



# Organize Locally

Grassroots organizing can lead to major political changes not only in your community, but across the entire country. Creating a network of advocates in your community and developing relationships with local elected officials and community leaders can be a powerful way to leverage your advocacy and amplify your voice in your community. Below are a few tips to help you get started.

## Step One: Look for existing groups

- If you can find an already existing group in your community that advocate to end homelessness, or which already have relationships with leaders, do what you can to join or partner with these groups. Instead of starting fresh, you can contribute and support the actions of an established group. This can help broaden the impact of everyone involved.
- If no group exists in your community, try to create one. Identify people, organizations, and stakeholders that work with homeless people in your community, and work with them to advocate together. This can be formal, as a coalition, task force, or organization, or an informal partnership with the people most interested in ending homelessness in your community.

## Step Two: Reaching out to Local Leaders

- Identify a few local elected officials like Mayors, City Council Members, or County Executives, as well as leaders in sectors that deal with homelessness, such as police chiefs, or faith, healthcare, and business leaders.
- Find their contact information online. Most elected officials post a contact form, general phone number, or constituent relations email that you can reach out on their public websites.
- Use this information to reach out and ask if they or their staff would be willing to schedule a meeting to discuss the issue of homelessness, and how they could partner with you or your group to help improve public policy and funding.

## Step Three: Asking them to be a champion on ending homelessness

- When you meet with them, be sure to give them the context of the issue, and explain how they can help solve it. If you are speaking with an elected official, approach the conversation as a concerned constituent and tell them how homelessness impacts the community and what they can do to help end it. If you are working with other leaders, focus in on how homelessness impacts their sector specifically.
- Make sure to ask the leaders not only to support ending homelessness publicly, but to also personally advocate to Congress for federal support. Ask them to take specific actions such as making a phone call or writing a letter to your Member of Congress, hosting a site visit, or setting up a meeting with a larger coalition to discuss homelessness.

#### **Step Four: Get the word out and grow the coalition**

- In addition to taking actions to lobby your Members of Congress, ask them to help you create public awareness of the issue. You can ask them to post on social media, write an op-ed, reach out to media about a story, or hold a press event on the issue.
- Once you have a champion on the issue, work on continuing to grow your coalition, reaching out to additional leaders, groups, or organizations