

CONGRESSIONAL BENEFITS & PERSONNEL PRACTICES



Part of the
“Life in Congress” Project

A Joint Research Partnership between the Congressional Management Foundation
and the Society for Human Resource Management



About the “Life in Congress” Project

The Life in Congress project is a partnership between the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) that seeks to identify human resource challenges in Congress and provide recommendations for overcoming them in order to make Congress a better place for both Members and staffers to work. Download reports and learn more at www.CongressFoundation.org/life-in-congress.

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Table of Contents

<i>About This Report</i> _____	4
Methodology _____	4
Notations _____	5
Respondent Demographics _____	5
<i>Survey Results</i> _____	6
Part I. Office Data _____	7
Part II. Financial and Compensation Benefits _____	7
Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) _____	7
Annual Salary Increases/Raises _____	8
Pay Adjustments/Lump Sum Bonuses _____	9
Student Loan Repayment _____	11
Transportation Benefits _____	12
Part III. Leave Policies _____	15
Vacation/Annual Leave _____	15
Sick Leave _____	18
Paid Time Off (PTO) _____	19
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) _____	21
Other Leave _____	24
Part IV. Flexible Working Benefits _____	26
Part V. Other Benefits and Personnel Practices _____	28
Professional and Career Development _____	28
Onboarding and Orientation _____	29
Performance Management _____	29
Recruitment and Retention _____	32
<i>Additional “Life in Congress” Resources</i> _____	34

About This Report

Certain benefits and personnel policies for congressional employees are set by their individual employing office, not by their chamber or the institution. For that reason, a wide range of practices and policies are in use throughout the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. While this flexibility allows a Representative or Senator to structure their personal office in a way that best aligns with their individual goals, it can also create challenges when trying to set up a freshman office, or when trying to be a competitive employer among 541 independent offices. The purpose of this study is to assist in these efforts by identifying common practices and norms so congressional managers can make informed decisions when determining or evaluating their office policies and practices.

CMF worked with leaders from multiple House and Senate staff associations on the survey questions, and these organizations also assisted in survey outreach and distribution by encouraging their members to participate in the study. We are grateful to the House Chiefs of Staff Association, the Professional Administrative Managers, and the Senate Administrative Directors/Chief Clerks for their support of the study, their input and feedback on the survey instrument, and their efforts in increasing the response rate. We especially thank: Reagan Blewett, Sen. Mark Warner; Tim Hysom, Rep. Alan Lowenthal; Elizabeth Kanick, Sen. Richard Blumenthal; Amber Moyerman, Sen. John Barrasso; Janice Siegel, Rep. Jerrold Nadler; and Christen Thompson, Sen. Mike Enzi.

Methodology

CMF contacted all House and Senate personal offices to participate in a survey on the benefits and personnel practices employed by their offices. Committee, leadership, support, and institutional offices were not included in this study. We invited Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Administrative Directors, and Office Managers via email to complete an online survey on behalf of their personal offices, requesting that we receive only one completed survey submission per office. Offices were also provided PDFs of the survey and could choose to complete it via hardcopy. The survey was organized into five sections and covered the following topics:

- Demographics/Analysis of Sample and General Office Data
- Financial and Compensation Benefits (i.e., COLAs, salary adjustments, bonuses, student loan repayment, transportation benefits)
- Leave Benefits (i.e., vacation/annual, sick, FMLA)
- Flexible Working Benefits (i.e., telecommuting, part-time arrangements)
- Other Benefits and Personnel Practices (i.e., professional development, performance management, recruitment and retention)

The survey did not include questions on the benefits that are provided by the House or Senate chamber or the institution overall, such as health care, retirement, child care services, and wellness programs.

Data for the survey was collected April 7–July 10, 2017, with a total of 200 responses. For the House, we received 160 responses (out of 441 personal offices), yielding a response rate of 36%. For the Senate, we received 40 responses (out of 100 personal offices), yielding a response rate of 40%.

Notations

Analysis: For this report, data were examined and presented by chamber, rather than for the Congress overall, due to significant differences in House and Senate personal office budgets and in the chamber-specific rules each office must follow.

Tables: Unless otherwise noted in a specific table, the following are applicable to data depicted throughout this report:

- Percentages for a question may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Percentages for a question may not total 100% if some answers are excluded.
- Percentages for a question may not total 100% if respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

Generalization of Results: As with any research, readers should exercise caution when generalizing results and take individual circumstances and experiences into consideration when making decisions based on these data. It is prudent to understand that the results presented in this survey report are only truly representative of the survey respondents.

Number of Respondents: The number of respondents (indicated by “n” in each table) varies because some respondents did not answer all of the questions. Individuals may not have responded to a question on the survey because the question or some of its parts were not applicable or because the requested data were unavailable. This also accounts for the varying number of responses within each table.

Respondent Demographics

Respondent Title		
	House (n = 160)	Senate (n = 38)
Chief of Staff	80.0%	5.3%
Deputy Chief of Staff	5.0%	18.4%
Administrative Director	3.1%	68.4%
Director of Operations	3.8%	7.9%
Office Manager	4.4%	--
Scheduler	3.8%	--

Political Party/Affiliation		
	House (n = 156)	Senate (n = 37)
Democratic/Independent	53.8%	59.5%
Republican	46.2%	40.5%

Gender of Member/Senator		
	House (n = 155)	Senate (n = 37)
Male	73.5%	74.3%
Female	26.5%	25.7%

Tenure of Member/Senator		
	House (n = 151)	Senate (n = 37)
Average Years in Current Chamber (including current year)	10 years	9.5 years

Survey Results

Part I. Office Data

For the following questions, respondents were asked to only count each employee once and include them in the location where they spend the majority of their time.

