-ranking agency officials, such as a state insurance commissioner or state Medicaid director, have significant decision-making power and hold important positions that Academy policy leaders will want to reach out to and leverage in the future.

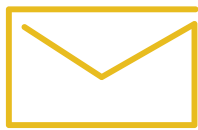


Section V:

Advocacy in Action

Working with Your Elected Officials

The key principle to remember when working with elected officials, whether they are your representatives in Washington, D.C. or your state capital, is that they are driven by their own political ideologies and perceptions of what voters want. Academy policy leaders can positively influence the perceptions of their elected officials through a number of grassroots advocacy activities, including the examples listed below.



Email Your Elected Officials



Connect on Social Media



Speak at a Public Meeting
or Town Hall



Meet Your Member
of Congress In-District



Take Your Congress
Member To Work



In-District Events
and ANDPAC



Work with
Coalitions



Follow Up
and Staying In Touch



Email Your Elected Official

Email is one of the most effective ways to communicate with your elected official. While email is traditionally viewed as an informal communication channel, all messages to your elected officials should be formal, using the same formal greetings, structure and subject matter you would include on your letterhead. An additional advantage of email is that it is very easy to include your state policy leaders and Academy staff on your communications. In your email, consider attaching a letter written on your letterhead to provide an official endorsement from your organization as well as help your communication stand out. Read the Academy's Action Alert tutorial [here](#).

Action Alerts

An action alert is an urgent call to action on legislation that is critical to the Academy's policy priorities. Action alerts amplify the voice of our profession, bringing key issues to the attention of elected officials at both the state and local levels. The more Academy members who participate in an action alert, the greater the opportunity to shape the future of nutrition! Visit the Academy's [Action Center](#) today and take action, it literally only takes a minute!

Add Your Personal Touch

When sending your member of Congress an email or completing an action alert, adding your personal connection to the issue makes a world of difference! Members of Congress are four times more likely to consider taking action on an issue if they receive a personalized email rather than a form letter, according to the Congressional Management Foundation. Share why the issue you are asking them to support is important to you or how the issue impacts your state or congressional district.



Connect on Social Media

While most members of Congress have a social media presence on a variety of platforms, Twitter is the most popular for advocacy. It is recommended that you include your city and state in your Twitter bio so it is clear that you are a constituent. When tweeting, make sure to use your representative's Twitter handle and the Academy's hashtag, #eatrightPRO. You can respond to a conversation with your member of Congress about a specific policy issue, state your advocacy 'ask' or even thank a member of Congress for taking the time to meet with you as a constituent. Include a picture in your posts if possible, especially with your member of Congress to personalize your message!

[Click here for the list of members of Congress Twitter handles](#)



Sample Tweets

Thank you to Sofya Leonova in @RepLinski office for taking the time today to discuss nutrition education and prevention of chronic disease! #NutritionEd #Prevention #eatrightPRO

Sincere thanks to #CookCounty Commissioner @RichardBoykin for sponsoring the resolution recognizing Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' 100th Anniversary! Thank you President Toni Preckwinkle and Commissioners; honored to join @eatrightPRO President-Elect @MaryRussellRDN @EatRight_IL #eatrightPRO

Amy Kelbick in @RepSchakowsky, Illinois RDNs appreciate your time today! #Prevention #eatrightPRO



Sample Facebook Posts

I told my member of Congress about the importance of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, which will help reduce obesity rates and treatment costs, and will improve care for older Americans by facilitating Medicare beneficiaries' access to qualified practitioners. Join me in taking action! <http://sm.eatright.org/actionalert>



Speak at a Public Meeting or Town Hall

Policymakers provide updates and meet face-to-face with constituents at town halls and public meetings. Town halls conducted by members of Congress typically occur in-district during a congressional recess. Public meetings and town halls can be used to discuss specific upcoming legislation/regulations, or to hear from constituents on topics of interest. Below are strategies and suggestions for making the most out of these events.

1. Prepare

- **Determine the purpose and tone of the event.** Research the background and position statements of the official and/or organization sponsoring the public meeting. Request the agenda and speaker information in advance.
- **Prepare a few talking points**, considering the following:
 - What are the views of the policymaker and/or organization?
 - What does the official need to know about you as a professional?
 - What is the human side? How will this impact people?
 - How can the official use this information to help the citizens of your state?
 - What are the political and substantive benefits of your proposal?
- **Rehearse your statement and/or question** with colleagues in advance to ensure you are comfortable and convincing.

2. During the Meeting

- **Deliver your statement early in the meeting** when time is less of a factor.
- **Introduce yourself as an RDN or NDTR.** If you are representing your affiliate, mention the number of affiliate members.
- **Be respectful.** If deserved, commend the official for his or her work on health issues, particularly those related to prevention.
- **Be concise.** Focus your message to a few sentences. Include the facts with information about your role as a dietitian or dietetics technician and why your expertise is relevant.
- **Include a personal story.** Present your request, bolstered by facts and an example from your experience that includes the impact on real-life situations with people.
- **Listen to the official's response.** Have a conversation and productive dialogue.
- **Prepare for questions.** If you don't know the answer to a question, simply communicate that you will research the information and follow up.
- **Prepare for objections to your request.** Find clever and respectful ways to say, "Yes and..." or to refocus the topic. Think about how you can use hooking, bridging and flagging to ensure your conversation goes as planned. See page 47 for examples.
- **Ask for a commitment.** When your conversation is coming to an end, ask for the official's support.

3. Follow Up

- **Leave a copy of your key message** with the official and his or her staff, along with your contact information.
- **Offer to be a resource** for the policymaker and his or her staff. You have much to offer in areas of mutual interest and your expertise can make their jobs easier!
- **Use social media** to share your presence at the event. Tag your elected official or organization.
- **Reinforce your message** by reaching out to the legislator or organization after the event. Thank them for holding the town hall/public meeting and remind them of your message.

Hooking, Bridging and Flagging

These are several simple and effective communication techniques you can use to keep your conversation focused or help you get back on track. Mastering hooking, bridging and flagging will help you remain in control of any conversation in dialogue.



Hooking

Set up a question that you want to be asked, leading the conversation in the direction you want to go. For example, lead with "That's just one of the many benefits of this policy." This sets the stage for the follow-up, "What are the other benefits of this policy?"



Bridging

Transition smoothly from off-topic questions back to the focus of your 'ask' by shifting the conversation. Use language like, "I hear your concerns, but the real problem is..." or "If we take a step back and look at the big picture..."



Flagging

Emphasize the main points of your message by drawing attention to the importance of what you have said or are going to say. For example, start your sentence with "The more important thing to remember is..." or "I can't underscore enough..." This will help to reinforce the main message you are trying to convey.



Meet Your Member of Congress In-District

What is the best way to schedule a meeting with your member of Congress in their district office? Here's your checklist, as well as resources to help you determine your contact.

Making a Meeting Request

Use the links below to find your member of Congress. Once you have identified your representative and senators, the link will take you to their website, where you will find contact information for their office.

1. **Who to contact?** Find your member of Congress' contact information using the following links:
 - [Directory of U.S. Representatives](#)
 - [Directory of U.S. Senators](#)
2. **Call your member of Congress' office** and ask to speak with the scheduler in their district office. If you prefer, you may contact their office via email or webform on the member of Congress' website. See the sample phone and email scripts on the next page to help schedule your meeting.
 - If you and/or others attending the meeting are constituent(s), be sure to mention this in the introduction. A member of Congress is more likely to want to meet with someone who is a constituent.
 - If applicable, mention any contact or working relationship with the member of Congress at the beginning of your request.
3. **Request a meeting** with the member of Congress and the district staff. The scheduler may not be able to guarantee that both will be in attendance, which is fine.
 - State that you are requesting a 15 to 20-minute meeting or a "brief meeting."
 - Say you will be bringing a group of RDNs and/or dietetics technicians, registered from the state/district with you to the meeting. Many offices will ask for the names of the individuals planning to attend the meeting.
 - Remember to personalize your message!
4. **Ask the scheduler** for the name and email address of the staffers who will be attending your meeting. The scheduler may ask you to follow up with each staff member in addition to setting up the meeting.
5. **The scheduler may ask for additional information**, so be prepared.
 - The scheduler may provide you an email address so that you can send the details for the requested meeting, including materials on the issues to be discussed. Please send any helpful read-ahead materials you have at hand.
 - If you need additional information from the Academy, contact the [manager of Grassroots and State Advocacy](#).

