
The United States House of Representatives Web Systems Publication – Communicating With Congress Level of Service Standards (Advocacy Vendors)

Version: 1.1

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Approval Authority: Director, Web Systems, House Information Resources, Office of
the Chief Administrative Officer

Communicating With Congress Level of Service Standards (Advocacy Vendors)

§ A.1. Scope

This document sets the standards for levels of service pursuant to the *Communicating with Congress (CWC) Usage Agreement and Access Application* between the CAO and Advocacy Vendors participating in the Communicating with Congress (CWC) system.

§ A.2. Definitions

For purposes of this document:

- (a) “CAO” means the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- (b) “CMS” means Correspondence Management System;
- (c) “CWC” means the Communicating with Congress system;
- (d) “holiday” means any Federal Government holiday and any other day that the CAO is closed;
- (e) “Member” means a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the U.S. House of Representatives;
- (f) “respond” means a response by a human being, and does not include any automatically generated response.

§ A.3. Data Transmission Contents

All data transmissions to the CWC API are to comply with the XML standards contained in *Communicating with Congress Standards*, version 1.0.

§ A.4. Responses to Advocacy Vendors by the CAO

- (a) When an Advocacy Vendor communicates to the CAO by telephone or email, the CAO will respond within 72 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays).
- (b) For purposes of this section,
 - (i) telephone communications to the CAO should be made to (202) 226-2140;
 - (ii) email communications to the CAO should be made to cwc.Vendors@mail.house.gov
 - (iii) fax communications to the CAO should be made to (202) 226-1872.

§ A.5. Responses to the CAO by Advocacy Vendors

- (a) When the CAO communicates to an Advocacy Vendor by telephone or email, Advocacy Vendor will respond within 72 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays).
- (b) When the CAO communicates an emergency to an Advocacy Vendor by telephone, Vendor will respond within two hours.

- (c) For purposes of this section, communications to an Advocacy Vendor should be made to the email or telephone number designated in § 4 of the *Communicating with Congress Usage Agreement and Access Application* signed by the Vendor.

§ A.6. Ongoing Consultations

At the request of the CAO, the Advocacy Vendor shall participate in ongoing consultations with the CAO. The CAO will determine the frequency of such consultations.

§ A.7. Downtime Notification

- (a) The CAO will provide the Advocacy Vendor with at least 48 hours notice of non-emergency downtime of the System. In the event of an emergency, the CAO will endeavor to provide timely notice.
- (b) The supporting services for the CWC operate with a maintenance window from midnight to 6 a.m. These systems may undergo maintenance that may affect the System without a 48 hour notice.

§ A.8. Testing

- (a) The CAO will provide a sandbox area where each Advocacy Vendor may test their applications against the CWC.
- (b) The CAO will notify each Advocacy Vendor at least one month prior to implementing a major change to the CWC. Included in the notification will be instructions as to how the Vendor may test their applications against the changed system during the one month period.

§ A.9. Suspension (or Limitation) of Operations

If the CAO determines that it would be advisable (in order to protect the availability, functionality, operability, or security of the CWC or any other system of the House), the CAO may either suspend the Vendor's access to the CWC or may limit the amount of data being received by or being released by the CWC. The CAO will endeavor to notify the Advocacy Vendor when such a determination has been made.

§ A.10. Acknowledgement of Receipt

If an Advocacy Vendor inquires about the delivery status of a specific message, the CAO will confirm whether or not the message was accepted by the CWC and processed for retrieval by the appropriate office.

§ A.11. Changes to these Standards

The CAO shall provide reasonable notice to Advocacy Vendors when changes are made to these standards. Changes to these standards will take effect immediately or as they themselves provide.

§ A.12. CWC Message Integrity

- (a)** Each Advocacy Vendor will make a good faith effort to ensure the message integrity of the messages sent through CWC. This shall include, but is not limited to
 - (i)** not transmitting duplicate messages;
 - (ii)** ensuring the accuracy of the name, address, phone number, email address, and district of the sending constituent; and
 - (iii)** Performing spam filtering checks on content information.
- (b)** If the CAO notifies an Advocacy Vendor that an unacceptable level of duplicate messages have been received, then the Vendor shall – within 5 business days – modify its software or processes so that that level of duplicate messages is no longer at a level unacceptable to the CAO. Such modifications shall be done in a manner that is compliant with all of the provisions of this Publication and with the *Communicating With Congress Usage Agreement and Access Application*.
- (c)** If an Advocacy Vendor fails to comply with this section, the CAO may either suspend the Vendor's access to the CWC or may limit the amount of data being received by or being released by the CWC. The CAO will endeavor to notify the Advocacy Vendor when such a determination has been made.

Changes between versions 1.0 (May 2013) and 1.1 (December 2015)

Section A.4(a) – replaced “24 hours” with “72 hours”

Section A.5(a) – replaced “24 hours” with “72 hours”

Section A.9 – replaced “operation of the CWC” with “the Vendor’s access to the CWC”; and
“Advocacy Vendors” replaced with “Advocacy Vendor”.

Section A.12 – added new section