Average number of staff employed in your office		
	House (n = 38-147)	Senate (n = 25-38)
Full-time DC staff	7.8	25.3
Part-time DC staff	0.9	1.1
Full-time District/State staff	7.0	17.5
Part-time District/State staff	1.3	1.7
Shared Employees	1.6	1.5

Part II. Financial and Compensation Benefits

This section discusses financial and compensation benefits that offices may have offered in 2016, such as salary adjustments (raises and bonuses), cost of living adjustments (COLAs), student loan repayment, and transit benefits.

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)

This section discusses office policies regarding cost of living adjustments (COLAs). Please note: these questions refer to COLAs separately from any salary increases/adjustments (raises and bonuses) that an office may provide to its employees.

Which of the following <u>best</u> represents how your office provided annual cost of living adjustments (COLA) for 2016?		
	House (n = 136)	Senate (n = 38)
We did <u>not</u> provide COLA.	81.6%	39.5%
All employees were eligible to receive COLA, and the percentage increase was the same for all employees.	3.7%	52.6%
All employees were eligible to receive COLA, but who received COLA and the percentage increase was determined by factors such as tenure, job type, or merit.	14.7%	7.9%

Annual Salary Increases/Raises

This section discusses office policies regarding annual salary increases/raises. Note: these questions are separate from any cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses an office may have provided to its employees.

Which of the following <u>best</u> represents how your office provided annual salary increases/raises for 2016?		
	House (n = 135)	Senate (n = 39)
We did <u>not</u> provide annual salary increases/raises.	23.0%	28.2%
All employees were eligible to receive an annual salary increase/raise, and the increase was the same for all employees.	2.2%	2.6%
All employees were eligible to receive an annual salary increase/raise, but who received an annual salary increase/raise and the amount of the increase was determined by factors such as tenure, job type, or merit.	74.8%	69.2%

Note: Respondents that did not provide annual salary increases/raises skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

What percentage, on average, did your office give for salary increases/raises in 2016?		
	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 23)
Average	4.4%	4.6%
Mode	5.0% (22 offices)	3.0% (3 offices)

Note: Respondents were provided a dropdown of percentages in five-tenth (0.5%) increments.

What is your office's approach to determining annual salary increases/raises?		
	House (n = 104)	Senate (n = 28)
We allocate for salary increases/raises when determining our annual budget	68.3%	39.3%
We determine salary increases/raises based on available funds at the end of the year	35.6%	50.0%
Other	9.6%	25.0%

At what time of the year do you usually give salary increases/raises to your employees?

	House (n = 104)	Senate (n = 28)
End of calendar year	35.6%	14.3%
Start of calendar year	28.8%	28.6%
End of fiscal year	1.0%	21.4%
Start of fiscal year	1.0%	7.1%
On the anniversary of their employment start date	13.5%	3.6%
Variable points throughout the year	35.6%	39.3%
Other	9.6%	0.0%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

Pay Adjustments/Lump Sum Bonuses

This section discusses office policies regarding pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses that were provided to employees in 2016. Please note that these questions refer to pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses offered apart from cost of living adjustments and salary increases/raises.

Which of the following best represents how your office provided pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses in 2016?

	House (n = 134)	Senate (n = 36)
We did <u>not</u> provide pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses.	5.2%	36.1%
All employees were eligible to receive pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses and the amount/percentage was the same for all employees.	23.9%	11.1%
All employees were eligible to receive pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses, but who received it and the amount was determined by factors such as tenure, job type, or merit.	70.9%	52.8%

Note: Respondents that did not provide pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses skipped the remaining questions on this topic. Respondents who provided the same amount/percentage to employees skipped the following question on which factors determined the amount.

What were the criteria used to determine who received a pay adjustment/lump sum bonus and/or the amount?

	Determines <u>who</u> receives a bonus		Determines <u>amount</u> of bonus	
	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 18)	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 18)
Job type	23.1%	38.9%	48.4%	72.2%
Tenure	19.8%	38.9%	39.6%	66.7%
Performance	56.0%	44.4%	84.6%	83.3%
Other	7.7%	5.6%	7.7%	0.0%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

How much did your office provide in pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses in the past year?

	House (n = 99)	Senate (n = 21)
Average Bonus Amount	\$3,042.28	\$4,195.45
Minimum/Lowest Bonus Amount - average	\$1,925.22	\$2,757.89
Maximum/Highest Bonus Amount - average	\$5,494.75	\$7,373.68

Note: Respondents were allowed to enter the range of bonus amounts they provided through the minimum and maximum fields, or enter the average bonus amount they provided, or both. If they provided all employees with the same bonus amount, respondents were instructed to enter that amount in the "average bonus" field.

When were pay adjustments/lump sum bonuses given in your office in the past year?

	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 18)
End of calendar year	86.0%	4.6%
Start of calendar year	5.3%	0.0%
End of fiscal year	3.5%	81.8%
Start of fiscal year	0.0%	0.0%
On the anniversary of their employment start date	0.9%	0.0%
Periodically throughout the year	14.0%	4.6%
Other	5.3%	13.6%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

Student Loan Repayment

This section discusses office participation in and policies regarding each chamber's Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). These programs allow participating offices to authorize repayment of qualifying student loans on behalf of eligible employees who agree in writing to remain in their employment for one year. Each chamber has specific program requirements and repayment limitations.

Does your office participate in your chamber's Student Loan Repayment Program?		
	House (n = 123)	Senate (n = 35)
Yes	97.6%	100.0%
No	1.6%	0.0%
Plan to offer in next 12 months	0.8%	0.0%

Note: The three House respondents who selected "No" or "Plan to offer in next 12 months" were asked a follow-up question about why they did not participate in the program and then skipped the remaining questions on this topic. All three indicated that they had no eligible employees.

