

#SaveHIVFunding Campaign: World AIDS Day Toolkit

How to Request & Conduct In-District Meetings & Make Other Requests to Congressional Offices

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Introduction

Why do a meeting with your Member of Congress or their staff?

One of the most impactful ways that people can push back against funding and other cuts proposed by Congress is to request an in-district meeting with your Representative and Senators and/or their staff. Members of Congress and their staff often seek to appeal to constituents and respond to information and to stories. When they know that you are an

engaged constituent they will be more likely to remember you and your needs and may be more open to the concerns that you raise. These meetings are an ideal way to share your story and experiences and express your concerns about cuts to HIV and HIV-related programs as well as other issues.

In-district meetings and activities also are a way to help you establish a relationship with a Member of Congress and/or their staff. Doing local meetings shows that you are a member of the community with important concerns and that your local family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues (who likely are voters) may share your concerns. Doing in-district meetings and events with Congressional offices is a good way to introduce yourself and begin communication that can endure and provide additional advocacy opportunities in the future.

Using the #CutsKillQuilt to Engage your Member of Congress for World AIDS Day.

Since September, the Save HIV Funding Campaign has worked to stop proposed cuts that could eliminate HIV prevention services and devastate access to care and treatment by creating a visual advocacy installation, the #CutsKill Quilt, inspired by the AIDS Memorial Quilt. The #CutsKill Quilt and its individual panels developed by advocates



#CutsKill Quilt Displayed at the U.S. Capitol, Sept. 2025. Courtesy of Getty Images

and communities across the nation highlights the potential consequences of cuts to federal HIV funding. The first display of the #CutsKill Quilt took place on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC on September 5, 2025.

The #CutsKill Quilt continues to be an effective way to engage members of Congress and their offices. In addition to a more traditional request for a meeting, introducing the quilt helps you to ask a Congressional office for a tangible action to engage them on HIV funding. For example,

you can ask a Congressional office to display a quilt panel made by you or your community when you request an In-district meeting.

As we prepare to recognize World AIDS Day on December 1st and throughout that week, we ask that you please help to promote the #CutsKill Quilt in your engagement with Congressional offices. Ways to use the quilt in your advocacy include:

- First, please let us know that you plan to request an In-District meeting by filling out this [in-district sign up link](#)!
- Request an in-district meeting and then present a local quilt panel during the in-district meeting. **Please note** that you or your organization would keep the quilt panel - the idea would be to show it to the Congressional office during your visit and allow the office to display it during World AIDS Day and then return it to you.
- Ask a Congressional office to hang your local quilt panel in its in-district office or outside of its DC office from December 1st - 5th.
- Invite a Member of Congress and their staff to attend your local WAD event and present a quilt panel there. (Again, you would retain ownership of the panel, but could ask the office to display it in one of their Congressional offices.)
- Ask some Congressional offices from your state to promote a photo of your local quilt panel in the media and on their social media platforms to recognize World AIDS Day.
- Ask the Congressional office [to create a digital #CutsKill Quilt Panel](#) and share it on social media as part of their recognition of World AIDS Day.
- Make your own digital #CutsKill quilt panel and promote it on social media and [tag your members of Congress](#).

To engage in this World AIDS Day advocacy, you can [make your own physical panel](#) or [a digital panel](#). If you have questions or need assistance, please contact:

- For contacts and assistance with Congressional offices: Bill McColl at bmccoll@colliercollective.org and Brooks Johnson at bjohnson@colliercollective.org
- For physical panels: Maxx Boykin at maxx@prep4all.org
- For digital panels: Michael Chancley at michael@prep4all.org.

Finally, we know it is a very busy time of year and everybody has a lot going on, so:

- If you are too busy to make a quilt panel, ***please just focus on requesting an in-district meeting or two*** and don't worry about incorporating the quilt into that advocacy.
- If you are too busy to do in-district meetings now, ***please feel free to reach out to Congressional offices only about engaging with the quilt in one of the ways listed above*** for World AIDS Day.

- If you are too busy to do any of the options above, then ***please consider using [#SaveHIVFunding Campaign's action alert](#)*** to let your Congressional offices know to fully fund HIV programs.

