



Understanding Representative Services

Created by [BrewingBallads](#)

An Introduction

Like our previous booklet, this guide was created to provide a simplified breakdown of representative assistance services. A common misconception is that elected representatives only job is to represent their state in DC, but there's more to their responsibilities.

There is no need to fear an entity meant to represent us. Let us reclaim our power in asking more of our representatives. Here we'll be examining federal, state, local representatives as well as community leaders.

Please enjoy!

x Rosa

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Federal Representatives

Representatives' duties include servicing the public they represent in more ways than one.

First let's take a look at the two types of federal representatives: Senators and House Members.

Senators and House of Representative members duties include:

- Contacting federal agencies on behalf of their state constituents to assist in obtaining services
- Help with research to find federal grants and funding for small businesses, rural development, housing, etc.
- Flag requests to have a US Flag flown over the US Capital for special events
- Paid internship opportunities for students, with qualifications varying per office
- Tickets to visit historic landmarks and buildings, such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Smithsonian Museums
- Spending requests to set aside federal funds for specific projects in your state (or district), for instance, supporting manufacturing and installation of science-based exhibits
- Academy nominations to attend a military service academy
- Meeting requests to meet with the Rep or one of their team members

Unlike Senators that are able to assist residents from their entire state, House Members are only able to assist residents that reside in the district that they represent.



State Representatives

Like Federal Representatives, States also have State Senators and State House members that can assist residents.

Unlike Federal Representatives, State Senators and State House members do not focus on national issues. Their focus lies in state-specific issues.

Keep in mind that State House members are limited to assisting residents in their districts, while State Senators are able to help residents across their state.

As such, both can assist with the following topics:

- Assist with state agencies and programs, such as Medicaid, Unemployment, State Taxes, etc.
- Spending requests to set aside state funds for specific projects in your district
- Advocate for policies in your state/district
- Provide information on policies, programs, and procedures in your state

A quick online search engine will allow you to find your State Representatives.

Your Governor's Office is also able to assist with state agencies, such as state tax issues, as well as the other duties listed above.



Local Representatives

Cities are most often represented by their local city councils. These councils, like all representatives, can also help their residents.

Here are a few things city council members can do to help:

- Create local laws and ordinances for their city
- Advocate for funding for city services and projects
- Review and approve the city budget
- Determine zoning requests as well as land usage
- Respond to resident needs and concerns related to city policies
- Assist with local tax issues, such as property taxes
- Local licenses for businesses, construction projects, etc.

City council members, like Mayors, are voted in by local residents.

Mayor Offices are also able to assist with these topics, though their responsibilities extend further.

Mayor Offices can additionally:

- Call special meetings with city council
- Enforce city contracts
- Prepare a proposed city budget

Requests for assistance for both can be made online and over the phone. Quicker responses are usually given online.



Community Leaders

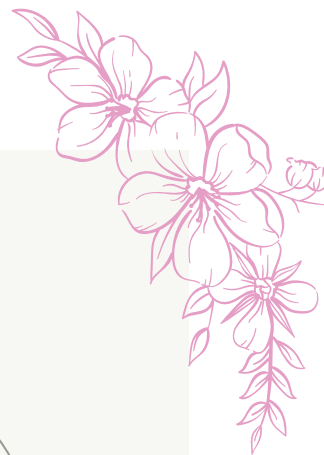
Although we have elected officials, that does not mean we are always comfortable reaching out to them. We may be unsure of emailing them or if anyone else in our communities feel the same way about a certain bill or program. That is where community leaders come into play.

There are always people willing to help others get their voices heard if we take a look around. These community leaders may look different depending on where you live.

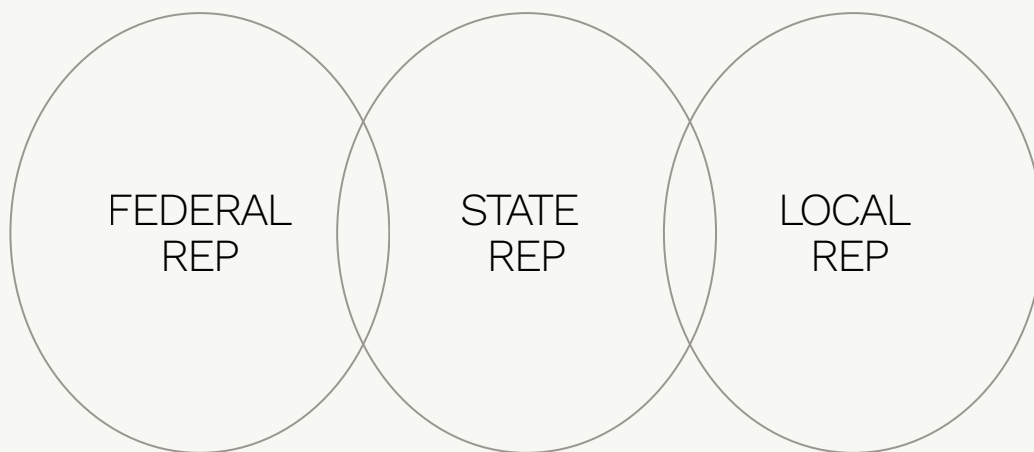
Community Leaders may include:

- A local nonprofit near you dedicated to social issues
- Larger organizations such as the ACLU
- Indivisible Team groups
- Local businesses that are passionate about helping their neighborhoods
- Individual leaders that enjoy helping organize phone banks
- Your friends or friend group

You do not have to reach out to these representatives alone. There is always community around us. They can be found online through social media apps, local community groups (like the NextDoor app), an online search engine or through asking your social circles (family, friends, coworkers).



Pop Quiz



Let's take a look at identifying which representatives are able to assist with certain issues.

Pothole on your block
Property tax issue
Building an addition to your house

Federal Representative

State tax issue
DMV/SOS
Proposed district policy

State Representative

IRS help
Social Security issues
DC Tours

Local Representative

*Hint: They are already nearly all grouped together.



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