

How to Host a Site Visit for a Member of Congress

Goal: Organize a visit that convinces your member of Congress to support **new and increased federal resources** to prevent and end homelessness in their district, state and nationwide.

Seeing is believing. Site visits are an important way for members of Congress to understand how organizations in their backyard are addressing homelessness — and what more can be done. Take the following steps to plan a successful visit:

1. SCHEDULE

- Invite your member of Congress.* Email their D.C. and local offices. Copy the scheduler and the staffer who tracks housing.
- Know the congressional calendar.* Schedule when Congress is in recess or during special events like Thanksgiving or Veterans Day.
- Be persistent, but respectful.* It may take several follow-ups to confirm the visit. Be flexible.

2. PREPARE

- Invite community leaders.* Consider: city, county, and state leaders; your board chair; partner organizations; and employers that volunteer with you.
- Pitch local media.* When members of the media show up, everyone will enjoy the publicity.
- Set the agenda.* No moment should be unaccounted for.
- Prepare key messages.* Your member of Congress must go home knowing that:
 1. Money spent on homelessness is a good investment.
 2. Your organization has strong support in the community.
 3. Your organization can accomplish more with greater federal funding.
- Do a walk-through.* Practice what will happen from the moment you welcome your visitors to when they leave.

3. HOST

- Be engaging.* Show off the different capabilities of your facility. Invite the member during active hours so they see your work in action.
- Show the need.* Give them a vision of what more you could accomplish with the appropriate commitment from Congress.
- Stay on schedule.* Follow your agenda to the minute. Show that you value everyone's presence and time.
- Leverage social media.* Share photos of the visit on social media. Tag your member of Congress so they're more likely to share the post.

4. FOLLOW UP

- Thank the member and staff.* Send a message to let them know you appreciate their visit.
- Keep in touch.* Ask to establish a regular quarterly meeting, or invite the member back for special events.
- Offer to be a resource.* Let them know you can be their one stop shop for local news and data on homelessness.

LET US HELP

Our dedicated staff and resources can help you leverage this opportunity for the greatest impact. Visit EndHomelessness.org for more information.