

WASHINGTON - Congressman-elect Adrian Smith, R-Neb., was setting up shop this week on Capitol Hill.

Smith doesn't get the keys to his own office or an official budget until around the time of his Jan. 4 swearing-in, but the operation is still coming together.

Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., is allowing Smith to use his office as a home base.

Smith was interviewing applicants for staff jobs and weighing how to arrange his offices in Nebraska's 3rd Congressional District, which covers 69 of the state's 93 counties.

One result of the Democratic takeover in the House is that a significant pool of qualified Republican staffers are looking for work, said Smith's chief of staff, Jeff Shapiro.

Shapiro, 28, was born in Sioux City, Iowa, but grew up in Omaha, graduating from Burke High School.

As a teenager, Shapiro worked in Terry's Omaha law office and he worked as a legislative assistant from 2001 to 2003 in Terry's congressional office. In recent years, Shapiro has been a lobbyist for General Mills in Washington.

Smith isn't just between offices at the moment.

He also is looking for a place to live in the Washington area , after deciding against taking over the apartment of his predecessor , retiring Republican Rep. Tom Osborne.

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