Sample Scripts for Phone or Email Outreach

Dear [scheduler, district staffer, etc.],

My name is [your name here] and I am a [insert RDN or NDTR] from [senator/representative name here]'s home state [mention district if you are a constituent].

I'm a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the largest food and nutrition professional association in the country, which represents more than 107,000 nutrition experts working every day to help improve the health of Americans through food and nutrition. I would like to schedule a brief meeting with the [senator/representative] and [his/her] district staff on [insert dates if you have time limitations].

I would like to bring several [RDNs and/or NDTR] with me to the meeting, all of whom are from the [senator/representative]'s [state/district]. We would like to discuss [list certain policy issue here, if appropriate, and attach any read-ahead information you may have].

I know that the [senator/representative] cares deeply about [insert issue]. We would greatly appreciate the [senator/representative]'s time to discuss how dietitians are working to accomplish these same goals every day. Please let me know what the best time for would be for [Senator/Representative name here] and staff to meet with us. If you have any additional questions, please let me know.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
[Insert your name, credentials Insert affiliate position
Insert affiliate name]

Additional Notes:

If the scheduler asks you to identify the issues or transfers you to one of the district staff, you can indicate that you will provide additional information about the specific issues to be discussed before the meeting, and restate that you would like time to talk about the importance of these issues as they pertain to improving the health of Americans through food and nutrition. You can also indicate the two key issues you would like to discuss e.g., the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act and the Older Americans Act.

You may also be asked for the names of the individuals who will be attending the meeting. You can indicate that you will provide that information prior to the meeting.

Making the Ask

When requesting a meeting via email, remember to be concise and to the point; members and staff read thousands of emails and receive hundreds of requests, so you want to make sure to entice them with to-the-point messaging. Always make your messaging relevant to the state or district they were elected to serve – if there is one thing members of Congress like, it's responding to their constituents and fixing problems in the district.

Try to schedule a meeting with a group of registered dietitian nutritionists. If you invite the member of Congress to your workplace, do your best to ensure more than one RDN is present to emphasize the importance of both the meeting and the issues you will discuss.

Time to Meet

Preparing for your Meeting

1. Review the issue brief, leave behind and talking points.
 - Note the Academy's key takeaways in the issue brief – this is the foundation for the talking points.
2. Think of a personal/professional story to tell that relates to the issue you want to discuss during the meeting. If you don't have a story related to the issue being discussed, ask your colleagues if they have a story you may share.
 - Personal stories resonate more deeply than facts or figures and members of Congress care about the people they represent. By telling a story about one of their constituents, (your patients/clients) you'll be able to make a stronger connection between member's understanding of the issue and the actual policy.
3. Practice
 - Practice using talking points.
 - Practice the "ask." This is the purpose of your meeting.
4. Be prepared to introduce yourself and other meeting attendees.
5. Email the issue brief and leave behind documents to the member of Congress before the meeting.

Your Meeting Materials Checklist:

- ✓ Leave-behind documents
- ✓ Your business card and/or introductory one-pager on who you are and what you represent
- ✓ Talking points that you can use to highlight relevant statistics or data points on issues

Additional Reminders

- Arrive to the meeting 10 minutes early, if possible
- Be concise and conscious of the member of Congress/staff's time
- Mute your phone
- Make sure to take pictures after the meeting
- Bring a positive attitude and passion for what you do – that's what you want the member of Congress to see!

What to Say During the Meeting

1. **Introductions.** Introduce yourself, noting your constituent status, Academy membership/role at the Academy affiliate or DPG, as well as your workplace. Allow the other RDNs/DTRs in attendance to introduce themselves.
2. **Note topics to be discussed.**
3. **Share your story first** and then follow with relevant facts and figures.
4. **Use talking points** to guide your conversation.
5. **Answer questions and respond to feedback** from the member of Congress or his/her staff. If the office has a question that you don't know the answer to, say "I'm not quite sure about that, but I can get you the answer later." Nothing is worse than providing false information to a member/staffer. Remember you want to be viewed as a reliable source.
6. **Make the ask.** Be clear and concise.



Sharing Your Story

It is often said on Capitol Hill that, “Facts make you credible. Stories make you memorable.” Policymakers do not always make decisions based on facts alone. There are multiple influences on the decision-making process and as legislators are inundated with information on a variety of topics, the right story can be very effective in highlighting your issue and influencing legislators. Some tips for telling effective stories include:

- **Be purposeful.** Use your story to illustrate a key success or challenge in your work. For example, if advocating for legislation ensuring adequate supply of medical foods, a story of a local patient at the Veterans Administration hospital impacted by a shortage of tube feeding formula can be easily understood. To make sure the purpose of your story is clear, follow this by saying, “I’m telling you this story because...”
- **Be strategic.** In the above example, a story from a veteran may be particularly salient to a member on the Veterans’ Affairs Committee. For example, if your legislator was an educator and you are advocating for child nutrition programs, telling a story about the impact of school breakfast and lunch on a student’s academic achievement may also garner more interest. Develop stories of economic benefit and impact as well. For example, if you provided MNT counseling for a client who was able to manage their diabetes well enough to be able to return to work, that is a powerful story.
- **Tell an effective story** Use the [storytelling worksheet](#) to craft an engaging and impactful story that your legislators will want to hear.
- **Make an emotional connection.** Members of Congress and their staff rely heavily on real constituent stories. Be judicious in your approach, as you don’t want to bring policymakers to tears or have them feel that the problem is insurmountable. But the right emotional connection can bring them to understand the real-life consequences of inaction or action regarding the issue for which you are advocating.
- **Focus on one person or family.** While it is extremely important to educate legislators on what RDNs do, remember to focus on the impact of your work and not just a description of your work. Telling a story of an individual, family or even a community that you have helped and how you helped, allows policymakers to better understand the on-the-ground impact of the work of RDNs.
- **Justify their involvement.** The stories you tell should clearly connect with your “ask” and should convey how the policymaker’s action will lead to concrete improvement in the lives of their constituents and within their community.

Adapted from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Connect Resource Manual for Project Connect:
<http://www.rwjf.org/en/grants/grantee-resources/connect-project.html>.



Take Your Congress Member To Work

Seeing is believing and getting an elected official to see dietetics professionals in their own settings will help make them believers. Site visits have been effective around the country in convincing legislators to support the Academy's policy initiatives. If you haven't tried this yet, start planning today!

Plan Ahead

- Connect with your affiliate or DPG leaders to make sure no one else in your area is approaching the same legislator. You will want to inform your affiliate or DPG of about your progress along the way.
- Gain approval from the appropriate people in your workplace for visits and photo releases. Coordinate with public relations facility staff if applicable.
- Check your employers' schedule to determine any conflicts.
- Know the schedules of key allies in your workplace (such as doctors, nurses and administrators) who will speak in support of the issue, so they can be available for the site visit.

Connect with your Policymaker

- Call your policymaker's office to invite him/her to your workplace and to determine when they will be in your area.
- Work with your elected officials' staff and the scheduler to set up a site visit. Determine the length of time the legislator can commit and plan accordingly; a one-hour visit is recommended.
- If the legislator cannot attend personally, do not hesitate to pursue a site visit with staff members, they carry substantial influence.
- Follow up in writing, confirm by telephone and offer to answer any questions in advance.
- Provide an agenda several weeks before the visit; notify all staff at your workplace of the visit several days in advance, so that everyone can be prepared.
- Call the day before the visit to confirm.
- Plan to take photographs of the visit for use in newsletters and the media.
- Be flexible! Legislators have extremely busy schedules so be prepared for last-minute changes.

Follow-Up

- After the site visit, be sure to write a follow-up letter thanking the legislator and staff for coming to your workplace.
- Share the success of the site visit with your Affiliate or DPG and PIA staff; contact the Academy's [Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy](#) to inform the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team about the outcome of your site visit.

Note:

A site visit from a senator, representative or state legislator may present a great opportunity for media coverage. Consider arranging for television or newspaper reporters to accompany this visit. You should obtain approval from the elected official's office and appropriate workplace staff before proceeding and work closely with his or her press secretary to coordinate.



In-District Events and ANDPAC

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee encourages Academy members to attend local fundraisers for members of Congress. One of the Academy's priorities is to integrate grassroots advocacy efforts and ANDPAC activities. Utilizing ANDPAC funds to sponsor Academy members to attend local fundraisers in your district and state is an important part of that process, helping to build and strengthen relationships between Academy members and members of Congress.

