

# KEYS TO SUCCESS

Resident activities, such as letter-writing campaigns or petition drives, can deliver personal messages about the importance of affordable housing directly from residents to lawmakers.

**NAHMA's recent advocacy workshop series generated the following "Keys to Success" for planning a resident engagement activity at your property:**

### ESTABLISH PARAMETERS

1

What is your message? Who are your lawmakers? What type of activity is right for your property? Answering these questions will help to set you up for success and develop an effective activity. Begin by identifying a general message for key lawmakers; then decide how best to engage residents in the process.

### MAKE IT SIMPLE, CONVENIENT, AND EASY

2

Utilize straight-forward materials for resident participation, such as petitions, form letters, or open-ended prompts (samples provided by NAHMA). The goal is to create a quick activity that will demonstrate the importance of affordable housing—directly from residents to lawmakers.

### COMMUNICATE THE "WHY"

3

Establishing a personal connection between the message and the residents is key to encouraging participation. Try questions like "why is affordable housing important to your family?"—and remember to not only communicate the "why" to residents (and staff members), but also to communicate the results.

### MAKE IT YOUR OWN

4

There is no one-size-fits-all activity, and you know your properties best. Coordinate with regional managers and property-level staff to distribute and collect the materials you've designated for the activity.

### NAVIGATE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

5

The best strategies for outreach play up strengths while supporting weaknesses. Make the most of existing dynamics in your communities by engaging a "resident leader" or staff member to help spread the word; similarly, navigate weaknesses effectively by choosing activities that will best reach your residents (taking into consideration language proficiency and literacy, as well as resident values and even timing).

### AMPLIFY YOUR OUTREACH

6

Posting photos of your activities on social media is an easy way to widen your net. Tagging lawmakers on social media platforms not only amplifies your message and your company's brand, but also allows you to establish a quicker connection with lawmakers and other constituents—just don't forget the photo release form.