On what basis does your office determine the amount of student loan repayment per employee?		
	House (n = 114)	Senate (n = 34)
By merit	6.1%	2.9%
By tenure	10.5%	11.8%
By position	4.4%	2.9%
Inverse to salary (lesser paid employee receives higher amount), not to exceed program limits	4.4%	2.9%
Fixed/equal amount for all participants, not to exceed program limits	45.6%	64.7%
Amount of employee's current loan payment, not to exceed program limits	14.9%	17.7%
No set policy	23.7%	5.9%
Other	10.5%	8.8%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

How many employees in your office currently receive a student loan repayment?		
	House (n = 98-113)	Senate (n = 31-33)
DC – average	2.3	6.9
District/State – average	1.7	4.4

What is the average monthly repayment amount per employee in your office?		
	House (n = 103)	Senate (n = 34)
Average	\$640.52	\$332.91
Mode	\$833.00 (28 offices)	\$250.00 (6 offices); \$300.00 (6 offices)

If an employee leaves before they serve their required one-year Student Loan Agreement is completed, what is your office's policy?		
	House (n = 113)	Senate (n = 34)
Employees are <u>not</u> required to pay back <u>any</u> of the money that has been contributed (i.e., the payback requirement is waived)	54.0%	64.7%
Employees are required to pay back <u>a portion</u> of the money that has been contributed	0.9%	2.9%
Employees are required to pay back <u>all</u> of the money that has been contributed	4.4%	11.8%
No set policy (i.e., determined on a case-by-case basis)	34.5%	17.7%
Other	6.2%	2.9%

In your opinion, to what extent has the Student Loan Repayment program helped your office with the recruitment and retention of employees?		
	House (n = 114)	Senate (n = 34)
Very helpful	50.0%	35.3%
Somewhat helpful	36.0%	47.1%
Neutral/Neither helpful nor unhelpful	12.3%	14.7%
Somewhat unhelpful	0.0%	0.0%
Very unhelpful	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know/No opinion	1.8%	2.9%

Transportation Benefits

This section discusses Member office policies for transit subsidies, mileage reimbursement, and parking.

Eligible Senate staff may receive up to \$255 per month in transit benefits (in 2016), though the amount is determined by each employing office, since the amount comes out of their individual budgets. Staff may not receive transit benefits and Senate parking at the same time.

In the House, permanent full-time or part-time employees or paid interns (both in DC and in the district/state) are eligible for transit benefits, which are managed by the House Office of Payroll and Benefits, and are based on actual commuting costs, which cannot exceed \$255 per month (in 2016). Transit benefits do not come out of individual offices' Member's Representational Accounts (MRAs). DC-based staff cannot receive transit benefits and House parking at the same time. NOTE: because individual Member offices do not manage transit benefits on behalf of their employees, nor do transit amounts come out of their Member office budgets, House respondents skipped most of the questions on transit benefits. They were asked about the number of staffers in their office who currently participated in the program.

Does your office participate in your chamber's Transit Benefit Program?		
	House	Senate (n = 34)
Yes	n/a	97.1%
No	n/a	2.9%
Plan to offer in next 12 months	n/a	0.0%

Note: The one Senate respondent who selected "No" skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

How many staffers in your office currently participate in the Transit Benefit Program?		
	House (n = 78-97)	Senate (n = 25-31)
DC – average	3.4	11.3
District/State – average	1.0	1.0

Note: Respondents who answered "Don't Know/Unsure" were excluded from this analysis.

For the House, 62 of 78 respondents indicated that they had zero district/state staffers currently participating in the Transit Benefit Program. For the Senate, 17 of 25 respondents answered that they had no state staffers currently participating.

Which of the following <u>best</u> reflects your office's determination of the monthly transit benefit amount?		
	House	Senate (n = 33)
We provide the <u>maximum</u> amount (\$255 per month) to all participants	n/a	6.1%
We provide an <u>equal</u> amount to all participants, but it is less than the maximum amount of \$255 per month	n/a	12.1%
We provide for each participant's <u>actual</u> commuting costs, not to exceed \$255 per month	n/a	78.8%
Other	n/a	3.0%

What is the average amount your office provides for transit subsidies?

	House	Senate (n = 7-32)
DC – average	n/a	\$110.75
District/State – average	n/a	\$86.43

Note: In the Senate, seven respondents provided the average amount for state-based staff, while 32 respondents provided the average amount for DC-based staff.

What is your office's policy for parking?

	House (n = 115)	Senate (n = 33)
No set policy	15.7%	18.2%
DC parking spots are allocated to staff based on seniority/tenure	58.3%	48.5%
DC parking spots are allocated to staff based on job type	19.1%	27.3%
DC parking spots are allocated to staff who do not have mass transit options available	20.0%	45.5%
District/state parking spots are allocated to staff based on seniority/tenure	7.8%	27.3%
District/state parking spots are allocated to staff based on job type	4.3%	9.1%
District/state parking spots are allocated to staff who do not have mass transit options available	7.0%	30.3%
District/state staff who pay for their own parking receive additional compensation to cover these expenses	1.7%	3.0%
Other	16.5%	18.2%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

What is your office's policy for mileage reimbursement for staff when using their privately-owned or privately-leased vehicles for official duties?

	House (n = 116)	Senate (n = 34)
No set policy	2.6%	2.9%
Staff is reimbursed at GSA rate (i.e., \$0.54 per mile for automobiles and \$0.51 per mile for motorcycles in 2016)	69.0%	73.5%
Staff is reimbursed at less than the GSA rate	27.6%	20.6%
Other	0.9%	2.9%

For the 32 House respondents that reimburse for mileage at less than the GSA rate, 29 noted their lesser rate in the comments. These reimbursement rates ranged from \$0.25 to \$0.51, with the most common rate being \$0.50, and the average rate being \$0.46. For the seven Senate respondents that reimburse for mileage at less than the GSA rate, five noted their lesser rate in the comments. These reimbursement rates ranged from \$0.42 to \$0.51, with an average rate of \$0.47.

Part III. Leave Policies

This section discusses the various types of leave an office may offer, including vacation/annual leave, sick leave, and family and medical leave (FMLA).

Instead of having separate policies for sick and vacation/annual leave, some offices combine these types of leave into one “paid time off (PTO)” plan (this excludes paid holidays).

