

Constituent Service

Description of Award:

This award focuses on how an office interacts with, assists, and serves constituents. We expect to see that an office demonstrates excellence through specific practices that are thoroughly rooted in the office's values and incorporated into the office's work, including specific, methodical, and consistent processes for achieving measurable results in constituent service. Please note: this award is independent of legislative achievements, and emphasis is on effectiveness not efficiency (e.g., use of, and adherence to, metrics for outcomes rather than simply measuring the time it takes to resolve a constituent case request or respond to an email).

For example:

- Impressive mail quality, established workflow, and efficient turnaround times
- Effectiveness in the office acting as ombudsman for constituents with federal agencies (casework)
- Responsiveness in constituent meetings, events, and field work
- Whether the office has implemented processes or tools which have resulted in improved timeliness, cost savings, and constituent satisfaction such as manuals, handbooks, and guides
- Effective online, social media, and/or in-person and/or telephone town hall meetings geared toward assisting constituents, especially in times of disaster/crisis/global pandemic
- Celebrating successes regarding constituent casework and staff interactions
- Hiring staffers skills to the needs of constituents in order to bridge communication barriers
- Going "above and beyond" to support constituent needs and actively represent the district/state while in Washington, DC

Questions: (Please limit your answers to 500 words per question.)

1. What policies and practices does your office have in place to ensure that excellent constituent service is a routine practice?
2. In your opinion, how is the constituent service your office provides different from that provided by other Senators/Representatives?
3. Please provide brief, but specific, examples to illustrate your office's excellent constituent service.
4. Please provide any metrics which demonstrate your office's excellence in constituent service.
5. Please describe the role of the Senator or Representative in establishing and maintaining a high level of constituent service in your office.
6. Please describe how you adapted your constituent services operations to fit the needs of your constituents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Life in Congress” Workplace Environment

Description of Award:

This award focuses on how an office treats its employees. We seek information describing how office management empowers employees; demonstrates flexibility in workplace rules; consistently uses core values to guide decisions, behaviors and communications; encourages staff professional development and achievement; and regularly engages in performance management practices. We expect to see that an office has created policies and a culture through specific practices that are thoroughly integrated into the office’s work.

For example:

- A performance management system that provides employees with continual feedback and metrics on performance
- Offering modern and creative work-flex policies (e.g., telework, job sharing, and flex work hours)
- A culture of staff professional development
- Holding staff accountable to office mission and values
- Fostering inclusivity in the office, including hiring staff representative of the district/state
- Supporting staff and intern professional development of interns
- Thoughtful and effective employee recruitment and retention strategies
- Involvement of the Senator/Representative in employee interactions and projects

Questions: (Please limit your answers to 500 words per question.)

1. What policies and practices does your office have in place to promote a positive workplace environment?
2. In your opinion, how is the workplace culture in your office different from those of other Senators/Representatives?
3. Please provide brief, but specific, examples that illustrate that your office is an outstanding workplace.
4. Please describe the role of the Senator or Representative in establishing and maintaining a strong and positive workplace culture.
5. Please describe how your office integrates the concepts of diversity and inclusion in your work.
6. Please offer examples of how you adapted your work culture to fit the needs of staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transparency and Accountability

Description of Award:

This award focuses on how the office integrates and respects the concepts of transparency and accountability in government. We would expect to see that an office demonstrates transparency through regular, meaningful, and robust communications to constituents and stakeholders that are designed to keep them informed of the Member's activities and actions in Congress. Additionally, offices would be expected to hold themselves accountable to their constituents by consistently following office protocols and sharing as much information with constituents as is necessary to demonstrate clarity in the Member's activities and goals.

For example:

- Consistently updating the Member's website and social media platforms with relevant information related to the legislator's legislative and representational responsibilities as well as pertinent information regarding safety and testing re: COVID-19
- Publicly sharing vote explanations, position statements, schedules, and meetings with constituents on a variety of platforms
- Providing numerous opportunities to interact directly with the legislator at town halls, telephone town halls, social media platforms, summits, and district/state office hours
- General responsiveness to legitimate constituent inquiries
- Holding office and staff accountable by adhering to performance standards
- Quality, amount, and variety (online, in-person, telephone) of town hall meetings

Questions: (Please limit your answers to 500 words per question.)

1. What policies and practices does your office have in place to promote transparency and accountability both in interactions with constituents and within the office?
2. How is the transparency and accountability offered and promoted by your office different from that in other Senators'/Representatives' offices?
3. Please provide brief, but specific, examples that illustrate how your office has gone beyond the norm in promoting transparency and accountability.
4. Please describe the role of the Senator or Representative in establishing and maintaining practices related to transparency and accountability.
5. How did your office foster transparency and accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Innovation and Modernization

Description of Award:

This award focuses on how a congressional office uses creativity and an eye toward the future to better facilitate the Member's roles as legislator, representative, and manager, or can encompass the work a Member does to improve the institution of Congress. This can be demonstrated either by example or by proposing innovations and modernization of the institution. This can include website improvements, social media, and interactive communications tools to enhance office productivity, institution-wide efficiency measures, and conscious efforts to bring Congress into the 21st century. We expect to see that an office demonstrates innovation and modernization through specific practices that are thoroughly integrated either into the individual office's work or work on behalf of Congress overall.

For example:

- Constituent feedback and interaction
- Office efficiency measures
- Workplace flexibility
- Legislative research
- Committee work
- Member briefings/information-sharing
- Staff management and communication
- Member and staff mobility and effectiveness

Questions: (Please limit your answers to 500 words per question.)

1. What policies and practices does your office have in place to ensure that innovation and modernization are routine practices? Alternatively, how is your Member attempting to modernize the institution of Congress?
2. How do your office's innovative/modernization practices compare with those of other Senators'/Representatives' offices?
3. Please provide brief, but specific, examples that illustrate how these practices have produced positive representative, legislative, or workplace outcomes.
4. Please describe the role of the Senator or Representative in establishing and maintaining practices related to innovation/modernization in your office or in the institution of Congress overall.
5. Please offer examples of how your office exemplified innovation or modernized/adapted to fit the needs of staff and/or constituents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff Lifetime Achievement Award

Description of Award:

This award recognizes a maximum of two congressional staffers (one institutional/support office staffer, one personal/committee/leadership office staffer) who has had both long, respected careers in Congress as well as a positive impact on the management and operations of the institution. We seek information about their careers on Capitol Hill and their contribution to Congress.

All current legislative branch staffers who have worked for Congress are eligible for this award. This includes staffers who work for personal, committee, leadership, and institutional offices (e.g., House Chief Administrative Office, Secretary of the Senate, Library of Congress, etc.). Former staff members will not be considered for this award unless they were employed by the institution at the time of their nomination. Individuals may not nominate themselves.

Questions: (Please limit your answers to 500 words per question.)

1. How long has the nominee served Congress and in what capacity/capacities?
2. Why does the nominee deserve a lifetime achievement award?
3. Please provide brief, but specific, examples that illustrates the nominee's significant contribution to Congress or the American public.
4. If there are public documents or other tangible evidence of the nominee's contribution (e.g., articles, commendations, etc.), please provide links or other information which will enable CMF to obtain it.
5. Please provide the names and contact information for three references (in addition to the nominator) willing to be interviewed about the nominee's service and contribution.