Academy member attendance at local fundraisers helps the Academy's advocacy efforts in several ways:

- Members of Congress prefer to hear from their constituents about issues. Attending events for members of Congress familiarizes them with you as a member of the Academy and strengthens the relationship between the them and the affiliate.
- Local events tend to be smaller, so Academy members are likely to have more "face time" with the member of Congress, providing an excellent opportunity to discuss Academy and affiliate priority areas and initiatives.

To attend a local fundraiser or event, contact your affiliate's public policy coordinator and have them complete the [ANDPAC Contribution Request Form](#) and submit the form to andpac@eatright.org.



Working with Coalitions

A coalition is a group of organizations and individuals working together to influence outcomes on a specific problem or issue. Coalitions have a broader reach than an individual organization and can be an effective way to consolidate resources to achieve a common goal. Coalitions also provide a forum for sharing information and facilitate cooperation among grassroots organizations and community members.

Before developing a new coalition, make sure that there isn't already an existing group with the same or similar mission. It may make more sense to join an existing coalition than create a new one.*

Some examples of the Academy and state affiliate coalition involvement include:

- The Academy joined the [Obesity Care Continuum](#) State Advocacy Representative Program in 2018. The goal of the STAR Program is to support and communicate the mission and goals of the OCC, which is composed of the Academy, Obesity Action Coalition, the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and the Obesity Medicine Association. With a combined membership of more than 150,000 patient and health care professional advocates, the OCC advocates for universal patient access to and coverage of evidence-based obesity treatment services across the care spectrum from nutrition, exercise and weight management through pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery. Members of the OCC also challenge weight bias and stigma-oriented policies.
- The Academy joined the [Aging in Motion Coalition](#) in March 2012 to help raise awareness of the importance of good nutrition as a component of prevention and treatment of sarcopenia in the aging population.
- The Academy is a member of the [United States Breastfeeding Committee](#), an independent nonprofit coalition of more than 40 organizations that support the mission to improve the nation's health by working collaboratively to protect, promote and support breast-feeding.
- The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics affiliate is a member of the [Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition](#), which has successfully advocated for strategic policy and state appropriations to maximize federal nutrition programs, reinforce the community-based emergency food assistance system and link local farmers with the needs of the hungry in the state of Washington.
- The [Coalition for Kidney Health](#) composed of the Academy, Obesity Action Coalition and other groups with interest in the new Kidney Model for prevention and slowing the progression of kidney disease. The coalition aims to increase patient access via increased referrals, increase staff availability and the use of MNT for persons with chronic kidney disease.

For more on building effective coalitions, see the [*Prevention Institute's Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide*](#).

*Adapted from the Prevention Institute: Cohen L, Baer N, Satterwhite P. Developing effective coalitions: an eight step guide. In: Wurzbach ME, ed. Community Health Education & Promotion: A Guide to Program Design and Evaluation. 2nd ed. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers Inc; 2002:144-161.



Following Up and Staying In Touch

Once you have an established relationship with your elected officials, stay in touch with their staff members and look for ways to become a trusted source of nutrition information whenever a nutrition issue arises.

Tips to Stay in Contact with your Elected Officials

- Promptly after a meeting or site visit, send a thank you note.
- Acknowledge an elected officials' support with a letter, call or email when they act favorably on your issue or in a vote.
- When a member of Congress has been especially supportive, attend a campaign fundraiser and bring along as many colleagues as possible. You may request ANDPAC funds to attend a fundraiser for a member of Congress. Be sure to make your presence known at the fundraiser, connecting with elected officials, staff and other supporters who may end up being your best allies.
- When new information supporting Academy positions is available, send it to your contacts promptly and follow up with a phone call.
- If you see a letter-to-the-editor or op-ed piece in your newspaper supporting the Academy's position on an issue, send it to your contacts in your elected officials' office, along with a personalized note letter.
- Peer-reviewed professional journals are always a trusted and respected resource of information. If you see an article that supports an issue, send it to the elected official along with a brief letter in which you explain the implications. As always, use personal, local examples to illustrate the point.
- Be creative! Look for opportunities to stay in touch that will reinforce the need for effective nutrition and health policy.

Closing the Loop: Reporting

As policy leaders, it is important for you to share your successes with the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team. To report your efforts, use the Legislative Meeting Tracking form in the Grassroots Advocacy Guidebook Appendix. Submit the completed form to the [Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy](#).

Let others know about your advocacy work! Share your experiences about what worked most effectively and what points had the greatest impact. Send your pictures and success stories to the Academy's [Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy](#) so your advocacy wins can be shared with other policy leaders!

The Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit

The Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit, formerly known as the Public Policy Workshop, is the Academy's annual advocacy event where hundreds of food and nutrition professionals gather in our nation's capital to sharpen their communication skills, take a deep-dive into key policy issues that impact the health of the nation and the dietetics profession, and develop new personal and professional relationships. Whether you are a newcomer to the world of policy and advocacy or a seasoned advocate, there is something for everyone at the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit! Attendees receive top-notch leadership and communications training that prepare them for their meetings on Capitol Hill and follow-up meetings with representatives once they are back home.

This annual event helps to consolidate and actualize much of the information in this guidebook in a hands-on approach. All Academy policy leaders are strongly encouraged to attend.



Principles of Effective Advocacy

Engaging with elected officials via email, social media or an in-person meeting, are opportunities for Academy members to educate and influence elected officials' perceptions about nutrition and health issues that affect their constituents. Understanding a few core principles about communicating with elected officials will ensure every opportunity is used to the fullest.

Be open and honest in all communications.

Your credibility is essential. Do not let your passion for the subject matter lead to exaggeration. Remember that "I don't know the answer to your question, but I will be happy to look into it and get back to you as soon as I can" is a perfectly acceptable response.

All politics is local.

Federal policy resonates at the local level. Local-level examples of the impact of a federal policy help humanize an issue and provide a more meaningful picture than national statistics. The involvement of local individuals, groups and organizations will get the attention of an elected official more effectively than a contact in Washington. If you are involved in other leadership positions in your community (e.g. on a hospital board, a member of rotary, PTA officer, etc.) mention that along with your professional affiliation. Every communication with your elected official should contain local information.

The power of the personal appeal.

Learn as much as possible about the existing personal links to nutrition and health issues of those you want to influence. Making a personal connection with an elected official or staff member's experience with an issue such as diabetes, geriatric malnutrition or heart disease can make your message much more powerful and memorable. By identifying these personal experiences, you often tap an emotional nerve and awaken a dormant source of strong support. It is important to be aware of the sensitive nature of this type of information.

A picture is worth a thousand words.

A photograph, video clip, graph or a picture drawn by a child can capture a story more vividly than a page full of text. Consider using a visual image in your communications to a congressional office to help a message resonate, examples include a letter, handout, newsletter, social media posts. Once you have identified relevant anecdotes and personal stories, consider how you can capture them visually.

Know the issue.

Before you make any contact with an elected official, study the issue carefully and be prepared to answer potential questions. If the issue you want to discuss applies to specific legislation, know where the bill stands (e.g., is it in committee, awaiting a floor vote or in a conference committee?).

The power of the media.

Newspapers, magazines, TV news, radio and TV talk shows all play an important role in influencing elected officials. These channels can be used to deliver your messages to your elected officials by including relevant letters-to-the-editor, editorials, or human-interest articles in your prepared packet to leave with the policymaker's office after your meeting. You may also mention a TV news story or radio talk show that examined your issue to demonstrate that it is of interest to a wide range of people. Make the point that media coverage of the issue will help make the general voting population more interested and that you can help them stay ahead of the issue.

Boost your visibility with social media.

With more members of Congress engaging on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, these venues provide greater opportunities to stay engaged with legislators. Be sure that your social media communications adhere to the **Academy's Social Media Policy** when advocating on behalf of the Academy, your affiliate or DPG. Don't forget to mention that you are a constituent in your messages!

It all adds up.

Every letter, phone call and contact creates a strong, unified voice for our profession. The more Academy members taking action on key issues, the louder our voice in Washington, D.C. When the staff of an elected official receives several letters or calls on a topic, they may take note. When staff receive hundreds or thousands of messages, they know it is an issue they must address. Quantity matters, particularly when members of Congress receive many unique communications, not just form letters or emails.

Know your allies and your opposition.

