

# PLANNING A SITE VISIT OR TOUR WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS



If you manage or work with an affordable housing property, shelter, assisted living property, or other development that has used federal housing funds, consider hosting a site visit and tour for your elected officials. This activity will allow officials to see the property and meet residents, helping the officials to better understand the impact of federal investments in housing on a personal level.

## GETTING STARTED

- Choose a time and location for your event. Ensure common safety standards, especially for anything indoors, by providing masks and hand sanitizer for all attendees.
- Recruit other organizations to host the site visit with you; even if the event is at your property, other local groups can be on hand to support your call for urgent action by policymakers and increased funding to address the homelessness and housing crisis. Expect organizational differences but unite the groups around the importance of homes that are affordable and the need to invest in them.
- If there is a resident council, make sure to engage it in the planning process. Members of Congress often enjoy seeing first-hand how federal spending can make a difference in the lives of households in their districts.
- Contact your elected officials' offices and ask to speak with their scheduler. Explain that you work with an organization dedicated to providing decent homes that are accessible and affordable to those most in need and that you would like to host the official and their staff at your site so they can meet residents and better understand what affordable housing looks like in your community.
- If they tell you the elected official is not available, consider inviting a staff member to come in their place.

## SHARING THE EVENT

- Promote your event on social media and your organization's website if it is open to the public. Include details about the time and place and how advocates can engage from home if desired.
- Work with your elected official's press secretary to coordinate media contacts in advance of the site visit. Use the event and the presence of your local official to raise awareness for the need for affordable housing.
- Task a member of your team with taking pictures during the event. Make sure to share on social media using the #HoUSed hashtag and thanking the elected official and their staff for joining.

## PLANNING LOGISTICS

- Work with resident council leaders and/or the property manager to identify residents who would be interested in sharing their stories during the event.
- In the days leading up to the event, ensure any organizations you have coordinated with know the plan for the day and consider sending a site map or other materials to your elected official's office if there is not a clear meeting place. Consider reaching out to any offices that declined your invitation to again invite them to the site visit. Work with the property manager to ensure the site is looking its best.
- Plan a clear path around the property or neighborhood, considering what areas are least crowded and will allow for appropriate social distancing.
- On the morning of the event, bring refreshments and plan to meet the officials as they enter the property.
- Share with them about the property, its residents, and the funding it has received from the city, county, state, and federal government. Share what the homes on this property mean to the larger community.

## AFTER THE EVENT

- Send an email thanking the official and their staff. Be sure to include answers to any questions that were raised. Ask them to continue to support affordable housing.

**For more information, contact NLIHC Manager of Field Organizing Brooke Schipporeit at [bschipporeit@nlihc.org](mailto:bschipporeit@nlihc.org).**