Thanks so much for your help, no matter what you do - *we appreciate you!*

Find Your Group

You don't have to do meetings alone! In fact, it's often more powerful for a legislator or their staff to hear from multiple people representing different perspectives, perhaps a person living with HIV, a person who uses PrEP, a healthcare provider, local leaders, and family members - we encourage people to join together! ***Meetings will be most persuasive*** if the group includes a direct constituent or people who provide services in or to the district.

It may be easy to gather a group for a Senator since they represent the whole state. It might be a little harder to reach a specific district, especially one that is away from a population center or does not have strong programs. We encourage people in each state to support each other and work together to maximize participation. This might involve someone attending the meeting in person and then having someone join by Zoom on a laptop or by voice on speaker phone.

The Save HIV Funding Campaign is organizing people who are concerned about funding cuts to HIV programs. We are happy to put people who are interested in doing meetings locally in touch. If you want help in finding your group, please fill out this [in-district sign up link](#) and also reach out to Maxx Boykin at maxx@prep4all.org.

Find Your Members of Congress

1. Each state has a Member of the House of Representatives and Two Senators representing them.
2. To find your members of Congress, visit: https://ballotpedia.org/Who_represents_me
3. Particularly key Congressional offices to meet with are listed on this [in-district target list](#). ***These offices are important to prioritize for in-district meetings.***
4. If your Senators and Members of Congress are not on this list, ***please still reach out to meet with Congressional offices from your state*** - each in-district meeting is important and counts!
5. Finally, while most members of Congress and their staff generally are courteous, especially towards constituents, if you believe that a specific office may be hostile to

you or your group or a meeting may result in a negative outcome, ***then please skip that meeting.***

If you have questions about contacting or meeting with Congressional offices, please email Bill McColl bmccoll@colliercollective.org and Jenny Collier at jcollier@colliercollective.org - they are happy to help you!

Request an In-District Meeting

1. Don't forget to let us know that you plan to request an In-District meeting by filling out this [in-district sign up link](#)!
2. **Please contact Brooks Johnson at bjohnson@colliercollective.org** to request the contact info for the appropriate staff to email to request your meeting.
3. To email the meeting request, please consider using or adapting the template email below.
3. Once you've decided to request a meeting, please email Bill McColl bmccoll@colliercollective.org, Brooks Johnson bjohnson@colliercollective.org and Maxx Maxx Boykin maxx@prep4all.org to let them know, thanks!

A. Email Template to Request a Congressional Meeting

Dear [NAME],

I am writing on behalf of [X people or organizations], many who are constituents [If you don't have constituents attending exclude this phrase] to request an in-district meeting with [Sen. or Rep. ____] and/or appropriate staff to discuss federal funding for HIV programs. As local programs that receive federal funding wrestle with the uncertainty caused by the government shutdown and as Congress finalizes FY26 funding, it is urgent to discuss the impact that HIV funding has on our district and to relay concerns about how cuts or shortfalls would impact constituents and local service providers. We would appreciate meeting on [time and day] or another mutually convenient time soon. We would be available to meet at [suggest either the Congressional district office if it's close enough or a local HIV clinic or HIV organization location]. If necessary, we would also be available to meet virtually.

[Consider adding a Quilt Ask in this email] In addition, with World AIDS Day coming up on December 1, 2025, we would like to please request that your office consider hanging

a quilt panel [made by ____ who are local constituents] as a part of the Save HIV Funding's [educational HIV quilt installation](#). The panel could be hung up either outside or inside of your district office or outside of your Washington, DC office from December 1st - 5th (the week of World AIDS Day). If you are interested, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can ensure prompt delivery of the quilt panel, thanks! [If they respond no, you can follow up by asking them to create a digital quilt panel and to promote it on their social media in recognition of World AIDS Day.]