What type of leave policy does your office offer?		
	House (n = 114)	Senate (n = 34)
We have <u>separate</u> policies for vacation/annual leave, sick leave, and other leave types.	81.6%	94.1%
We have <u>combined</u> vacation/annual leave and sick leave into one paid time off (PTO) plan.	14.9%	5.9%
Neither – we do not have formal leave policies.	3.5%	0.0%

Note: The respondents that indicated their office has a paid time off (PTO) policy skipped ahead to the PTO section, and did not answer the questions in the “Vacation/Annual Leave” and “Sick Leave” sections. Respondents that selected “Neither” proceeded to the questions on family and medical leave.

Vacation/Annual Leave

This section discusses office vacation/annual leave policies for 2016, separate from other types of leave an office may offer, such as sick leave and family and medical leave (FMLA).

On what basis does your office determine the amount of vacation/annual leave granted to each staff member?		
	House (n = 95)	Senate (n = 32)
No set policy	1.1%	0.0%
Amount varies by tenure	63.2%	87.5%
All employees receive the same number of days annually	35.8%	12.5%

Note: Respondents selecting “no set policy” skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

For House respondents, 34 offices indicated that they provide all employees with the same number of vacation/annual leave days. The number of days ranged from 10 days to 30 days, with an average of 16.8 days. The most frequent House response was 15 days (14 offices).

For Senate respondents, four offices indicated that they provide all employees with the same number of vacation/annual leave days. The number of days ranged from 15 days to 20 days, with an average of 16.3 days. The most frequent Senate response was 15 days (3 offices).

Number of vacation/annual leave days granted		
	House (n = 34)	Senate (n = 4)
Average	16.8 days	16.3 days
Mode	15 days (14 offices)	15 days (3 offices)

For employees whose vacation/annual leave is determined by their <u>tenure</u> , what is the maximum amount they receive yearly?								
Tenure of Employee	Amount would be prorated	1-5 days	6-10 days	11-15 days	16-20 days	21-25 days	26-30 days	31 or more days
House (n = 57)								
Less than 1 year	23.2%	5.4%	28.6%	41.1%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1-3 years	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%	64.9%	15.8%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
4-6 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.9%	53.6%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
7-10 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	67.3%	19.2%	1.9%	0.0%
11+ years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	45.3%	45.3%	3.8%	0.0%
Senate (n = 28)								
Less than 1 year	25.9%	3.7%	25.9%	40.7%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1-3 years	3.7%	0.0%	22.2%	59.3%	14.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4-6 years	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	51.9%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%
7-10 years	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	55.5%	14.8%	3.7%	0.0%
11+ years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%	66.7%	22.2%	0.0%	3.7%

Does your office allow employees to roll over <u>unused paid vacation/annual leave</u> from one year to the next?		
	House (n = 92)	Senate (n = 32)
No	26.1%	12.5%
Yes, and the number of rollover days is unlimited	5.4%	3.1%
Yes, but the number of rollover days is limited	68.5%	84.4%

Note: Respondents that limited the number of rollover days were asked to enter the number of days they allowed to be rolled over.

For House respondents, 63 offices indicated that they limit the number of unused vacation/annual leave days that can be rolled over to the following year. The number of allowed rollover days ranged from 2 days to 40 days, with an average of 13.6 days. The most frequent House response was 5 days (cited by 21 offices), followed by 30 days (12 offices), and 10 days (11 offices).

For Senate respondents, 27 offices indicated that they limit the number of unused vacation/annual leave days that can be rolled over to the following year. The number of allowed rollover days ranged from 5 days to 60 days, with an average of 11.1 days. The most frequent Senate response was 5 days (14 offices), followed by 10 days (6 offices).

Number of Allowed Rollover Days for Unused Vacation/Annual Leave		
	House (n = 63)	Senate (n = 27)
Average	13.6 days	11.1 days
Mode	5 days (21 offices)	5 days (14 offices)

When an employee leaves your office, do they get paid for <u>unused vacation/annual leave</u>?		
	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 30)
No set policy	13.2%	3.3%
No, staff loses accrued time	25.3%	10.0%
Yes, and the number of days paid out is unlimited (i.e., they receive the full balance of accrued leave)	34.1%	50.0%
Yes, but the number of days paid out is limited	27.5%	36.7%

Note: Respondents that limited the number of payout days were asked to enter the number of days they allowed to be paid out.

For House respondents, 25 offices indicated that they limit the number of unused vacation/annual leave days that can be paid out when an employee leaves. The number of allowed payout days ranged from 5 days to 30 days, with an average of 18.7 days. The most frequent House response was 30 days (11 offices), followed by 10 days (6 offices).

For Senate respondents, 11 offices indicated that they limit the number of unused vacation/annual leave days that can be paid out when an employee leaves. The number of allowed payout days ranged from 10 days to 60 days, with an average of 33.5 days. The most frequent Senate response was 60 days (4 offices).

Number of Allowed Payout Days for Unused Vacation/Annual Leave		
	House (n = 25)	Senate (n = 11)
Average	18.7 days	33.5 days
Mode	30 days (11 offices)	60 days (4 offices)

Sick Leave

This section discusses office policies regarding sick leave for 2016, which is separate from vacation/annual leave and family and medical leave (FMLA).

On what basis does your office determine the amount of sick leave granted to each staff member?		
	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 32)
No set policy	8.8%	0.0%
Amount varies by tenure	1.1%	0.0%
All employees receive the same number of days annually	90.1%	100.0%

Note: Respondents that indicated they did not have a set policy or did not offer sick leave were asked a follow-up question on how they handle sick employees, and then skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

Given that your office does not have a formal sick leave policy, which of the following <u>best</u> describes your office's response when employees are sick?		
	House (n = 9)	Senate (n = 0)
Employees are directed to use their annual leave	0.0%	n/a
Employees are able to take sick days on an as needed basis, and it does not affect their leave	100.0%	n/a
Employees are encouraged to work if at all possible (i.e., taking time off for sickness is discouraged)	0.0%	n/a
Other	0.0%	n/a

Note: There are no Senate data for this question because all respondents to the previous question indicated that they have a sick leave policy in their office.

