

How to Use the Sequester Invoice and Letter Templates

Tools to effectively communicate devastating impact to Members of Congress

Thanks for joining in PTA's effort to urge Congressional action on deficit reduction and intervention to STOP the sequester! Using the template invoice and letter provided, we are hoping to encourage PTA units at the local, district, and state levels to communicate the potential devastating impact that an 8.2% reduction in federal education funding will have on public education and particularly PTA priority programs like Titles I, II, III, IDEA, and Head Start.

These documents are designed to serve as communications tools when contacting your federal representation in the Senate and House of Representatives. It is a two-part approach. The excel "invoice" will calculate the dollar amount your district stands to lose, should sequestration take effect, and the template letter allows you to tell the story of your school and your district by detailing what the cuts will mean in terms of lost jobs, program reductions, and elimination of vital services.

Before beginning, you need the below information:

- PTA unit name and address with zip code
- Senator/US Representative Name and address
- Your state/district's total 2011-2012 allocations for programs included on your invoice **this data can be retrieved from your district office if you don't have it on-hand**

Once you have all the information, you can fill out the excel spreadsheet. Once you input the numbers, the spreadsheet itself will calculate the potential cuts. The invoice lists programs, but you can edit the list or programs to reflect areas of concern to your district. The final invoice should likely reflect Titles I, II, and IDEA, as those funding streams are likely to have the largest impact. Make sure to save the excel spreadsheet to a dedicated location that is easily located so you can access and email the completed invoice.

Please note that this calculation is a rough estimate using the 2011-2012 federal allocations to determine what the funding level would look like for future years. The number generated by the spreadsheet is an approximation based on one school year's allocation. While it is fairly reliable, there are other factors at play that will impact the final depth of the sequester, including forward and advanced funded programs, state-level inputs that may have some districts absorbing more of the cut, hold harmless provisions, etc.

After completing the invoice, you can complete the letter to tell the story of sequestration and how students, families, and schools in your district will be impacted. Beyond straight dollar amounts on the spreadsheet, the letter allows you to put a "face" on the cuts of sequestration. Make sure that the letter is placed on PTA letterhead – or, perhaps your district would like to collaborate with you on a joint letter to submit on district letterhead? Either option will make an impactful statement.

The completed excel spreadsheet and letter can be sent up to Capitol Hill via email. Share the information with the education staffer in each office. If you don't know the name of the staffer, simply call the office and ask the front desk for the name – spelled out – of the education staff person. Email formulas are:

- US Senate: firstname.lastname@senatorlastname.senate.gov
- US House: firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov

This information is well-timed; as Congress will be forced to deal with the reality of the fiscal cliff immediately following the November 6 election.

For additional information, please contact Jacque Chevalier at jchevalier@pta.org