In addition to recruiting fellow dietetics professionals to get involved and make personal contact with legislators, it is important to establish alliances with other groups who support your cause.

For example, local chapters of the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society may be very supportive on medical nutrition therapy coverage issues. Community child welfare organizations may be supportive of issues relating to changes in programs such as Medicaid and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Be collaborative.

Meet with other organizations' legislative leaders to identify areas of common ground and to enlist their support in writing letters, making phone calls, sending emails and attending public meetings. Identify the organizations that can mobilize voters and be prepared to address their opposing message points. Understand the factors that motivate your opposition and point it out to legislators in a fair, open way. In addition, you should be prepared for opposing views. Academy staff can offer valuable support in developing and refining opposition messaging.

Additional Tips for Advocacy Success

- **Get to know your legislators.** Advocacy is grounded in relationships. It is important to understand your elected officials' districts and constituencies, voting records, personal schedules, opinions, expertise and interests. Maintain a strong understanding of the legislator's concerns, priorities and perspectives.
- **Acquaint yourself with legislative staff.** Relationships with your representatives' staff can be very beneficial. Legislative staff, committee members and agency officials are essential sources of information and have significant influence in the development of policy. They can even be your biggest advocates as they have the ear of your policymaker.
- **Collaboration is key.** Identify groups and legislators with whom you may need to negotiate for changes in legislation. Do not dismiss anyone because of previous disagreements or because you lack a history of working together; yesterday's opponent may be today's ally. Foster and strengthen relationships with allies and work with legislators who are flexible and tend to keep an open mind.
- **Be honest, straightforward and realistic.** Only make promises you can keep when working with legislators and their staff. Avoid misleading a legislator about the importance of an issue, the opposition's position, or strength or other matters. Do not be afraid to say, "I do not know" when asked a question; just remember to promptly follow up with the requested information.
- **Be polite, positive and professional.** Remember names and thank those who help you, both in the legislature and in the public health advocacy community. Be brief, clear, accurate, persuasive, timely, persistent, grateful and polite when presenting your position and communicating what you need/want from the legislator or staff member. Be sure to follow up with legislators and their staff. If you offer your assistance or promise to provide additional information, do so in a timely and professional manner. Be a reliable resource for them today and in the future. If your affiliate has a lobbyist, make sure they are included in all communications so that they can appropriately represent you and share with you important legislative issues or viewpoints.
- **Stay engaged.** Learn the legislative process and understand it well. Keep on top of the issues and be aware of controversial and contentious areas. Understand the budget process as much as you can. Acknowledge which departments and agencies hold authority over the programs that you care about, as well as pertinent committees.

Section VI:

Tools of the Trade

Advocacy Resources

1. **The Community of Interest:** The public policy panel [Community of Interest \(COI\)](#) is an online forum with trainings and webinars, handouts and materials. This platform also allows discussions amongst all policy leaders. Panel members can access this community by using the same Academy username and password used to log on to [eatrightPRO.org](#). The 'Quick Start Guide' on the homepage will give you the basics of navigating the website.
2. **Public Policy Weekly News:** Also known as PPWN, this is the weekly e-newsletter provides important updates for public policy panel leaders. Read these newsletters carefully and in full as they contain information on advocacy initiatives, such as open action alerts, training and webinar dates, and other materials for you to be successful in your role. Members who are politically engaged and want to stay on top of policy issues can receive this newsletter by emailing the [Manager, Policy and Advocacy Communications](#).
3. **Academy Website:** The [advocacy](#) section of the Academy's website provides an overview of current [policy activities](#). Here are quick links to specific pages:
 - [Regulatory Comments Page](#)
 - [ANDPAC](#)
 - [Licensure](#)
 - [Action Center](#)
4. **Issue Briefs, Leave Behinds and Talking Points:** The Academy creates the following resources for key pieces of legislation:
 - *Issue Brief:* Provides Academy members the details about a bill or issue, summarizing key points, research and supporting documentation.
 - *Leave Behind:* Provides the member of Congress with the details they need to know about the bill or issue.
 - *Talking Points:* Provide Academy members with an outline of the issue to be discussed during a meeting with a member of Congress.
5. **Eat Right Weekly:** The Academy's weekly e-newsletter provides all Academy members with a weekly summary of current government actions and activities.
6. **Medicaid Advocacy Toolkit:** [Expanding MNT in Medicaid: A Toolkit for Successful Advocacy](#) is a comprehensive resource designed to assist affiliate policy leaders with Medicaid advocacy in their states. The toolkit provides a Medicaid decision tree for determining the state's Medicaid MNT ask, Medicaid MNT return on investment references, sample Medicaid MNT laws, Medicaid MNT implementation regulations and case studies.
7. **Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:** Policy issues are highlighted in the journal's Public Policy News section. Academy members have free access to [JAND's](#) online database.
8. **The Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy Team:** For any policy questions, contact the [Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team](#) at 1-202-775-8277.

Federal Resources

1. **Library of Congress Website:** [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information, providing access to accurate, timely and complete legislative information for members of Congress, legislative agencies and the public. It is presented by the Library of Congress using data from the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Printing Office, Congressional Budget Office and the LOC's Congressional Research Service. This website is usually updated the morning after a session adjourns.

State Resources

1. **State Legislature Website:** Each state has a website for its state legislative body with contact information for your state legislators. [Search online](#) to find your state legislature's home page.
2. **Medicaid Office Website:** Find the website for your state Medicaid office to utilize their resources and program data, including the their Fee Schedule.
3. **Council of State Governments:** The [Council of State Governments](#) provides state officials in all three branches of government with the tools and strategies needed to implement effective policies and programs. They also work to build partnerships between governing entities and promote multi-state and regional cooperative ventures.
4. **Obesity Care Continuum State Advocacy Program Handbook:** A handbook designed to review key state-level players in obesity care advocacy, with links to each governor, insurance commissioner and state legislative health committee.
5. **Defeat Malnutrition Today Advocacy Toolkit:** This state advocacy toolkit offers information, resources and strategies for advancing policies related to quality malnutrition care for older adults.
6. **Incident Reporting Tool:** The Academy's Incident Reporting Tool was created to assist in its efforts to protect the public, enhance the quality of nutrition care and promote self-regulation of the profession. The information collected from the Incident Reporting Tool will be used to facilitate stakeholders and policymakers' understanding of the value of qualified RDN care, including elected leaders, state agency officials, other health care providers and the public.

National Organizations

1. **National Conference of State Legislatures:** Tracks the trends and current events in state legislatures and provides issue briefs and a national perspective on the work of each state legislature. [NCSL](#) is a valuable resource for tracking an issue in the state legislature, learn what other states are doing and provide a national perspective on current policy initiatives.
2. **The Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease:** The Academy is a member of this national coalition. Several Academy affiliates have engaged in PFCD's state outreach programs. On the [Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease website](#), click on "Get Resources" for research and information on preventing chronic disease. Click on "In the Field" to see what PFCD is doing in your state.
3. **National Association of Counties:** [NACO](#) is the only national organization representing county governments and provides legislative, research, technical and public affairs assistance to county governments to support their programs and policies at the local level.

Health Data Research

1. **The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation:** Use this [resource](#) for data on a health issue. Compare your state's data to national figures and track issues over time.
2. **The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation:** [RWJF](#) provides funding for a wide array of programs that work to develop a national culture of health.
3. **Trust for America's Health:** [TFAH](#) publishes health-related research and amplifies existing programs and policies to support health and well-being. TFAH creates annual State of Obesity and look at other social determinants of health as they relate to populations at a broad scale.
4. **County Health Rankings:** Provides [health data](#) on every county in the country, including obesity rate, smoking rate, morbidity and mortality rates, education levels, grocery store density and alcohol store density.
5. **USDA Food Environment Atlas:** This interactive [atlas](#) provides county and state data on food accessibility, participation in food assistance programs, food insecurity, local foods and diabetes rates.
6. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** The [CDC](#) provides statistics and research on numerous health issues and is an excellent and trusted resource for current data on the nation's health.

Glossary

Legislative Terms

Act: A bill passed by Congress and signed into law by the President of the United States.

Amendment: A formal proposal to change the language of a bill after it has been introduced.

Appropriation Bill: Provides funding for government agencies and programs.

Authorization Bill: Establishes or continues a federal agency or program, establishes conditions under which the program operates and authorizes or approves funding. An authorization bill does not provide the actual funding, this is done in the appropriations bill.