The majority of respondents indicated that they give their employees the same number of sick leave days. For House respondents, the number of sick leave days ranged from 1 day to 15 days, with an average of 10.2 days. The most frequent response was 12 days (cited by 45 offices). For Senate respondents, the number of sick leave days ranged from 3 days to 15 days, with an average of 10.1 days. The most frequent response was 10 days (10 offices), followed by 12 days (cited by 9 offices).

Number of sick leave days granted		
	House (n = 82)	Senate (n = 32)
Average	10.2 days	10.1 days
Mode	12 days (45 offices)	10 days (10 offices); 12 days (9 offices)

Does your office allow employees to roll over <u>unused paid sick leave</u> from one year to the next?		
	House (n = 83)	Senate (n = 32)
No	67.5% (56)	53.1% (17)
Yes, and the number of rollover days is unlimited	25.3% (21)	31.3% (10)
Yes, but the number of rollover days is limited	7.2% (6)	15.6% (5)

Note: Respondents that limited the number of rollover days were asked to enter the number of days they allowed to be rolled over.

Does your office allow employees to donate <u>unused paid sick leave</u> to an office-wide leave bank?		
	House (n = 83)	Senate (n = 32)
Yes	18.1%	15.6%
No	81.9%	84.4%

Paid Time Off (PTO)

This section discusses the results of those offices who offered a paid time off (PTO) policy in 2016, which combines vacation/annual leave and sick leave into one plan. This type of combined leave plan is much less common in House and Senate offices than offering separate policies for vacation/annual leave and sick leave, with only 17 House respondents and 2 Senate respondents indicating they offer this type of leave policy. Due to the small number of responses for these questions, we again caution readers about the generalization of results. For offices that employ PTO policies, they may also wish to review the sections on vacation/annual leave and sick leave for comparative purposes.

On what basis does your office determine the amount of paid time off (PTO) granted to each staff member?		
	House (n = 17)	Senate (n = 2)
No set policy	5.9%	0.0%
Amount varies by tenure	58.8%	0.0%
All employees receive the same number of days annually	35.3%	100.0%

Note: Respondents selecting “no set policy” skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

For the six House offices who give their employees the same number of PTO days annually, the number of days ranged from 12 days to 21 days, with an average of 17 days. Both of the Senate offices who give their employees the same number of PTO days provide 20 days.

For employees whose paid time off (PTO) is determined by their tenure, what is the maximum amount they receive yearly?

Tenure of Employee	Amount would be prorated	1-5 days	6-10 days	11-15 days	16-20 days	21-25 days	26-30 days	31 or more days
House (n = 10)								
Less than 1 year	40.0%	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1-3 years	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4-6 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%
7-10 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%
11+ years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%

Note: No Senate respondents indicated that they give PTO by tenure.

Does your office allow employees to roll over unused paid time off (PTO) from one year to the next?

	House (n = 16)	Senate (n = 2)
No	37.5%	50.0%
Yes, and the number of rollover days is unlimited	0.0%	0.0%
Yes, but the number of rollover days is limited	62.5%	50.0%

Note: Respondents that limited the number of rollover days were asked to enter the number of days they allowed to be rolled over.

For the 10 House respondents limit the number of PTO days that can be rolled over, the number of days ranged from 2 days to 10 days, with an average of 5.5 days. The most frequent response was 5 days (cited by six offices). The Senate respondent that limits the number of PTO days that can be rolled over allows 10 rollover days.

When an employee leaves your office, do they get paid for unused paid time off (PTO)?

	House (n = 16)	Senate (n = 2)
No set policy	18.8%	0.0%
No, staff loses accrued time	37.5%	50.0%
Yes, and the number of days paid out is unlimited (i.e., they receive the full balance of accrued leave)	37.5%	0.0%
Yes, but the number of days paid out is limited	6.3%	50.0%

Note: Respondents that limited the number of payout days were asked to enter the number of days they allowed to be paid out. The one House respondent limits their payout to 30 days, while the one Senate respondent limits theirs to 10 days.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) applies certain rights and provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to covered employees. Eligible employees are entitled to a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period; however, this leave is not required to be paid. To qualify as an eligible employee, staff must have been employed in any employing (i.e., congressional) office for a total of 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours of employment during the previous 12 months.

FMLA includes leave for qualifying life events, defined as follows:

- Type A: Birth of and care for a newborn child.
- Type B: Adoption of a child or to receive a child in foster care.
- Type C: Care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a “serious health condition.”
- Type D: Employee’s serious health condition that make the employee unable to perform his or her job.
- Type E: Leave for a qualifying exigency while the employee’s immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) is on covered active duty or on call to covered active duty status.

Which of the following <u>best</u> describes how family and medical leave (FMLA) is implemented in your office?		
	House (n = 111)	Senate (n = 34)
We do <u>not</u> offer <u>paid</u> family and medical leave (FMLA) – only <u>unpaid as required by law</u>	10.8%	0.0%
We offer a <u>combination</u> of unpaid and paid family and medical leave (FMLA), <u>informally</u> on a case-by-case basis	20.7%	2.9%
We offer a <u>combination</u> of unpaid and paid family and medical leave (FMLA) based on a <u>formal, written policy</u>	57.7%	73.5%
We offer <u>only paid</u> family and medical leave (FMLA)	10.8%	23.5%

Note: Respondents who do not offer paid family and medical leave – only unpaid – skipped the remaining questions on this topic.

This rest of this section covers paid FML, not mandated unpaid FML.

What is the maximum number of paid weeks of FMLA leave your office offers for each of the following qualifying events?

