# AUGUST ADVOCACY

# TOOLKIT

# REQUEST A MEETING

NAHRO
*building communities together*

# INVITE GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO ENGAGE DURING AUGUST ADVOCACY

## PURPOSE




A meeting request is the front door to stronger advocacy.

During August Advocacy, Advocates can use the campaign's meeting request tool on the Action Alert Center or submit an advocacy engagement if you contact officials directly. NAHRO encourages advocates to invite federal, state, and local officials to see the impact of HUD programs working in their communities. This includes Members of Congress and their staff, state legislators, mayors, councilmembers, county officials, agency leaders, and other decisionmakers who influence housing and community development outcomes.

The meeting request is the first step. The goal is to get officials into the conversation — and, when possible, into your community.

## WHY REQUEST A MEETING?

**Relationships drive advocacy. A meeting gives housing leaders the chance to explain local needs, share program impact, and become a trusted resource before the next vote, budget decision, hearing, or policy debate.**

**A strong meeting can help you:**

- Build or strengthen relationships with public officials and staff;
- Explain how housing and community development programs work locally;
- Share the needs and challenges facing your residents and community;
- Connect federal, state, and local policy decisions to real outcomes;
- Make specific asks tied to your agency's priorities;
- Position your agency as a local resource on housing and community development.

**Housing leaders bring something valuable to the table: local expertise, real examples, and direct experience serving residents and communities.**

# WHO SHOULD YOU ENGAGE?

**August Advocacy should reach decisionmakers across all levels of government in the community.**

**Consider requesting meetings with:**

- Members of Congress;
- Congressional district or state staff;
- State legislators and staff;
- Governors' housing or policy staff;
- Mayors/City Managers and staff;
- City councilmembers;
- County commissioners or supervisors;
- Local housing, planning, or community development officials;
- Public agency leaders;
- Other local decisionmakers connected to housing, redevelopment, infrastructure, services, or community investment (law enforcement, sanitation, supportive service practitioners, hospital and medical facility staff, etc.).

**Staff meetings count. If the elected official is unavailable, a meeting with staff can often be just as valuable. Staff track issues, brief officials, shape recommendations, and often become the key relationship that keeps your agency connected.**

# WHAT COULD YOUR MEETING LOOK LIKE?

**Choose the engagement format that best fits your relationship, capacity, and local story.**

### IN-PERSON MEETING

Best for a first conversation, relationship building, or follow-up after a previous engagement.

### VIRTUAL MEETING

Best when schedules are tight or when you want to include multiple officials, partners, commissioners, or staff.

### PROPERTY TOUR OR SITE VISIT

Best for showing affordable housing, redevelopment, preservation, resident services, or community development work in action.

### RESIDENT OR STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

Best for elevating local voices and helping officials hear directly from residents, staff, commissioners, and community partners.

### RIBBON CUTTING, GROUNDBREAKING, OR LOCAL EVENT

Best for highlighting success, new investment, redevelopment, preservation, or community partnerships.

### STAFF-LEVEL BRIEFING

Best when the elected official is unavailable but staff are interested, engaged, or responsible for housing issues.

## 1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

**Before making your request, decide who you want to engage and why.**

**Ask:**

- Which officials represent our residents, properties, or service area?
- Which offices make decisions that affect our work?
- Which relationships do we need to build or strengthen?
- Which officials should better understand our programs, residents, and local challenges?
- Which offices should see affordable housing and community development work firsthand?

**A strong August Advocacy meeting strategy may include targeted outreach to a congressional office, a state legislator, a mayor's office, county officials, and local councilmembers.**

## 2 IDENTIFY YOUR MAIN MESSAGE

**Before requesting the meeting, identify the main point(s) you want officials and staff to remember.**

Here's a sample request structure:

Our community depends on housing and community development programs because **[identify local need]**. These programs help us **[discuss local outcome]**. Continued support and partnership are necessary because **[current challenge or opportunity]**.

**Examples:**

- Federal housing programs help families remain safely housed in our community.
- Public housing capital funding helps preserve affordable homes for residents with limited options.
- Housing Choice Vouchers help families access stable housing, employment, education, and opportunity.
- Community development programs support neighborhood revitalization, infrastructure, services, and local partnerships.
- State and local partnerships help agencies preserve housing, coordinate services, and respond to community needs.
- Local decisionmakers play an important role in helping housing providers move projects, partnerships, and community solutions forward.