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this request, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

<Your Name>

<Your Town, State> (this lets them know that you are a constituent)

<phone number> (helpful for contact purposes)

Plan Your Meeting

Once you have set a date for the meeting, ***we suggest that you plan your meeting in advance with the group who will attend by having a pre-meeting.*** Please make sure to develop a meeting agenda ahead of time, and it can help to time the meeting during your pre-meeting - ***you may only have 20 to 30 minutes total for the actual meeting. We have included suggested meeting goals and agenda items below.***

A. Meeting Goals. The goals of your advocacy meetings are to:

1. **Educate policymakers** about the importance of HIV programs to you.
 - a. ***If you are a person living with HIV or someone on PrEP***, please explain what programs you rely on (such as the Ryan White Program, Medicaid, PrEP Access Programs) and how important they are, and your experience of using them.
 - b. ***If you work at an HIV service program***, clinic, or do research, please explain the importance of federal funding to the work that you do.
2. **Develop a relationship** with Congressional offices and staff and offer to be a resource to them.
 - a. If you are associated with an HIV services program and have authorization from the program, you may wish to invite the Congressional office to visit the program.

- b. **Please note**, if you do schedule a visit to your local clinic or organization, please feel free to contact Bill MColl at bmccoll@colliercollective.org and Jenny Collier at jcollier@colliercollective.org if you would like tips for conducting a Congressional visit to a local program.

B. Suggested Meeting Agenda

Sections C-G below describe a typical meeting averaging around 30 minutes. Note: Feel free to vary or change the meeting as needed based on the amount of time that you will have, local issues and concerns or other reasons.

C. Greetings and Introductions (3-5 minutes)

1. **Thank** the office for meeting with you.
2. **Introduce your group members** and explain your interest in HIV.
3. Give the Member or staffer an opportunity to introduce themselves as well.
4. *Note that most meetings will be in a 30 minute format. However it could be as short as 15 minutes or as long as an hour. Make sure to ask about and take into account time limits.*

D. What To Talk About (10-20 minutes)

1. **Your request for Congress to provide full Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) funding for HIV programs**
 - a. **Background:** The Senate Appropriations Committee passed bipartisan FY26 funding bills that would fully fund HIV programs. The House Appropriations Committee worked on its **FY26 bill that proposes to cut HIV treatment and prevention programs by more than \$2 billion. Since the House and Senate were unable to finalize FY26 funding** by Sept. 30th (the end of the FY25 funding year), this lack of final funding has led to a government shutdown. Once the government re-opens, Congress will likely try to work quickly to finalize funding for FY26.
2. **Also urge Congress to:**
 - a. **Extend enhanced premium tax credits under the Affordable Care Act to help make insurance premiums cheaper** for constituents, including people living with and at risk for HIV.
 - b. **Reverse cuts to Medicaid that were passed as part of the FY25 budget reconciliation bill** - these cuts will reduce access to insurance coverage and increase cost for people living with HIV and vulnerable to HIV - *putting at risk access to essential health care.*

- c. **Include guardrails in the final FY26 funding package** to ensure that the Administration spends the FY26 funding Congress provides in the way Congress intended.

3. Request World AIDS Day support by showcasing a local quilt panel:



Antoinette Jones-Knowles: National Field Organizer for the Positive Women's Network and co-founder of Dandelions Inc. speaks in front of the #CutsKill Quilt in Atlanta

Ask the Congressional office to please display a quilt panel at its district office or outside of its Washington, DC office from December 1-5, 2025 in recognition of World AIDS Day. [Here is more information about the #CutsKill Quilt.](#) **Specific requests related to the quilt include:**

- Presenting a panel to an office at in-district meeting (you or your organization should retain ownership for future use, however)
- Asking a Member of Congress to hang the panel in an in-district office (or outside of their Congressional office) from December 1st - 5th
- Inviting a Member of Congress and their staff to attend your local WAD event and present a panel there
- Asking Members of Congress to engage in media and social media around the panel and World AIDS Day
- Ask the member [to create a digital #CutsKill Quilt Panel](#) and share it on social media

For questions on the Digital Quilt, contact Michael Chancley: michael@prep4all.org. For questions on joining an in-person #CutsKill Quilt Action, contact Maxx Boykin: maxx@prep4all.org. If they agree to do a display, please contact Maxx Boykin maxx@prep4all.org and Bill McColl bmccoll@colliercollective.org.