House (n = 88)

Number of Weeks of Paid FML	Type A: Birth of/ Care for Newborn	Type B: Adoption/ Foster Care	Type C: Serious Health Condition of Immediate Family	Type D: Serious Health Condition of Employee	Type E: Military Family Leave
0 weeks	1.2%	3.7%	14.9%	15.1%	15.6%
1 week	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%
2 weeks	4.6%	6.1%	6.8%	5.5%	6.3%
3 weeks	4.6%	4.9%	2.7%	2.7%	6.3%
4 weeks	8.1%	9.8%	12.2%	11.0%	6.3%
6 weeks	24.1%	24.4%	18.9%	20.6%	17.2%
8 weeks	12.6%	11.0%	8.1%	4.1%	1.6%
12 weeks	42.5%	39.0%	31.1%	35.6%	35.9%
More than 12 weeks	2.3%	1.2%	1.4%	5.5%	10.9%
Average Number of Weeks of Paid FML	8.5	7.9	6.6	7.3	7.5

Note: Weeks that did not receive a response are not shown.

What is the maximum number of paid weeks of FMLA leave your office offers for each of the following qualifying events?

Senate (n = 34)

Number of Weeks of Paid FML	Type A: Birth of/ Care for Newborn	Type B: Adoption/ Foster Care	Type C: Serious Health Condition of Immediate Family	Type D: Serious Health Condition of Employee	Type E: Military Family Leave
1 week	2.9%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
2 weeks	2.9%	8.8%	14.7%	5.9%	9.4%
4 weeks	14.7%	20.6%	11.8%	8.8%	12.5%
6 weeks	32.4%	26.5%	38.2%	32.4%	37.5%
7 weeks	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
8 weeks	11.8%	11.8%	14.7%	20.6%	12.5%
10 weeks	2.9%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
12 weeks	29.4%	26.5%	20.6%	23.5%	21.9%
More than 12 weeks	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%
Average Number of Weeks of Paid FML	7.6	7.0	6.7	7.4	7.3

Note: Weeks that did not receive a response are not shown.

Please indicate which employees are permitted to take paid family and medical leave for the birth and care of a newborn child (Type A) and for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care (Type B).

	House (n = 91)	Senate (n = 34)
Type A: Birth and care of a newborn child		
Female employees only	1.1%	0.0%
Both female and male employees, but male employees receive <u>less</u> leave than female employees	25.3%	23.5%
Both female and male employees, and male employees receive the <u>same</u> amount of leave as female employees	73.6%	76.5%
Type B: Placement of a child for adoption or foster care		
Female employees only	1.2%	0.0%
Both female and male employees, but male employees receive <u>less</u> leave than female employees	12.9%	11.8%
Both female and male employees, and male employees receive the <u>same</u> amount of leave as female employees	85.9%	88.2%

When taking paid family and medical leave for the birth and care of a newborn child (Type A) and/or for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care (Type B), are employees permitted to take intermittent leave or are they required to take their paid family and medical leave during a single period of time (i.e., all at once)?

	House (n = 90)	Senate (n = 34)
Type A: Birth and care of a newborn child		
Yes, employees can take intermittent leave	80.0%	97.1%
No, employees must take leave during a single period of time	20.0%	2.9%
Type B: Placement of a child for adoption or foster care		
Yes, employees can take intermittent leave	80.7%	97.1%
No, employees must take leave during a single period of time	19.3%	2.9%

Does your office allow or require employees to contribute annual, sick, or other paid leave to FMLA leave?

	House (n = 111)	Senate (n = 34)
No set policy	36.0%	11.8%
No	37.8%	29.4%
Yes	26.1%	58.8%

Other Leave

Does your office offer paid bereavement leave?		
	House (n = 110)	Senate (n = 33)
No	20.0%	0.0%
Yes	80.0%	100.0%

Note: Respondents that answered "yes" were asked to specify the maximum number of days their office provides for paid bereavement leave.

For the House respondents that provided paid bereavement leave, the number of days ranged from 1 day to 15 days, with an average of 5 days. The most frequent House response was 5 days (cited by 34 offices), followed by 3 days (30 offices). For Senate respondents that provided paid bereavement leave, the number of days ranged from 3 days to 10 days, with an average of 4.6 days. The most frequent Senate response was 5 days (cited by 20 offices), followed by 3 days (10 offices).

Maximum number of bereavement leave days granted		
	House (n = 87)	Senate (n = 33)
Average	5.0 days	4.6 days
Mode	5 days (34 offices); 3 days (30 offices)	5 days (20 offices); 3 days (10 offices)

Does your office offer additional leave specifically devoted to cultural, ethnic, or religious events/holidays?		
	House (n = 105)	Senate (n = 34)
No	64.8%	79.4%
Yes	35.2%	20.6%

Note: Respondents that answered "yes" were asked to specify the maximum number of days their office provides for cultural, ethnic, or religious events/holidays.

For the House, 34 respondents noted how much maximum additional leave they provided for cultural, ethnic, or religious events/holidays. The number ranged from 1 day to 10 days, with an average of 4.2 days. The most frequent House response was 5 days (cited by 9 offices), followed by 3 days (8 offices). For the five Senate respondents that provided additional cultural/ethnic/religious leave, the number ranged from 1 day to 15 days, with an average of 5.3 days. The most frequent Senate response was 4 days (cited by 2 offices).

Does your office offer any of the following leave benefits to staff?		
	House (n = 109)	Senate (n = 34)
Paid time off for volunteering	5.6%	3.1%
Paid jury duty (beyond what is required by law)	43.1%	54.6%

Note: Only "Yes" responses are shown.