Bicameralism: Two chambers/houses in a legislative body (i.e. the House of Representatives and the Senate comprise the U.S. Congress).

Bill: A proposed law introduced during a session for consideration by the legislature and identified numerically in order of presentation. Bills that begin with "HR" originate in the House and bills that begin with "S" originate in the Senate (Ex: H.R. 853).

Budget Resolution: A resolution of the House and Senate that sets spending and revenue limits for the upcoming fiscal year. It does not require presidential approval.

Co-sponsor: A member of Congress who formally signs on to a measure. Any member of either chamber may add his or her name to a bill, indicating strong support for the proposal.

Committee: Both the House and Senate have several standing committees with specific purview over policy issues. Members from both parties serve on every committee and subcommittee.

Committee of Jurisdiction: The subjects and functions assigned to a committee by rule, resolution, precedent, or practice, including legislative matters, oversight and investigations, and nominations of executive officers.

Companion Bill: An identical bill introduced in the other chamber of Congress.

Conference Committee: Composed of members of the House of Representatives and Senate, a conference committee resolves differences between a bill that has passed both the chambers but with different provisions. Both House and Senate must approve the final conference committee version of the bill prior to being sent to the president for approval.

Congress: Refers to both the federal House of Representatives and Senate.

Continuing Resolution: A type of appropriations legislation that gives to or sets aside money for specific federal government departments, agencies and programs. Unlike regular appropriations bills that are passed annually (with the funding they provide covering one fiscal year), continuing resolutions occur when congress and the president fail to agree on and pass one or more of the regular appropriations bills. A CR continues the pre-existing appropriations at the same levels as the previous fiscal year (or with minor modifications) for a set amount of time. The CR typically provides funding at a rate or formula based on the previous year's funding.

Discretionary Spending: Spending controlled in annual appropriations acts. These funding lines or programs can be discontinued quickly if their appropriations bills are not passed. Some examples include WIC, school kitchen equipment grants and CDC grant programs.

Fiscal Year: The 12-month period on which the budget is planned. The federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year.

Germane: Refers to whether an amendment is relevant to the subject matter already being considered in a bill. The House Rules prohibit non-germane amendments while the Senate Rules generally, but not always, permit non-germane amendments.

The Floor: The floor is where members of Congress go to vote, debate bills and make speeches. The House Chamber or the Senate Chamber have their own floor; both have very restricted access.

Hearing: A committee meeting convened for the purpose of gathering information on a specific subject or considering specific legislative measures.

Majority: Refers to the Majority Party, the political party that has the most members in the House or the Senate.

Mandatory Spending: Spending controlled by laws other than annual appropriations acts. The government is obligated to fully fund these programs. Some examples include Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Mark-up: The process by which congressional committees and subcommittees debate, amend and rewrite proposed legislation.

Marker Bill: A piece of legislation introduced in Congress that's not actually intended to pass as a standalone bill, but is intended for inclusion in a larger bill.

Minority: Refers to the Minority Party, the political party that has less than 50 percent of the membership in the House or the Senate.

Omnibus Bill: A proposed law that covers a number of diverse or unrelated topics.

Override: An effort by Congress to reverse a presidential veto. It requires a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and the Senate.

Political Action Committee: An organization that raises funds privately to support candidates running for election, especially at the federal level.

President's Budget: Federal funding recommendations from the President of the United States that are submitted to congress, usually in January for the fiscal year beginning the following October. These recommendations do not have the force of law but indicate the administration's top priorities.

Quorum: A simple majority of the members of a full committee or the full House or Senate. A quorum is needed to begin conducting official business.

Ranking Minority Member: The highest-ranking (and usually longest serving) minority member of a committee or subcommittee.

Regulations: The interpretation and implementation of laws. Regulations are written by the departments and agencies that implement the laws in order to clarify the legislation and put it into practice. Exactly how legislation plays out in practice is determined by the regulations.

Session: Each two-year Congress is broken down into two sessions. The first session is held in odd-numbered years and the second session is held during even-numbered years.

Sponsor: The legislator who introduced a piece of legislation and advocates for its passage.

Subcommittee: A subunit of a committee established for the purpose of dividing the committee's workload. Recommendations of a subcommittee must be approved by the full committee before being reported to the House and Senate.

Town Hall: An event where policymaker or public official answers questions from members of the public.

Veto: The act of the President of the United States disapproving a measure. The President's veto may be overturned if two-thirds of both the House and Senate vote to override the veto.

Federal Agency Acronyms

- AHRQ:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (part of HHS)
- AoA:** Administration on Aging
- ATTTB:** Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (part of U.S. Department of Treasury)
- CBO:** Congressional Budget Office
- CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (part of HHS)
- CFSAN:** Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (part of FDA)
- CMS:** Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (part of HHS)
- CNPP:** Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (part of USDA)
- EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency
- ERS:** Economic Research Service (part of USDA)
- FAO:** Food and Agricultural Organization (part of the United Nations)
- FDA:** U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- FEC:** Federal Election Commission
- FNB:** Food and Nutrition Board (part of IOM)
- FNS:** Food and Nutrition Service (part of USDA)
- FSIS:** Food Safety and Inspection Service (part of USDA)
- GAO:** Government Accountability Office
- HAB:** HIV/AIDS Bureau (in HRSA)
- HELP:** Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
- HHS:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- HRSA:** Health Resources and Services Administration (part of HHS)
- HIS:** Indian Health Service (part of HHS)
- IOM:** Institute of Medicine (part of NAS)
- MCHB:** Maternal and Child Health Bureau (in HRSA)
- NAS:** National Academy of Sciences
- NCHS:** National Center for Health Statistics (part of CDC)
- NIH:** National Institutes of Health (part of HHS)
- OMB:** Office of Management and Budget (part of the White House)
- PHS:** Public Health Service
- USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
- USPTF:** U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (part of AHRQ)
- WHO:** World Health Organization (part of the United Nations)

Academy Acronyms

ANDPAC:	Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee
AP:	Affiliate President
BOD:	Board of Directors
CPC:	Consumer Protection and Licensure Coordinator
CPE:	Continuing Professional Education
CPEU:	Continuing Professional Education Units
CPLS:	Consumer Protection Licensure Subcommittee
DPG:	Dietetic Practice Group
EAL:	Evidence Analysis Library
EC:	Executive Committee (of a DPG or MIG)
FNCE®:	Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo™
HOD:	House of Delegates
ICD-10:	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (revision 10)
LD:	Licensed Dietitian
LDN:	Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist
LN:	Licensed Nutritionist
LPPC:	Legislative and Public Policy Committee
MNT:	Medical Nutrition Therapy
MPA:	Model Practice Act
MQii:	Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative
NDTR:	Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered
NSC:	Nutrition Services Coverage
NSPC:	Nutrition Services Payment Committee
PAC:	Political Action Committee
PAL:	Policy and Advocacy Leader (DPGs)
PIA:	Policy Initiatives and Advocacy
POW:	Program of Work
PPC:	Public Policy Coordinator
PPLA:	Public Policy Leadership Award
PPP:	Public Policy Panel
RD:	Registered Dietitian
RDN:	Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
RR:	Reimbursement Representative
SNAP:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SPR:	State Policy Representative
SRS:	State Reimbursement Representative

For a full list of Academy acronyms, click [here](#).

Appendix

Position Descriptions

Affiliate President

Elected or Appointed: Elected

Reporting Relationship: Senior Manager, Affiliate and Practice Leader Relations

Voting/Non-voting: Voting

Position Duration: One-year term

Position Purpose: The affiliate president provides leadership and guidance to the PPC and public policy panel. The affiliate president is an engaged member who works with district presidents, where applicable, to develop goals for grassroots participation and plays an integral part of disseminating key messages. Appoints members to the public policy panel.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Provide leadership and guidance to the public policy coordinator and other public policy panel members;
2. Participate in public policy panel meetings, as necessary;
3. Participate or assign a designee to participate in Academy professional development webinars;
4. Appoint members to affiliate public policy panel, as appropriate and assist affiliate president-elect with appointing public policy panel members for upcoming year;
5. Assist consumer protection coordinator in providing recommendations to the governor for appointments to the licensure/certification board;
6. Encourage members to attend FNCE® and the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit annually;
7. Support PPC and SPR in encouraging affiliate members to attend local events for their elected officials (town halls, tele-town halls, ANDPAC events, etc.);
8. Promote the dissemination of public policy updates, action alert participation and other policy or legislative updates;
9. Complete action alerts and promote action alert participation among affiliate members;
10. Attend the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit, as affiliate budget allows;
11. Participate in the latest Academy public policy and advocacy orientation training webinar, as well as the Academy affiliate president position training webinar;
12. Assist with development of affiliate annual public policy plan of work;
13. Make policy goals and priorities accessible to affiliate board members;
14. Assist with developing communication strategy for affiliate public policy activities;
15. Assist public policy panel with planning for congressional in-district meetings; and
16. Participate in conference calls with the Academy's Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy as needed.



