

A Guide to Digital Advocacy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented challenges when it comes to our ability to advocate for the needs of the University of California and the communities it serves. Congress has suspended in-person meetings, but that does not mean you cannot reach your legislators. Instead, there are a number of digital platforms you can use to advocate for fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations priorities.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

With the lack of in-person meetings and events, legislators are more digitally active than ever. You can match their increased presence on social media by sharing stories and posts about the importance of federal funding to you and the University of California.

One example of how you can engage members of Congress is to be active on their Twitter, page. You can search their tweets to identify ones that mention the budget and respond by asking questions, such as:

- How much money will go to federal student aid?
- I conduct research on campus, how does this affect my ability to get research grants?
- How will this impact the University of California?

For more ideas, sample posts and a list of the California congressional delegation's social media handles, [please see the social media guide](#).

SEND AN EMAIL

Your legislator's physical offices may be closed, but they are still available to speak with constituents and respond to correspondence. Congressional staff are closely monitoring office e-mails and will note the issues most prevalent in their district. [You can find the contact information for your senators and representative online](#).

Your e-mail does not have to be long, but should include two elements:

- What you are requesting.
- Why it is important to you.

Unsure about a specific "ask"? [You can always reference UC's FY 2022 appropriations priorities](#).

CALL YOUR LEGISLATOR

If emails are not your preferred form of communication, you may still be able to speak to someone in your representative's office. [For tips on how to effectively call your representative, the guide to calling your legislators is a great resource](#). Please note that not all offices have access to their office phones and may encourage you to send an email or leave a voicemail.

ATTEND A TELE-TOWN HALL

To address community concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, legislators continue to hold tele-town halls during which they speak to constituents through digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom. Most tele-town halls are open to the public and an invite is usually shared through your representative's website and social media platforms. It is important to note the topic of the scheduled tele-town halls.

SCHEDULE A VIRTUAL MEETING

While most legislators and their staff may not be physically meeting with people, they are holding virtual meetings. A 15-30-minute call with your legislator's office will give you an opportunity to delve into a deeper conversation about both your needs and those of your campus. For tips on how to go about requesting a virtual meeting and preparing for one, the [virtual meeting guide](#) is a great resource.

QUESTIONS?

Your [UC campus, lab and health center governmental relations offices](#) are an excellent resource!

Looking for other ways be a UC advocate? [Join the UC Advocacy Network \(UCAN\)](#), which is a community of committed people who lend their voices to shape state and federal policies promoting the University's mission of education, research, health care and public service.