

MONTHLY ALLIANCE ADVOCACY WORKSHOP:

Building Long-Term Relationships with District Staff & Local Electeds




National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS




[ENDHOMELESSNESS.ORG](https://endhomelessness.org)

National Alliance to End Homelessness Statements for Participation


The Alliance works to ensure that diverse voices are welcomed and included as facilitators, attendees, and guests in all forums.




The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination or abusive behavior. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that all its events are safe and respectful for all participants.



Participants acknowledge that any form of discrimination, violence, or abusive behavior may result in removal from all forums depending on the situation.



If any discrimination is witnessed or experienced during the webinar, or if you feel unsafe, please notify any member of the Alliance staff.



The National Alliance to End Homelessness strives to create a diverse, inclusive, accepting, and safe space for everyone.

Housekeeping





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END HOMELESSNESS



Monthly Bulletin

Roundup of Highlights From Month & Action Opportunities

Monthly Workshops

Building Advocacy Skills Together & Peer-to-Peer Learning

Periodic Action Alerts

Calls to Action to Contact Congress

Alliance Virtual Office Hours

Book Time with our Advocacy Director

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UPCOMING ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS

Topic	Date
Using Economic + Public Safety Arguments with Moderate and GOP Offices	May 28
And more!	TBD

Joining Today's Workshop:

TAMINA CHOWDHURY

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Building Long-Term Relationships with District Staff & Local Electeds

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WHY RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

- Policy change happens through people
- District staff = trusted advisors to Members of Congress
- Local electeds influence federal priorities
- Long-term trust > one-time advocacy

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Who are you building relationships with?

District Directors

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graph TD; A[District Directors] --> B[Legislative Aides (housing/homelessness)]; B --> C[Mayors, city councilmembers, county executives]; C --> D[State legislators with federal influence]; D --> E[Key local stakeholders aligned with them];
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Legislative Aides (housing/homelessness)

Mayors, city councilmembers, county executives

State legislators with federal influence

Key local stakeholders aligned with them

CORE PRINCIPLE: BE A TRUSTED RESOURCE

- Provide timely, accurate information
- Bring solutions—not just problems
- Be responsive and reliable
- Stay nonpartisan and mission-focused

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START WITH A STRONG FOUNDATION

- Introductory meeting (virtual or in-district)
- Share who you are + local impact
- Learn their priorities
- Follow up with key resources

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MAINTAIN CONSISTENT ENGAGEMENT

- Regular check-ins (quarterly or monthly)
- Share updates (data, stories, local trends)
- Invite them to events and site visits
- Engage beyond “asks”

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USE IN-DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES

- Recess meetings
- Site visits to shelters/housing programs
- Roundtables with providers & people with lived experience
- Community events

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CENTER LIVED EXPERIENCE

- Elevate voices of people impacted by homelessness
- Pair data with real stories
- Prepare speakers thoughtfully
- Ensure dignity and respect

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ALIGN WITH THEIR PRIORITIES

- Understand political and local context
- Frame homelessness as:
 - Economic issue
 - Public safety issue
 - Health issue
- Connect to district-specific impacts

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PARTNER WITH LOCAL ELECTEDS

- Build coalitions with mayors & local leaders
- Coordinate messaging
- Encourage joint advocacy (letters, meetings)
- Leverage their influence with federal offices

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COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Only reaching out during crises
- Overloading with information
- Being overly transactional
- Not following up
- Ignoring staff turnover

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What Success Looks Like

Staff proactively reach out to you



Invitations to briefings and discussions



Increased visibility of homelessness issues



Policy wins + sustained support

Calls to Action

Identify 3–5 key offices to prioritize



Schedule introductory or follow-up meetings



Plan at least one in-district engagement



Commit to consistent relationship-building

Alliance Tools and Support

Advocacy toolkits



Messaging guidance



Data & research



Staff support, workshops, and coaching



National Alliance to End Homelessness

April 2026



Introduction

Zach Schlager

- 6+ years as PATH's Senior Director of Public Policy
- 12 years at UC San Diego Health
- 3 years working for local Congressman
- Actively involved in public health and diversity efforts
- Board involvement with American Lung Association, San Diego Pride, San Diego Housing Federation, Mexican-American Business and Professionals Association, and others
- Father to Jack (14) and Violet (10)



How Can You Advocate?

- Call your elected officials
- Phone- and text-banking, postcards
- Canvassing and fundraising
- Public comment or testimony
- Social media pressure
- Letters to the editor and op-eds
- Earned media events (e.g., press conferences, grand openings)
- Sit-ins and protests





Lobbying Do's

- Thank the elected official for taking the time to talk
- Make introductions and share your story
- Clearly outline your ask and know who you're talking to
- Offer your assistance
- Leave behind helpful fact sheets and branded giveaways
- Take a picture and post it on social media
- Follow up with a card or email





Lobbying Don't's

- Don't attack your representative
- Don't assume the elected official knows anything about you or your issue; they are **BUSY!**
- Don't use jargon or acronyms
- Don't overwhelm them with information
- Don't offer any money or make threats
- Don't leave without thanking them





Advocacy During the Trump Administration

- Success stories are critical
- Solid data necessary to back up our arguments
- Clear messaging and setting of stakes
- Thoughtfully incorporate and activate conservative voices and impacted areas
- Tell your friends and neighbors about your work





The Art of Public Comment

- Most public comments are limited to 1-3 minutes, depending on how many items you're speaking on
- Begin by thanking the group or person you are addressing
- Be sure to utilize their appropriate title(s)
- Summarize the issue and why you care
- Use data when appropriate
- Always helpful to reference any partners or supporters
- End with a clear, direct ask, followed by a thank you
- Do not go over time

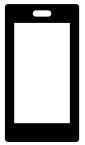




Contact Us



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Thank You!

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

Please take a short survey and
we'll see you next month!

And check out our weekly
office hours!



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