

# Hosting a Site Visit

One way to communicate directly with your Member of Congress is by scheduling a site visit at your organization. Site visits are crucial for influencing your Member of Congress, as it allows the Member to see the success of your program and will encourage the Member to vote in favor of more funding for homelessness programs. At a site visit, you can show your Member or a staffer your organization and have a meeting to talk about why programs like yours are necessary to end homelessness.

## Step One: Schedule the Site Visit

- Often times, your Member will have certain days of the week “in district”, or at the district’s main office. Usually, these days will be Mondays or Fridays. Call the District Office and schedule your site visit with the Member when they are in the office; if the Member is unavailable, schedule a meeting with a senior staff member that works in the district office.

## Step Two: Prepare for the Site Visit

- Join together with a few of your fellow advocates and local leaders to decide which policy issue you want to address in the site visit. An example of a policy issue to discuss would be McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Grants. Also decide who can and should attend this site visit from your group. Local leaders such as the Mayor or city councilmembers will be more influential than a group of advocates. Another thing to keep in mind is a Member might be more willing to attend if there is a photo opportunity with press present.
- Prepare questions and stories to talk about with your Member during the site visit. Make sure these pertain to the policy issue you want to address. You should also make set stops along the tour around your facility. Handouts and fliers may help give more information on the policy issue that you do not have the time to discuss during the site visit. Check the [Alliance’s Advocacy Toolkit](#) for sample invitations, letters of support, and agendas to prepare for hosting a site visit.

## Step Three: During the Meeting

- Discuss your program with your Member of Congress. Be sure to mention who your program targets and what some general outcomes are.
- Discuss your policy issue and ask the questions that were prepared.
- Be sure to take pictures with your Member and other attendees to share on social media and your organization’s website. The Congressional office might also want pictures, so be sure to share the pictures with the office if they request them.

## Step Four: Follow Up

- Send a thank you email to the staff member or your Member who you had the meeting with, and emphasize the importance of the discussed policy issue again. This will leave a good impression with the office.
- Hold the Member accountable. If you and the Member agreed on a certain plan of action and the Member does not follow through, call the office, post on social media, or go to your local press to inform your community that your Member is not going through with their promise.