Lisa Eaton Wright, MS, RDN, LDN
Affiliate President

What is your favorite thing about being an Affiliate President?

I enjoyed being an Affiliate President because it allowed me to engage Illinois Academy members and raise awareness about issues that impact our profession. Regulations and policy impact our lives beyond food and nutrition and members want to know how various issues impact them and their jobs. I care enough to advocate for them and to lift them up so they feel confident advocating for themselves.

Why should an Academy member take on the role of an Affiliate President?

I have a personal mantra that has evolved over the years I've been an RDN: It's our profession. Let's own it. Let's advocate for it!

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Develops a strategic work plan of goals and desired achievements for the affiliate;
2. Updates position description, policies and procedures as needed;
3. Appoints new public policy panel leaders, as needed, and makes recommendations for unfilled positions to their successor; and
4. Ensures records are kept and available to affiliate leaders for at least seven years.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4 hours per month (approximately 1 hour each week, as needed) in addition to meetings

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Recommendations for incoming positions;
- Contact information for key relationships established; introduce their successor before departure; and
- Other relevant information/documents from previous years.

Academy Staff Contact:

- Senior Manager, Affiliate and Practice Leader Relations

Note: The Affiliate President position description outlined here only describes a president's purpose and responsibilities relevant to policy and advocacy. It does not encompass the full scope of an Affiliate President's duties. For more information and resources, consult the [Affiliate Manual](#) on the DPG, MIG and Affiliate Governance Management website or contact affiliate@eatright.org.

Public Policy Coordinator

Elected or Appointed: Elected (appointed in some states)

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President

Voting/Non-voting: Voting or Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term

Position Purpose: This position is responsible for coordinating federal legislative activities and affiliate public policy panel. Serves as federal legislative connection with Academy staff, meets with members of Congress and reports back to the Academy, affiliate board and public policy panel.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Serve as lead for the affiliate on federal legislative issues, communicating federal public policy issues to the affiliate board, president, public policy panel and affiliate membership;
2. PPCs must understand the basics of government and the Academy's public policy priorities;
3. Serve as the primary information-sharing conduit between Academy Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff and your affiliate members;
4. Stay informed and remain up-to-date with federal legislative issues that concern the Academy's policy priorities and long-term goals;
5. Develop constituent relationships and assist affiliate members with developing constituent relationships with members of Congress and their staff;
6. Serve as the affiliate leader on engaging members in various grassroots activities including action alerts, ANDPAC events, attending town hall meetings, etc.;
7. Complete action alerts and promotes action alert participation among the affiliate board, public policy panel and membership; monitor metrics and identifying strategies to increase participation;
8. Attend and lead affiliate's efforts during the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit;
9. Participate in Academy public policy meetings, webinars and educational offerings;
10. Lead the development of a public policy plan of work with the public policy panel and submit to the Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy (see p. 19 for the template);
11. Coordinate and assist with the dissemination of the Academy's public policy messaging and communications;
12. Organize meetings with members of Congress and/or their staff;
13. Submit your affiliate's strategic measures survey to the Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy; and
14. Perform other duties as assigned by Affiliate President or requested by Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff.



Ria Saunders, MS, RD, LD
Public Policy Coordinator

What is your favorite thing about being a Public Policy Coordinator?

I work from home for an organization that includes other allied health professionals but no other RDNs on staff. As Public Policy Coordinator, not only have I been able to make connections, but I've made meaningful friendships with dietetic professionals I wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity to spend time with.

Why should an Academy member take on the role of Public Policy Coordinator?

I began my role as Public Policy Coordinator for the Maine Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics when I was 27 years old. While excited to advocate for nutrition policy, I was also a little worried I wouldn't have much to contribute to the role. But I was blown away by the amount of guidance and support I received. The Academy's PIA staff provided clear training and direction for the role, and affiliate board members provided mentorship that has been invaluable to both my role as PPC and to my career. By my second term as PPC for the Maine affiliate, I had developed the skills in advocacy and leadership that I hope to pass on to future dietetic leaders.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Submit the public policy plan of work to the Academy's Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy by September 1;
2. Submit reports to the public policy panel and affiliate board as needed;
3. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
4. Submit reports to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations; and
5. Keep records for at least three years and pass records to the incoming PPC.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 6-12 hours per month (approximately 1.5-3 hours a week) in addition to meetings, with additional time during the in-district work periods for members of Congress and the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Recent public policy plan of work
- Current federal issues and reports
- Public policy panel meeting minutes and reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy

State Policy Representative

Elected or Appointed: Appointed

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President

Voting/Non-voting: Voting or Non-voting

Position Duration:

Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term

Position Purpose: This position is responsible for coordinating affiliate state legislative activities and advocacy efforts. This position also monitors state legislative issues and coordinates meetings with state legislators and the governor.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Assist with the development of affiliate public policy plan of work;
2. Track state legislative issues of importance to members and oversee the affiliate's response to emerging opportunities and issues;
3. Maintain ongoing relationships and dialogue with the affiliate president, PPC, SRS, RR and other appropriate leaders – including DPG representatives in the state – to manage practice matters. Affiliates may want to delegate responsibility for specific policy issues to individuals with expert knowledge or interest to lead affiliate action on a particular effort;
4. Coordinate appointments with the governor's office, state legislators and other public officials to raise the profile of the association;
5. Serve as the chair of the state legislative day organizing committee. Work with the committee to organize the event and meetings with state legislators;
6. Coordinate with the PPC and the SRS on policy issues to assure that the affiliate stance is consistent with the Academy;
7. Serve on the affiliate public policy panel. Act as a liaison with the Academy's Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy collaboratively consider the affiliate's response to emerging opportunities and policies;
8. Complete action alerts;
9. Identify state legislators who serve on committees with jurisdiction on issues impacting food, nutrition and health legislation;
 - Make appointments with legislators when you are not asking for a specific vote or favor. Be sure your meetings include one or more constituents of the legislator;
 - Become a resource on issues on their food, nutrition and health agenda;
 - Watch the news for issues they care about and let them know your knowledge of and interest in these issues.
10. Assist affiliate members in making appointments with any of the state's legislators in their district or state capital;
11. Pay attention to the personal connections of your affiliate leaders and train your members to develop and maintain relationships with state legislators;
12. Serve as a resource for the affiliate on state legislative issues;
13. Assist with the dissemination of the Academy's public policy messaging and communications; and
14. Perform other duties as assigned.



Lesley McPhatter, MS, RD, CSR
State Policy Representative

What is your favorite thing about being a State Policy Representative?

Becoming the SPR for my affiliate has been one of the more rewarding volunteer positions I have held in my 31-year career as a RDN. Taking an active role in state advocacy allows us to see the impact we can have on the overall health and nutrition of the people we serve.

Why should an Academy member take on the role of State Policy Representative?

Our Virginia affiliate has been instrumental in passing legislation and budget allowances for important programs related to food deserts, and formulas for inborn errors of metabolism. WE are the experts in nutrition and need to avail ourselves of every opportunity to advocate for and support legislation that promotes a healthier, food secure community.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Submit reports to the public policy panel and affiliate board as needed;
2. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
3. Submit reports to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations; and
4. Keep records for at least three years and pass records to their successor.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-10 hours per month (approximately 1-2.5 hours a week) in addition to meetings, with additional time during the state legislature's session and state legislative day; additional time commitment may be required in the springtime when most legislatures are in session.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Current state issues and reports
- Public policy panel meeting minutes and reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy

State Regulatory Specialist

Elected or Appointed: Appointed

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President

Voting/Non-voting: Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term

Position Purpose: The state regulatory specialist is responsible for monitoring state regulatory initiatives, identifying comment opportunities, meeting with regulatory agencies and reporting to the public policy panel.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Track state regulatory issues of importance to the affiliate, in coordination with a lobbyist or legislative consultant if appropriate, and oversee the affiliate's response to emerging opportunities and challenges, including writing and submitting regulatory comments;
2. Initiate meetings with state agency officials to promote access to the RDN, DTR and nutrition services in state regulatory and programmatic initiatives;
3. Ensure the affiliate has an up-to-date compendium of current statutes and rules that impact dietetics practice, including scope of practice, facility and program requirements and any other document that defines the requirements and responsibilities for dietitians in your state;
4. Coordinate with the PPC, SPR, CPC and the RR on issues to ensure that the affiliate stance is consistent with the Academy;
5. Complete action alerts and encourage affiliate members to take action;
6. Ensure that the affiliate's state agency and regulatory work is consistent with the three priority goals established annually by the public policy panel;
7. Identify and meet with other decision-makers within state agencies whose work will impact the affiliate's goals, particularly those that relate to access to RDNs, DTRs and nutrition services and programs;
8. Consult with the Academy's Policy Initiatives and Advocacy team and the LPPC to coordinate Academy's stances and positions on emerging regulatory issues at the state level;
9. Serve as a resource for the affiliate on state regulatory issues;
10. Assist with the dissemination of the Academy's public policy messaging and communications; and
11. Perform other duties as assigned.