E. Tell your personal story (5-10 minutes)

1. **Describe current needs through an example** - *tell a personal story about your experience if you are a directly impacted person or about your experience providing services if you are a service provider.*
2. **Focus on *local* impacts of proposed funding cuts:**
 - a. ***Service Disruption:*** HIV prevention and treatment, mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, housing assistance, and other essential support services that have been or would be disrupted or terminated.
 - b. ***Vulnerable Populations:*** People living with or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with substance use disorders, unhoused people, and other underserved communities have been or would be disproportionately affected.
 - c. ***Public Health Crisis:*** An increase in HIV transmission rates, overdose deaths, and other negative health outcomes is occurring or would be expected.
 - d. ***Job Losses:*** Widespread layoffs of healthcare professionals, social workers, case managers, and support staff are occurring or are anticipated.

F. Additional Talking Points (as time permits)

1. **Current Action Alert.**
2. **HIV programs have a more than 35 year history of bipartisan support.**
3. **Provide background on HIV in your state with [state-specific fact sheets](#)**
 - a. Ask the staffer how familiar they are with HIV Services and Programs.
 - b. Describe the need for HIV services in your state or the member's district.
4. **Cuts to federal HIV prevention and treatment funding would:**
 - a. Hurt people living with or vulnerable to HIV by reducing access to critical, life-saving services, and
 - b. Cut jobs in HIV programs throughout our state.
5. **Federal HIV programs are effective and save money.**
 - a. **HIV prevention is cost-effective** - Each year, there are approximately 32,000 new cases of HIV, and each new case has expected lifetime medical costs of more than \$500,000. This equals ***\$16 billion in new lifetime medical costs each year.***
 - b. **The Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) initiative has reduced HIV incidence by 21% in EHE jurisdictions - 3.5 times better than non-EHE jurisdictions** - because EHE jurisdictions have additional resources to expand access to HIV testing, treatment, and prevention services, including PrEP (HIV prevention medication).
 - c. **The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is an effective federal program that provides HIV care, treatment, and support to more than 550,000 people nationwide.**

- i. The program has helped ***more than 90% of its clients*** achieve viral suppression, which indicates HIV treatment success and prevention of HIV transmission.
- ii. ***Maintaining funding for all parts of the Ryan White Program is critical.***
- iii. Explain that if people lose Medicaid coverage, their next option is to try to gain access to HIV care through the Ryan White program, which may have more people coming on to the rolls, resulting in insufficient funding to serve all who need care.

G. Meeting Wrap Up (5 minutes):

- 1. Ask how you can be a **resource on issues related to HIV**, and ***what is the best way to stay in touch?***
- 2. **If you work for an HIV services program, invite the office and member of Congress to visit your program or clinic.** Ask whom you should contact to issue the invitation.
- 3. **Thank** the staff for their time and consideration!

F. Leave Behinds:

It is helpful to provide printed leave behinds for the staffers and also to send them electronically with a meeting thank you note and any promised follow up. The following items may be helpful.

- 1. **Information about local World AIDS Day activities or programs, including follow up on any quilt panel engagement (as appropriate).**
- 2. [State-specific 1 pagers](#) identifying the amount and impact of CDC HIV Prevention, Ryan White Program, and HIV research funding provided to your state.
- 3. [AIDS Budget & Appropriations Coalition \(ABAC\) materials, including:](#)
 - a. [Funding Chart](#): This chart contains the HIV community's federal funding requests for domestic HIV programs.
 - b. [ABAC FY26 Community Letter to key Appropriators](#): This letter to Congress describes the ABAC funding requests for FY26 and the federal HIV programs these requests support.

Meeting Follow Up

- 1. Send an email to the staffer **thanking them** for meeting with you.
- 2. Share any leave behinds again electronically, especially state information.
- 3. Make sure to CC: everyone who attended the meeting with you so that you are all in contact.

