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### **Property Site Visits with Members of Congress**

Hosting a member of Congress at one of your property sites is an excellent opportunity for you to demonstrate the life altering services that affordable housing provides to low-income individuals and families. These visits will give your Representative or Senator a first-hand view of housing programs in action, and this may inform and influence their future votes.

- To begin, call your member's Washington DC office and ask to speak with his or her scheduler. The scheduler can inform you of the member's availability, and he or she can also provide you with the desired format for a meeting request (procedures for arranging a site visit may vary by office).
- If your initial invitation is not immediately accepted, do not become discouraged. Senators and Congressmen have busy schedules, and arranging a property visit may involve a lot of patience. Try to arrange for different dates and remain in contact with the Member's office in case of a cancellation or rescheduled meeting. In some cases, the scheduler will inform you that the official is unavailable to visit, but he or she may offer a staff member to attend the visit. Because the staff member serves as the information gatekeeper for the Congressman/Senator, you should accept this offer. Doing so will give the staffer exposure to affordable housing programs in action and this will better inform their position. The Member's Housing Legislative Assistant (LA) would most likely attend, but you should extend the invitation to others in the office as well.
- You should plan on involving your residents during the property visit. The residents display the essential services provided by affordable housing and they can also demonstrate what daily life is like at your property. Also, your residents are constituents of the elected official (i.e. potential voters) and he or she may wish to meet with them during the visit. Town-hall style sessions are a good technique to use for tenant engagement – however, discuss your plans to conduct the town-hall session with the Member's office before you make arrangements.
- During the property visit, NAHMA encourages members to discuss the current policy and legislative issues that you have experienced in affordable housing management. Topics such as full funding for Project Based Section 8 or Rural Rental Assistance contracts are major priorities for NAHMA, and our grassroots toolkits feature numerous talking points on these subjects. The grassroots toolkits also feature the latest urgent issues for affordable housing programs. Feel free to consult with NAHMA staff for information on any topic that you would like to discuss during the site visit.
- Also try to involve other staff members who work at the property. Allowing your elected official to meet the property staff will remind them of the jobs created through affordable housing programs. The property staff are also the elected official's constituents, so their participation could make a lasting impression.

The new [NAHMA Maps](#) can assist you in finding and contacting your representatives, and we suggest that members use this tool to draw attention to the number of affordable housing properties in your state/district. Please contact Juliana Bilowich at [jbilowich@nahma.org](mailto:jbilowich@nahma.org) with any specific questions or concerns related to property site visits with Members of Congress.