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

§ C.1. Scope

This document sets the standards for levels of service pursuant to § 6.0(c) of the Statement of Work of the Technology Service Contract between the Vendor and the House.

§ C.1A. Purpose

The goal of the Communicating With Congress System (the “System”) is to create an improved method of transmitting advocacy generated constituent communications to offices of the U.S. House of Representatives (the “House”). The System is to be used exclusively to communicate to the offices of each House Member, Delegate, and Resident Commissioner. The System does not provide an opportunity to communicate with committee, leadership, or support offices.

§ C.2. Definitions

For purposes of this document:

- (a) “CAO” means the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- (b) “CWC” means the Communicating With Congress service;
- (c) “holiday” means any Federal Government holiday and any other day that the CAO is closed;
- (d) “respond” means a response by a human being, and does not include any automatically generated response

§ C.3. Data transmission contents

All data transmissions from the CWC are expected to comply with the XML standards contained in *Communicating With Congress Standards*, version 1.0. Vendors will process the transmissions even if they do not comply with the *Standards*.

§ C.4. Responses to Vendors by the CAO

- (a) When a CMS 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.

§ C.5. Responses to the CAO by Vendors

- (a) When the CAO communicates to a CMS Vendor by telephone or email, Vendor will respond within 72 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays).
- (b) When the CAO communicates an emergency to a CMS Vendor by telephone, Vendor will respond within two hours.
- (c) For purposes of this section, communications to a CMS Vendor should be made to the email or telephone number designated for the Authorized Contractor Representative by the Vendor pursuant to § G.4(a) of the Technology Service Contract between the Vendor and the House.

§ C.6. Ongoing Consultations

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

§ C.7. Downtime notification

- (a) The CAO will provide the CMS Vendor with at least 48 hours advance notice prior to 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 CWC without a 48 hour notice.

§ C.8. Testing

- (a) The CAO will provide a sandbox area where each CMS Vendor may test their applications against the CWC.
- (b) The CAO will notify each CMS 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.

§ C.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 operation of 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 CMS Vendors when such a determination has been made.

§ C.10. Acknowledgement of receipt

Inquires about the delivery status of a specific message or campaign should first be made by an Office to their CMS Vendor. CMS Vendors have the capability to poll designated Exchange mailboxes and query the CWC database via http. In the event a CMS Vendor is not able to provide the requested information, CAO Web Systems will endeavor to assist with the resolution of the Office's request.

§ C.11. Retrieval and retention of messages

Each Office's CMS will be configured to retrieve messages from the CWC on regularly scheduled, ongoing basis (except for those times designated in § C.7, above). The CWC will retain messages for up to sixty (60) calendar days from date of receipt for the sole purpose of facilitating availability to the addressed office, if required.

§ C.12. Changes to these Standards

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

§ C.13. Offices not wishing to receive CWC messages

The CMS Vendor of any House Office that does not wish to receive advocacy messages from the CWC will implement those preferences within their CMS package; effectively deleting messages as there are processed. The CWC does not store the advocacy message preferences of an office.

§ C.14. Inclusion of offices into CWC

Except as otherwise provided by the Committee on House Administration:

- (a) The CAO shall set deadlines for when each House Member, Delegate, and Resident Commissioner Office of the House will be provided with CWC services by their CMS Vendor.
- (b) If a Member, Delegate, and Resident Commissioner signs a Client Work Order for CMS Services on or after January 1, 2016, the CMS Vendor shall provide CWC services to that office within 1 business day after the Client Work Order takes effect.

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

Section C.1 – replaced “the Communicating with Congress Usage Agreement and Application for Access between the CAO and Vendors who are providing correspondence management systems to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives” with “§ 6.0(c) of the Statement of Work of the Technology Service Contract between the Vendor and the House”.

Section C.1A – added new section

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

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

Section C.7.(a) – replaced “CAO will provide the CMS Vendor with at least 48 hours notice of non-emergency downtime of the System” with “CAO will provide the CMS Vendor with at least 48 hours advance notice prior to non-emergency downtime of the System”.

Section C.13 – added new section

Section C.14 – added new section