4. When you hear about new developments, write back again in reply to this email as a way to remind the staffer about your meeting and to remind them of your concerns. The goal is to stay in touch with Congressional offices and hopefully build a relationship that allows you to communicate your concerns as they come up in the future.
5. Please report the meeting and any outcomes back to the #SaveHIVFunding Campaign team, including Bill McColl bmccoll@colliercollective.org, Brooks Johnson bjohnson@colliercollective.org and Maxx Boykin maxx@prep4all.org to let us know that you held the meeting.
6. Please let us know if you have questions or need support in doing follow up by contacting Bill McColl at bmccoll@colliercollective.org and Jenny Collier at jcollier@colliercollective.org.

Tips for a successful meeting

As you engage with Congressional offices, please consider these tips for a successful meeting:

- **Know the legislator, the district and its demographics** as well as possible. You can see their bios, recent statements and other information on their websites and social media accounts.
- **Provide information about who you are and what you do, and make sure the legislator/staff know how to contact you in the future.**
- **Come prepared.** Bring brochures or other relevant information, such as local HIV-related data or data about how much funding your group, institution or state receives.
- **Know the “other side’s” positions** and be ready to respectfully respond to them.
- **Always come with an “ask.”** In addition to discussing funding requests, other asks could include an invitation to an event or to visit your clinic or a local organization working on HIV issues.
- **Make your case, briefly and persuasively.** Be specific about what you want the legislator to do and when.
- **Tell a personal story** and incorporate local issues and data whenever possible to help make the point.
- **Establish a time when you will expect to receive an answer or follow-up.**
- **Find ways to stay connected.** Ask to be on the legislator’s health advisory committee, receive a regular newsletter and attend local events.
- **Follow up promptly with a thank you email and any promised information** for the legislators and/or staff with whom you met. If the legislator or their staff asked a question and you didn’t know the answer, please contact the Save HIV Funding campaign and we can help you respond.

- **Be polite but feel empowered.** As a constituent, legislators work for you and the other individuals they represent, and you have a right to talk to them and their staff about issues that concern you and impact their constituents.

Resources

Quilt Resources:

- **Quiltmaking Instructions:**
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hbwlGeyg4we1FLPGN7pP5SgmzSSh9B6qcPRfbFsbAk8/edit?tab=t.0>
- **Digital Quilt:**
 - <https://savehivfunding.org/digital-quilt/>
 - <https://savehivfunding.org/virtual-quilt-guidance/>

Additional #SaveHIVFunding Campaign In-District Meeting Resources:

- [Save HIV Funding Campaign Training Video](#)
- [Congressional Calendar](#): This calendar shows the planned Congressional recesses and may be helpful in trying to choose a date to meet. Please be aware that the dates may change but this is usually accurate.

State Level Data and Profiles:

- [CDC HIV Prevention State Profiles](#)
- [AIDSVu](#)
- [PrEPVu](#)

Appropriations Resources:

- [AIDS Budget and Appropriations Coalition Chart](#)
- [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2026 AIDS Budget and Appropriations Coalition Letter to Congress](#)

Reconciliation Bill Resources:

Information and fact sheets on the impact of implementation of the FY25 budget reconciliation bill, otherwise known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” or OBBBA.

- [The AIDS Institute Policy Brief](#): H.R. 1 – Deep Cuts to Medicaid and ACA Coverage Threaten Progress Against HIV
- [The AIDS Institute Policy Brief](#): Expiring ePTCs and Impact on ADAP
- [The AIDS Institute Policy Brief](#): Premium Tax Credit and Enhanced Premium Tax Credit Explainer.
- [National Health Law Program](#): post-OBBBA implementation resources

- [Center for American Progress State](#): Fact Sheets

In Closing

In-district meetings provide a valuable opportunity to connect with Congressional offices on issues important to you and your community - thank you for undertaking this effort, especially in the lead up to World AIDS Day.

We would appreciate it if you could **please let the #SaveHIVFunding Campaign team know when you complete in-district meetings and/or outreach related to the quilt - *we want to hear how these conversations go as they are critical to our advocacy!***

To update the Campaign, or if you have questions or need support, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Maxx Boykin at maxx@prep4all.org
- Bill McColl at bmccoll@colliercollective.org
- Jenny Collier at jcollier@colliercollective.org

Finally, thank you for being willing to meet with Congressional offices as well as promote quilt advocacy during this critical but busy time, we appreciate you!