Connie Diekman
M.Ed, RD, CSSD, LD, FADA, FAND
State Regulatory Specialist

What is your favorite thing about being a State Regulatory Specialist?

As a State Regulatory Specialist my favorite thing is the networking with the state policy team to discuss and determine what issues are important to Missourians, what issues should we be addressing and how to work with our lobbyist to ensure we are at the right tables of state policy.

Why should an Academy member take on the role of State Regulatory Specialist?

State Regulatory Specialists are, at least in Missouri, involved in policy at a broad scope making the position a very dynamic and exciting position. Monitoring regulations, in concert with our lobbyist, provides a glimpse of state goals, the philosophy of state government and of course, the challenges of the regulatory process. Serving in this position has enhanced my understanding of why RDNs need to know, and be involved in, policy.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Submit reports to the public policy panel and affiliate board as needed;
2. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
3. Submit reports to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations; and
4. Keep records for at least three years and pass records to successor.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-8 hours per month (approximately 1-2 hours a week) in addition to meetings, with additional time during the state legislature's session and state legislative day.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Current state regulatory issues followed and reports generated
- Public policy panel meeting minutes and reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Senior Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

Consumer Protection Coordinator

Elected or Appointed: Appointed

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President

Voting/Non-voting: Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term but not to exceed six years

Position Purpose: This position is an integral part of the affiliate public policy panel and is responsible for advising the affiliate leaders and members about consumer protection issues, coordinating the reporting of harm to responsible parties and monitoring the activities of state licensure, certification or regulatory boards.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Monitor consumer protection issues and their impact on the affiliate's licensure statute and related issues, in collaboration with the SPR and SRS, through state regulatory action reports and other resources;
2. Keep affiliate board informed of current consumer protection issues in the state, including licensure board activities and licensure sunset dates (the proposed date for the expiration of the current statute and the development of the revised statute);
3. For licensure statutes that are scheduled for sunset, lead the affiliate plan for effective strategies on the sunset preparation;
4. Participate in Academy consumer protection issues meetings, webinars and licensure forum calls;
5. As a member of the affiliate public policy panel, communicate with the panel on consumer protection and licensure issues impacting the profession;
6. Develop a plan to assure that dietitians and consumers can easily report statute violations as well as success and effectiveness stories of RDNs;
7. Monitor frequency of state licensure board meetings, attend the licensure board meetings and monitor RDN licensure board member attendance;
8. Monitor the status of RDN licensure board terms of office;
9. Monitor the overall licensure board structure with regard to professional representation roles;
10. Assist affiliate board with recommendations to the governor for appointments to the licensure board;
11. Assist affiliate board with confirming governor's action on appointment of RDN licensure board members;
12. Serve as a resource for the affiliate on the state dietetics licensure/certification statute and regulations;
13. Assist with the dissemination of the Academy's consumer protection and licensure messaging and communications;
14. Provide testimony when necessary on behalf of the affiliate at licensure related public hearings;
15. Assist with the dissemination of the Academy's public policy messaging and communications;
16. Complete action alerts; and
17. Perform other duties as assigned.



Cassie Vanderwall, PhD, RD, CD, CDE, CPT
Consumer Protection Coordinator

What is your favorite thing about being a Consumer Protection Coordinator?

The Consumer Protection Coordinator is charged with communicating the importance of professional regulation in order to protect and serve the public. I enjoy equipping and empowering the RDNs and NDTRs in Wisconsin with tools to share their work local legislators: stories of success and the potential harm caused by unqualified individuals practicing MNT.

Why should an Academy member take on the role of Consumer Protection Coordinator?

The role of the Consumer Protection Coordinator is an ideal position for members who are passionate about protecting the public and advancing the profession of dietetics via professional regulation. This position increases the member's understanding of how professions are regulated and the overall position of legislators as it pertains to public safety and protection.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Submit reports to the public policy panel and affiliate board as needed;
2. Provide input for sunset preparation at least 18 months prior to sunset;
3. Provide affiliate board with status on licensure board terms of office approximately one year prior to term expirations;
4. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
5. Submit reports to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations; and
6. Keep relevant records for at least three years and pass records to successor.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-10 hours per month (approximately 1-2.5 hours a week), in addition to meetings.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Current licensure statute and regulations
- Licensure board meeting minutes and reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Senior Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
- Manager, Consumer Protection and Regulation

Reimbursement Representative

Elected or Appointed: Appointed (elected in some states)

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President or DPG Chair

Voting/Non-voting: Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term, with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term

Position Purpose: The reimbursement representative position serves in a dual role of member education and advocacy. The RR serves as a resource for Academy members who have questions about coding, coverage and payment issues. They facilitate use of the Academy's coding, coverage and payment resources and coordinate local advocacy efforts (for DPG RRs – support national advocacy efforts) to expand federal and state nutrition coverage policies.

Responsibilities of the Position:

Member Education:

- Promote the Academy's monthly MNT Provider newsletter to your members;
- Communicate with the affiliate/DPG executive committee on topics including Medicare, Medicaid and private sector coverage;
- Share MNT coverage and Medicare Part B MNT/DSMT benefit information with affiliate/DPG members via phone or email communications and through presentations;
- Direct members to federal, state and private insurance coding, coverage and payment resources (through affiliate/DPG and Academy web pages); and
- Encourage members to track MNT outcomes data by advocating the use of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Health Informatics Infrastructure (ANDHII), which is critical for impacting coverage decisions.

Advocacy:

- Participate in in-district meetings with members of Congress for MNT coverage issues.
- Attend/view recording of Academy's RR orientation webinar, quarterly call/webinars and public policy trainings on reimbursement-related advocacy issues;
- Support coding, coverage and payment issues on the local (for the affiliate RRs) and national level;
- Work cooperatively as a member of your public policy team, the affiliate public policy panel or the PAL and assist with member action alerts;
- Participate in Academy coding surveys and activities;
- Participate in action alerts;
- Collect information on nutrition services coverage in state benchmark plan; and
- Communicate/work with the state regulatory representative.



Lois Hill, MS, RDN, LD, LDE, FAND
Reimbursement Representative

What is your favorite thing about being a Reimbursement Representative?

Reimbursement Representatives make a difference and impact on RDNs' issues with coding, coverage, and payment. These issues have a direct impact on RDNs' everyday life!

Why should an Academy member take on the role of Reimbursement Representative?

