



AUGUST ADVOCACY

TOOLKIT

SHARE STORIES
+ REPORT
ENGAGEMENT

HELP NAHRO SHOW THE FULL IMPACT OF AUGUST ADVOCACY

PURPOSE

August Advocacy is stronger when NAHRO can show not only how many letters were sent, but also what happened in communities across the country.

Meetings, site visits, local events, media appearances, resident stories, and follow-up conversations all help demonstrate the reach and impact of NAHRO's advocacy network.

This toolkit helps members identify strong local stories, use them in advocacy, and report engagement back to NAHRO.



WHY STORIES MATTER

Policy can feel abstract. Local stories make it real.

When you share a local example, you help officials and staff understand:

- » Who housing and community development programs serve;
- » How programs operate in real communities;

- » What funding, flexibility, and partnerships make possible;
- » What challenges remain;
- » Why continued support matters.

A strong story does not need to be long. It should connect public decisions to real people, real homes, and real community outcomes.

WHAT COUNTS AS A STORY?

A story can focus on a resident, a property, a program, a partnership, or a community outcome.

Examples include:

- » A resident gaining housing stability;
- » A senior or person with a disability remaining safely housed;
- » A family using a voucher to access opportunity;
- » A public housing modernization project;
- » A redevelopment or preservation effort;

- » A supportive services program;
- » A partnership with a school, employer, health provider, nonprofit, or local government;
- » A community development investment that improved a neighborhood;
- » A challenge that shows why public resources are still needed.

Stories can highlight successes, needs, or both.

BUILD A STRONG LOCAL STORY

Sample structure:



1 THE LOCAL NEED

What challenge was your community facing?

Examples:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| » Aging housing stock; | » Limited voucher utilization; | » A shortage of deeply affordable homes. |
| » Lack of affordable rental options; | » Resident service needs; | |
| » Rising rents; | » Infrastructure or preservation needs; | |

2 THE PROGRAM OR PARTNERSHIP

What program, funding source, or partnership helped address the need?

Examples:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| » Public Housing Operating Fund; | » HOME; | » Community development partnerships; |
| » Public Housing Capital Fund; | » CDBG; | » State or local housing resources; |
| » Housing Choice Vouchers; | » Family Self-Sufficiency; | » Local government or nonprofit partnerships. |
| » Project-Based Vouchers; | » Resident services; | |

3 THE LOCAL OUTCOME

What happened because the program or partnership existed?

Examples:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| » Homes were preserved; | » A housing development was rehabilitated; | » Local partners coordinated services; |
| » Residents remained safely housed; | » A neighborhood investment moved forward; | » A project moved from planning to implementation. |
| » Families accessed stable housing; | | |

4 THE CONTINUING NEED

What should officials understand moving forward?

Examples:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| » Demand exceeds available resources; | » Funding uncertainty makes planning harder; | » Local approvals, partnerships, and coordination matter. |
| » Older properties need continued investment; | » Program flexibility helps agencies respond to local conditions; | |
| » Administrative capacity affects service delivery; | | |

STORY TEMPLATE

Use this format to draft a short story for letters, meetings, site visits, media outreach, or follow-up.

In [Community], [Organization Name] uses [program/funding source/partnership] to help [residents/community served]. This support has helped [local outcome]. Continued support and partnership matter because [remaining need/challenge].

Example

In [Community], [Organization Name] uses housing resources to help families, seniors, and people with disabilities remain safely housed. These programs have helped preserve affordable homes and connect residents to stability and opportunity. Continued support matters because local housing needs continue to exceed available resources, and predictable funding and local partnership are essential to maintaining safe, stable homes.



HOW TO USE STORIES DURING AUGUST ADVOCACY

In Action Alerts

Add one or two local sentences to NAHRO's customizable letters.

Example:

In our community, housing programs help [brief local example]. Continued support is essential because [local need].

In Meetings With Officials

Use a story to open the conversation and make the issue concrete.

Example:

Before we get into the policy details, I want to share what this looks like locally.

During Site Visits

Connect the site or program to a larger policy priority.

Example:

This property shows why preservation investment matters. These homes serve local residents but preserving them requires predictable support and partnership.

In Local Media

Use stories to explain why housing policy matters to the broader community.

Example:

These programs are not abstract. They support real homes, real residents, and real neighborhoods here in [Community].

In Follow-Up

After a meeting or visit, include a short story in your thank-you email.

Example:

As we discussed during the visit, [local example] demonstrates why continued support remains important to our community.