Additional paid leave* (open-ended question)		
	House (n = 43)	Senate (n = 19)
Extra days between Christmas and New Year's	81.4%	84.2%
Extra days before or after Thanksgiving	44.2%	36.8%
Good Friday or Easter Monday	32.6%	31.6%
Personal Days		36.8%
Other Leave/Holidays	25.6%	

**Many offices indicated that they gave extra time off in December, ranging from 1 day to 2 weeks, with most respondents indicating they closed their offices or operated it with very limited staff between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Other respondents noted they closed the day before or after Thanksgiving. Some offices also provided personal days for staff to use at their discretion.*

Note: This question was open-ended and asked respondents if they offered additional paid leave not specified earlier, or if they had unique aspects to their office leave, or would like to expand on their office's leave policies. Responses were analyzed and since the majority of answers covered additional holiday leave, the top results for each chamber are presented in this table.

Part IV. Flexible Working Benefits

This section discusses benefits and policies regarding workplace flexibility practices (“workflex”), including telecommuting, flex time, part-time work, and other arrangements.

Does your office offer any of the following flexible work arrangements to staff?		
	House (n = 109)	Senate (n = 33)
Flextime during core business hours (allowing employees to work different hours within limits during core business hours; e.g., workday starts and ends at times different than the established standard, but employee still works the same number of hours per day)	39.8%	45.5%
Flextime outside of core business hours (allowing employees to work different hours outside of core business hours; for example: employees required to be present between 10 and 3, but start and stop times may vary)	32.7%	24.2%
Compressed workweeks (allowing full-time employees to work longer days for part of the week or pay period in exchange for shorter days, or a day off, each week or pay period)	13.2%	9.4%
Telecommuting on an ad-hoc basis (telecommuting on an ad-hoc basis is defined as situations that may occur intermittently throughout the year or as a one-time event)	65.7%	81.8%
Telecommuting on a part-time basis (regular telecommuting but not every day)	17.0%	24.2%
Telecommuting on a full-time basis	3.9%	15.2%
Reduced hours/part-time work (working fewer than 40 hours or fewer than the workplace norm)	36.5%	54.6%
Gradual return to work (working less than a full-time schedule following a leave)	37.4%	54.6%
Job sharing (two or more employees share the responsibilities, accountability and compensation of one full-time job)	5.6%	0.0%

Note: Only “Yes” responses are shown.

What are your top concerns regarding the implementation of flexible work arrangements in your office?

	House (n = 104)	Senate (n = 34)
The congressional workload and job requirements don't allow for these types of arrangements.	62.5%	79.4%
Concerns about giving preferential treatment/treating all employees equally.	49.0%	61.8%
Potential loss of productivity/absenteeism/abuse of the program.	51.9%	44.1%
We're a small organization/not sure how to make this work.	34.6%	29.4%
Technology/IT/information security limitations	10.6%	8.8%
Other	11.5%	8.8%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

How does your Washington, D.C. office's work schedule change when your chamber is in recess/not in session?

	House (n = 109)	Senate (n = 34)
There is <u>no</u> change	20.2%	2.9%
Office closes early	46.8%	79.4%
Start and end times of the work day are flexible	42.2%	26.5%
Employees telecommute with increased frequency	10.1%	11.8%
Other	11.9%	17.7%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

How does your office account for work performed by district/state staff in the evenings and on weekends?

	House (n = 108)	Senate (n = 34)
District/state staff are expected to work weekends/evenings when necessary, and they do <u>not</u> receive any additional compensation for that work	49.1%	20.6%
District/state staff are expected to work weekends/evenings when necessary, but they do receive additional compensation for that work (e.g., paid overtime, given a bonus, allotted comp time)	44.4%	58.8%
District/state staff very rarely work weekends/evenings	6.5%	20.6%

Part V. Other Benefits and Personnel Practices

This section discusses policies regarding other benefits and practices such as professional and career development, new employee orientation, performance management, and the recruitment and retention of staff.

Professional and Career Development

Does your office allow any of the following benefits or engage in any of the following practices related to <u>professional and career development</u> ?		
	House (n = 108)	Senate (n = 33)
Training and professional development opportunities (seminars, courses, training to keep skills current, etc.) provided by <u>your office or your chamber</u> (either online or offline)	90.7%	93.9%
Training and professional development opportunities (seminars, conferences, courses, training to keep skills current, etc.) provided by external organizations (either online or offline)	84.3%	78.8%
Informal mentoring program	54.8%	57.6%
Career counseling	39.8%	46.9%
Cross-training to develop skills	52.9%	51.5%

Note: Only "Yes" responses are shown.

Respondents who do not offer any of the above cited the following reasons: limited development opportunities; the cost of such programs; and the time to find and attend such programs or the time to engage in such activities. Several respondents also indicated that development in their office was employee-driven, rather than office-driven.

Onboarding and Orientation

Does your office engage in any of the following practices related to the <u>onboarding and orientation of new employees</u> ?		
	House (n = 108)	Senate (n = 33)
Provide a written office procedures manual and review personnel policies (such as leave policies) with the new employee	88.9%	100.0%
Review/discuss the new employee's job description	90.7%	87.9%
Review/discuss the new employee's performance goals	73.2%	74.2%
Provide training on office procedures/tasks common to all employees	88.9%	90.9%
Provide training on office procedures/tasks specific to the position	95.3%	93.8%
Provide information on the Office of Compliance (OOC)	44.1%	50.0%
Require new employees to access the online orientation offered by your chamber	47.6%	65.6%
Provide information/training on the resources/services available (e.g., CRS, institutional/support offices, office subscriptions, etc.)	91.6%	97.0%

Note: Only "Yes" responses are shown.

Most respondents who do not engage in the above cited they were unaware that such programs and/or material were available.

Performance Management

Does each staff member in your office have written, formalized job descriptions?		
	House (n = 109)	Senate (n = 33)
Yes	39.5%	60.6%
No	21.1%	15.2%
Varies – some do, some don't	36.7%	24.2%
Unsure/Don't know	2.8%	0.0%

Which processes mostly closely reflect the practice(s) of your office for conducting staff performance reviews?