Being a Reimbursement Representative for the Kentucky Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics provides a great opportunity to advocate, network and learn about coding, coverage and payment issues. A Reimbursement Representative is on the front line of working on these important issues for the profession.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Submit reports to the public policy panel and affiliate board or DPG executive committee as needed;
2. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
3. Submit quarterly reports to Academy Nutrition Services Coverage staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations; and
4. Keep records for at least three years and pass records to successor.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-10 more hours per month (1-2.5 hours per week), in addition to meetings.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Current nutrition services coverage issues and quarterly reports
- Public policy panel meeting minutes and reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Nutrition Services Coverage Manager, Advocacy and Communications
- Senior Director, Governance and Nutrition Service Coverage

DPG Policy and Advocacy Leader

Elected or Appointed: Appointed

Reporting Relationship: Dietetic Practice Group Chair

Voting/Non-voting: Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term but not to exceed six years

Position Purpose: The PAL plans and organizes the policy and advocacy activities for the DPG. The PAL stays current with public policy news and developments and disseminates information to the executive committee and DPG members. DPG leaders and members are important resources for affiliate public policy panels. The PAL serves as the primary contact with Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Serve as the DPG point of contact with the Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff;
2. Serve as a member liaison for advocacy coalitions that the Academy has joined and which are relevant to the DPG. Collaborate with Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff to attend calls and report back, as necessary;
3. Identify and recruit DPG members to serve as content experts for public policy initiatives; identify professionals outside of the dietetics profession with expertise relevant to the public policy priority areas of the Academy inclusive of your DPG;
4. Develop an annual public policy plan of work or other document that outlines the regulatory, legislative and other public policy goals of the DPG and submit to the Academy's Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy;
5. Meet with Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff to collaborate on the public policy priorities. Meetings can be held during Academy events, or scheduled as stand-alone meetings;
6. Engages DPG members in grassroots advocacy efforts. The PAL should tailor communications to DPG members as appropriate to demonstrate how the issue is relevant to the DPG public policy plan of work, policy goals, or practice areas;
7. Serve as a content expert and/or lead a team of content experts for policy issues related to your DPG; Submit DPG's recommendations to inform Academy regulatory comments, stances and positions.
 - Communicate with members of the DPG to solicit input, data, sources of data and technical expertise on legislative and regulatory issues as needed.
 - Collect, synthesize and submit consensus comments on behalf of the DPG to Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff.
8. Communicate with DPG members and committees, including reimbursement representative to elicit timely response to legislative and regulatory issues;
9. Keep DPG executive committee and members informed about legislative and regulatory issues;
10. Complete action alerts and encourage other DPG leaders and members to take action on open action alerts;
11. Encourage DPG members to work closely with state public policy panel leaders on regulatory and legislative issues;
12. Network with other organizations with similar public policy goals or interests;
13. Attend the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C., (fully funded as DPG budget allows). Communicate with members of DPG before, during and after the event;
14. Attend FNCE® and related DPG meetings and events (fully funded as DPG budget allows); and
15. Participate in executive committee conference calls as scheduled.



Nina Crowley, PhD, RDN, LD

Policy and Advocacy Leader for the Weight Management DPG

What is your favorite thing about being a Policy and Advocacy Leader?

Serving as a Policy and Advocacy Leader has been the best way for me to be in contact with the key people and groups who are making changes in policy for people with obesity. I've been lucky to serve on committees representing the WMDPG and work alongside people who are the 'movers and shakers' in this area. Once I got 'bit' by the 'policy bug,' I've been passionate about getting dietitians who think policy is scary and "not their thing" to see how thrilling it is to be part of making change in the future of our profession! In my current role as a program coordinator, I miss the direct patient care, but in my role as PAL, I feel like I am helping to make change that will impact the lives of all of our patients!

Why should an Academy member take on the role of Policy and Advocacy Leader?

Carving out your niche in dietetics helps you to know where to apply your unique skills and where you are able to make your mark helping people. Being the Policy and Advocacy Leader for your Dietetics Practice Group helps you to take your area of expertise even further, to the level of helping to change policy in that area allowing more people to access dietitians practicing in this area. It really helps you to take a step back from the daily grind of your job and think bigger picture about how to make an impact with nutrition for EVERYONE.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. Update position description, policies and procedures as needed;
2. Submit reports to staff in a timely manner and include future recommendations;
3. Provide input on the DPG program of work for the upcoming year and send to chair-elect for coordination (early January);
4. Submit the public policy plan of work to the Academy's manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy by September 1;
5. Keep records for at least three years and pass records to successor; and
6. Submit content for annual report to past-chair in June for previous year.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-10 hours per month (approximately 1-2.5 hours a week) in addition to meetings and increased time commitment leading up to the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- DPG position description
- DPG Policies and Procedures, as appropriate
- DPG Guiding Principles, as appropriate
- Pertinent correspondence and files

Academy Staff Contacts:

- Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy
- Director, DPG/MIG/Affiliate Relations

Affiliate Delegate

Elected or Appointed: Elected

Reporting Relationship: Affiliate President

Voting/Non-voting: Voting

Position Duration: Three-year term (recommended), with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term but not to exceed six years

Position Purpose: The Affiliate Delegate serves as the affiliate voice in the House of Delegates and as a member of the affiliate board of directors. Serves as an ex-officio member of the affiliate public policy panel to communicate and encourage member participation in food, nutrition and health policy initiatives or activities and action alerts, and to provide insight from the affiliate perspective on policy related impact strategic or professional issues discussed by the House of Delegates.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Complete Academy policy initiatives delegate position orientation training;
2. Assist with planning and implementation of communication strategies (e.g., website, newsletter, social media, presentations to affiliate board, districts and members) on messages related to legislative and regulatory issues;
3. Develop ongoing relationships with legislative representatives and policy makers (in person, by phone and/or by email);
4. Assist with the grassroots mobilization for responding to federal/state legislation and regulations;
5. Complete action alerts;
6. Assist with member communications to encourage participation in action alerts for federal and state issues;
7. Assist with nominating members and legislators for the Academy's public policy awards;
8. Assist with the development of affiliate annual public policy plan of work;
9. Participate in affiliate public policy meetings;
10. Participate in the Academy and affiliate advocacy social media campaigns and communication messaging;
11. Attend the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit; and
12. Provide insight from affiliate perspective on the policy related impact of strategic and professional issues discussed by the HOD.



Alana Cline, PhD, RD
Affiliate Delegate

What is your favorite thing about being an Academy Delegate?

My favorite thing about being the Affiliate Delegate for the Colorado Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is seeing the “big picture” issues of importance to our profession and being able to relay that information back to our affiliate members

Why should an Academy member take on the role of Academy Delegate?

To represent our affiliate members when making decisions about important issues and decisions that affect the Academy and our profession.

Reports and Deadlines:

1. HOD reports for fall and spring meetings and others as determined by the House Leadership team.

Time Spent in Activities:

- 8–10 hours per month (approximately two to two and a half hours a week) in addition to meetings, with increased activity in the fall and spring.

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Recent HOD reports

Academy Staff Contacts:

- Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy
- Director, HoD Governance

Note: The Affiliate Delegate position description outlined here only describes a delegate’s purpose and responsibilities relevant to policy and advocacy. It does not encompass the full scope of a delegate’s duties. For more information and resources, consult the [House of Delegates Community website](#).

DPG Delegate

Elected or Appointed: Elected

Reporting Relationship: DPG Chair

Voting/Non-voting: Voting or Non-voting

Position Duration: Three-year term, with possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term but not to exceed six years

Position Purpose: The DPG Delegate serves as the DPG voice in the HOD and as a member of the DPG Executive Committee. The DPG Delegate works with the DPG Executive Committee and PAL to encourage member participation in food, nutrition and health policy initiatives and action alerts, and to provide insight from the DPG perspective on policy related impact of strategic and professional issues discussed by the House of Delegates.

Responsibilities of the Position:

1. Complete position orientation training;
2. Assist PAL and executive committee with planning and implementation of communication strategies (e.g., website, newsletter, social media, presentations to the executive committee and members) on messages related to legislative and regulatory issues;
3. Develop relationships and have ongoing outreach and communication with personal legislative representatives and policy makers (in person, by phone and/or by email);
4. Assist with the grassroots mobilization for responding to federal legislation and regulations;
5. Complete action alerts;
6. Support member communications to encourage participation in action alerts for federal and state issues;
7. Assist with nominating members and legislators for the Academy's public policy awards;
8. Assist with the development of DPG annual public policy plan of work;
9. Participate in Academy and DPG advocacy social media campaigns;
10. Participate in the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit and quarterly advocacy days and/or DPG legislative days; and
11. Serve as a content expert and provide insight from DPG perspective on the policy related impact of strategic and professional issues discussed by the HOD.

Reports and Deadlines:

- HOD reports for fall and spring meetings and others as determined by the House Leadership team.

Time Spent in Activities:

- About 4-10 hours per month (approximately 1-2.5 hours a week) in addition to meetings

Materials to be Passed on to Successor:

- Recent HOD reports

Academy Staff Contact:

- Manager, Grassroots and State Advocacy
- Director, HOD Governance

Note: The DPG Delegate position description outlined here only describes a delegate's purpose and responsibilities relevant to policy and advocacy. It does not encompass the full scope of a delegate's duties. For more information and resources, consult the [House of Delegates Community website](#).