PROTECT PRIVACY AND OBTAIN PERMISSION

Stories are powerful, but they must be handled responsibly.

Before sharing a resident story publicly:

- » Obtain permission;
- » Explain where and how the story may be used;
- » Avoid sharing sensitive personal details;
- » Give residents the option to decline;
- » Do not pressure anyone to participate;
- » Follow your agency's privacy, communications, and legal policies.

If permission is not available, tell the story at the program or community level rather than naming an individual.

SAFER STORY FRAMING

Instead of:

"Maria, a single mother with two children, avoided eviction after..."



Use:

"One local family was able to remain safely housed because..."

Instead of:

"A resident with a disability told us..."



Use:

"Residents have shared that stable housing helps them access services, maintain routines, and remain connected to the community."

WHAT COUNTS AS AN ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT?

NAHRO wants to capture the full range of member advocacy during August Advocacy.

Please report:

- » Letters sent through the Action Alert Center;
- » Meetings with federal, state, or local officials;
- » Meetings with political staff;
- » Site visits or property tours;
- » Resident or stakeholder roundtables;
- » Ribbon cuttings or groundbreakings;
- » Community events involving officials or staff;
- » Phone calls with public offices;
- » Local media appearances;
- » Podcast or radio interviews;
- » Public access television segments;
- » Op-eds or letters to the editor;
- » Follow-up messages after meetings or events.

If your activity helped an official, staff member, resident, partner, or the public better understand housing and community development priorities, it is worth reporting.

WHAT TO REPORT TO NAHRO

When reporting an engagement, include as much detail as possible.

BASIC INFORMATION

- » Organization name;
- » Contact person;
- » City and state;
- » Congressional district or service area, if known;
- » Date of engagement;
- » Type of engagement;
- » Official, office, staff, or audience involved;
- » Program or site discussed.

ENGAGEMENT DETAILS

- » Main issues discussed;
- » Whether residents, commissioners, staff, or partners participated;
- » Whether the engagement involved local media;
- » Whether photos, clips, or links are available;
- » Whether follow-up is needed from NAHRO;
- » Any notable response from the official or office.

STORY DETAILS

- » Brief summary of the local example;
- » Program, funding source, or partnership connected to the story;
- » Whether NAHRO may use the story internally;
- » Whether NAHRO may use the story publicly;
- » Any privacy or permission limitations.

REPORTING TEMPLATE

Organization:

[Organization Name]

Location:

[City, State, Congressional District/Service Area]

Type of Engagement:

[Meeting / Site Visit / Media / Event / Action Alert / Other]

Date:

[Date]

Official, Office, Staff, or Audience:

[Name/Office/Audience, if applicable]

Summary:

Briefly describe what happened.

Key Issues Discussed:

List the main housing or community development topics covered.

Local Story or Example:

Briefly describe the local impact story shared.

Follow-Up Needed:

List any next steps, requested information, or NAHRO support needed.

Permission:

May NAHRO use this story or example publicly?

[Yes / No / Internal Use Only / Need to Confirm]

Photo/Video:

Provide a photo/video of the event that NAHRO could use to promote NAHRO member advocacy and August Advocacy.

HOW REPORTING HELPS NAHRO

Reporting helps NAHRO:

- » Track which offices and officials have heard from housing leaders;
- » Identify states, districts, or communities where more outreach is needed;
- » Highlight strong member engagement;
- » Share examples with leadership, committees, and partners;
- » Build stronger Hill-facing and member-facing materials;
- » Demonstrate the full reach of August Advocacy beyond letter volume alone.

The more NAHRO knows about member engagement, the stronger our national advocacy story becomes.

QUICK STORYTELLING CHECKLIST

Before sharing a story:

- » Identify the local need;
- » Connect it to a program, partnership, or policy issue;
- » Explain the local outcome;
- » Describe the continuing challenge;
- » Keep the story clear and concise;
- » Confirm permission if a resident or individual is identifiable;
- » Add the story to an Action Alert, meeting, site visit, or media opportunity;
- » Report the story or engagement to NAHRO.

QUICK REPORTING CHECKLIST

After an advocacy engagement:

- » Record the date and location;
- » Note which official, office, staff member, or audience was involved;
- » Summarize what was discussed;
- » Capture any local story or example used;
- » Save links, photos, or clips if available and approved;
- » Identify any follow-up needed;
- » Report the engagement to NAHRO.





National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials

630 I Street, NW, Washington DC 20001

Phone: 877-866-2476 | www.nahro.org