	House (n = 109)	Senate (n = 34)
Supervisor(s) completes written evaluation	42.2%	58.8%
Staff completes written self-evaluation	45.0%	50.0%
Staff and supervisor(s) meet to discuss performance	71.6%	73.5%
All staff are evaluated	56.0%	58.8%
Only specific staff positions are evaluated	4.6%	5.9%
Informal evaluations are conducted but there is no formal policy/practice	20.2%	20.6%
Do not conduct performance reviews	8.3%	11.8%
Other	9.2%	2.9%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

How involved is your Member/Senator in performance reviews?

	House (n = 87)	Senate (n = 26)
The Member/Senator is not involved in performance reviews in any way.	27.6%	34.6%
The Member/Senator provides feedback on the employee to the Chief of Staff or employee's supervisor ahead of the performance review.	51.7%	38.5%
The Member/Senator attends <u>no</u> performance review meetings.	34.5%	42.3%
The Member/Senator attends <u>some</u> performance review meetings.	12.6%	11.5%
The Member/Senator attends <u>all</u> performance review meetings.	2.3%	3.9%
Other	11.5%	11.5%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

When are performance reviews generally conducted in your office?

	House (n = 88)	Senate (n = 27)
End of calendar year	44.3%	22.2%
Start of calendar year	6.8%	14.8%
End of fiscal year	0.0%	18.5%
Start of fiscal year	0.0%	0.0%
On the anniversary of their employment start date	10.2%	14.8%
Variable points throughout the year	26.1%	18.5%
Other	12.5%	11.1%

How often does your office conduct performance reviews?

	House (n = 88)	Senate (n = 26)
Once a year	62.5%	80.8%
Twice a year	21.6%	3.9%
Quarterly	6.8%	0.0%
Other	9.1%	15.4%

Does each staff member in your office have annual performance goals?

	House (n = 106)	Senate (n = 33)
Yes	33.0%	36.4%
No	28.3%	21.2%
Varies – some do, some don't	35.9%	39.4%
Unsure/Don't know	2.8%	3.0%

Recruitment and Retention

What means does your office typically use to recruit for staff openings?		
	House (n = 106)	Senate (n = 34)
Hill listservs/Internal email lists/Congressional staff associations	80.2%	58.8%
Employee referral	81.1%	85.3%
Word of mouth	90.6%	91.2%
Internal job posting through House or Senate support offices	56.6%	82.4%
Other resume service(s)	10.4%	11.8%
Newspaper ads	2.8%	5.9%
Online ads	11.3%	20.6%
Community groups in the district/state	21.7%	26.5%
Other	5.7%	0.0%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

What is your single greatest problem or challenge in trying to recruit and hire new staff members? (open-ended question)		
	House (n = 76)	Senate (n = 25)
Low salaries/Compensation/Budget restrictions	48.7% (1 st)	24.0% (3 rd)
Applicant pool and finding qualified candidates*	36.8% (2 nd)	44.0% (1 st)
Time it takes to hire, having enough time for proper vetting, and under pressure to hire quickly	9.2% (3 rd)	
Finding candidates that had ties to their state, especially for the DC office		32.0% (2 nd)

** Many House respondents noted that they had difficulty in finding qualified candidates for district/state positions and had too many applicants for DC-based positions. Several Senate respondents noted that they had difficulty in finding diverse candidates.*

Note: This question was open-ended. Responses were analyzed and the top three answers for each chamber are presented here.

What is your single greatest problem or challenge in trying to retain and keep current staff members? (open-ended question)

	House (n = 80)	Senate (n = 23)
Low salaries/Compensation/Budget restrictions	70.0% (1 st)	43.5% (1 st)
Lack of advancement opportunities/upward mobility	28.8% (2 nd)	39.1% (2 nd)
Long hours/Burnout/Workload/Work-life	18.8% (3 rd)	13.0% (3 rd)

Note: This question was open-ended. Responses were analyzed and the top three answers for each chamber are presented here.

**What was the biggest challenge related to benefits for your office in the past 12 months?
What challenges are you anticipating in the next 12 months? (open-ended question)**

	House (n = 52)	Senate (n = 20)
Low salaries/Compensation/Budget restrictions	44.2% (1 st)	20.0% (2 nd)
Health care benefits	28.8% (2 nd)	25.0% (1 st)
Workplace flexibility	11.5% (3 rd)	15.0% (3 rd)

Note: This question was open-ended. Responses were analyzed and the top three answers for each chamber are presented here.

Additional “Life in Congress” Resources

Workflex Toolkit for Congress

This booklet is a combination of advice, research, and worksheets from several organizations that is designed to help educate congressional managers and employees about flexibility in the workplace. It explains what workflex is, why it's important, and how it can be implemented in Congress by addressing obstacles to workflex, conducting organizational and employee assessments, and drafting workflex plans that work for the office and for the staffer.

The “Workflex Toolkit for Congress” and downloadable worksheets and assessments are available at: <http://www.congressfoundation.org/workflex-toolkit>

Life in Congress: Aligning Work and Life in the U.S. House and Senate

This CMF-SHRM report focuses on how House and Senate staff manage work and life issues and is based on a survey of more than 1,400 congressional staff. It offers an inside look at the workloads of congressional staff and their struggles in managing the multiple demands of work, family and personal responsibilities.

Available at: <http://www.congressfoundation.org/lic/aligning-work-life>

Life in Congress: Job Satisfaction and Engagement of House and Senate Staff

This CMF-SHRM report, also based on the survey of 1,400 congressional staff, reveals what House and Senate staffers value most about their workplace. It includes a breakdown of responses by employee job categories, and comparisons to data collected by SHRM on the U.S. workforce.

Available at: <http://www.congressfoundation.org/lic/job-sat-engagement>

Life in Congress: The Member Perspective

Work-life fit isn't just a struggle for employees. This CMF-SHRM report focuses on the job of Members of the House of Representatives from the legislator's perspective. It offers the first view of the challenges lawmakers face in managing the demands of constituents, interacting with colleagues, overseeing a staff, and still having a home life.

Available at: <http://www.congressfoundation.org/lic/member>