**Keep the message clear, local, and nonpartisan.**

## 3 MAKE A CLEAR ASK

**The meeting should be more than an introduction. Be ready to ask for something specific.**

**Depending on the official, your ask may be:**

- Visit one of our properties or programs;
- Meet with our residents, commissioners, staff, or partners;
- Support stable and predictable housing funding;
- Support policies that strengthen housing preservation, vouchers, resident services, and community development;
- Help resolve a local barrier or coordination issue;
- Connect your agency with relevant staff or departments;
- Stay engaged with us before the next budget, legislative, or policy decision;
- Use our agency as a local resource on housing and community development.

**The ask does not need to be complicated. It just needs to be clear.**

## 4 SEND THE MEETING REQUEST

**When using the meeting request tool in NAHRO's August Advocacy Hub or sending a direct email, keep the request short, specific, and local.**

**To Request a Meeting through NAHRO:**

- Click the "Request a Meeting" button;
- Provide your name, email, and a work or home address;
- The system will identify your elected officials from Congress to your City Council member;
- A generic meeting request message will appear, NAHRO encourages users to send the prepopulated message or to customize the message.

**Your request should answer four questions:**

- Who are you?
- Why are you reaching out?
- What kind of engagement are you requesting?
- Why does it matter to the official's district, state, city, county, or community?



## SAMPLE MEETING REQUEST

**Subject:** Meeting Request During August Advocacy

Dear [Official/Staff Name],

I am writing on behalf of [Organization Name] to invite [Official Name/Office] to meet with us during August Advocacy.

As a local housing and community development provider, we help administer programs that support housing stability, affordable homes, neighborhood investment, and opportunity for residents in [Community/Region]. We hope to share how these programs are working on the ground and discuss how federal, state, and local decisions affect the residents and neighborhoods we serve.

We would be glad to host or participate in:

- An in-district or local office meeting;
- A property tour or site visit;
- A conversation with residents, staff, commissioners, or local partners;
- A visit to a redevelopment, preservation, or community development project;
- A ribbon cutting, groundbreaking, or local housing event.

We would be happy to work with your office to identify a date and format that fits your schedule.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to connect during August Advocacy.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Organization]
[Phone]
[Email]

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## FOLLOW UP IF YOU DO NOT HEAR BACK

**Public officials and staff receive many requests. A polite follow-up can make a difference and can keep things moving when developing a meaningful partnership with elected officials and their staff.**

**Suggested follow-up timing:**

- Follow up 3–5 business days after the first request;
- Offer additional dates or a shorter meeting;
- Ask whether staff would be available if the official cannot attend;
- Keep the tone helpful, flexible, and understanding.

**Sample follow-up:**

Dear [Staff Name],

I wanted to follow up on our invitation for [Official/Office] to meet with [Organization Name] during August Advocacy.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss local housing and community development needs in [Community] and share how our programs serve residents, families, and neighborhoods. If the official's schedule is full, we would be glad to meet with staff or identify a future date that works better.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[Name]

## 6 CONFIRM THE MEETING

**Once a meeting is scheduled, confirm relevant items such as:**

- Date and time;
- Location or virtual meeting link;
- Expected attendees;
- Meeting format;
- Main topics;
- Accessibility, parking, or security needs;
- Whether photos, press, or public promotion are allowed.

**If the meeting becomes a site visit, use the Host a Site Visit Toolkit to plan the engagement.**

## 7 REPORT THE ENGAGEMENT TO NAHRO

**Reporting helps NAHRO understand where officials are hearing from housing leaders and where more outreach may be needed.**

**Please report:**

- Meetings with federal, state, or local officials;
- Meetings with staff;
- Site visit or tour requests;
- Confirmed visits or events;
- Follow-up conversations;
- Any official response or next step.

**Your report helps NAHRO tell a stronger national story about member advocacy and local impact.**

## QUICK REQUEST A MEETING CHECKLIST

**Before sending the request:**

- Identify the official or office;
- Decide what type of engagement you want;
- Prepare your local message;
- Make a specific ask;
- Offer clear date options;
- Use the meeting request tool or direct outreach;
- Follow up if needed;
- Confirm details once scheduled;
- Report the engagement to NAHRO.






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