



AUGUST ADVOCACY

TOOLKIT

ENGAGE LOCAL MEDIA

AMPLIFY YOUR HOUSING STORY DURING AUGUST ADVOCACY

PURPOSE

August Advocacy is not limited to direct outreach to public officials. It is also an opportunity to elevate housing and community development priorities in your local community.

Local media engagement can help housing authorities, redevelopment agencies, and community development organizations explain what housing programs make possible, highlight local needs, and reinforce the messages officials are hearing through meetings, site visits, Action Alerts, and community engagement.

This toolkit helps members prepare for podcasts, radio interviews, public access programs, op-eds, letters to the editor, community newsletters, local blogs, and other local media opportunities.



WHY LOCAL MEDIA MATTERS

Public officials and their staff often pay attention to what local communities are discussing. Local news, community radio, podcasts, public access television, civic newsletters, and social media can help reinforce the importance of housing and community development programs.

Local media can help you:

- » Explain how housing programs work in your community;
- » Highlight local housing needs and success stories;
- » Connect public decisions to real people and neighborhoods;
- » Build public support for affordable housing and community development;
- » Encourage residents, partners, and community members to take action;
- » Reinforce site visits, meetings, and Action Alerts;
- » Position your agency as a trusted local voice.

The goal is not just visibility. The goal is to make housing part of the local conversation during a key advocacy window.

WHAT COUNTS AS LOCAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT?

Local media engagement can include:

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| » Podcast interviews; | » Op-eds; | » Local blog posts; |
| » Local radio appearances; | » Letters to the editor; | » Social media videos; |
| » Public access television segments; | » Community newsletters; | » Coverage of ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, site visits, or community events. |
| » Local newspaper interviews; | » Civic association newsletters; | |

CHOOSE YOUR MEDIA GOAL

Before reaching out to a reporter, host, editor, or producer, decide what you want the media opportunity to accomplish.

Your goal may be to:

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| » Explain why August Advocacy matters; | » Discuss the importance of stable housing and community development resources; |
| » Highlight a local housing success story; | » Encourage community members to request meetings, contact officials, or send Action Alerts; |
| » Raise awareness about housing needs; | » Build stronger public understanding of your agency's role. |
| » Promote a site visit or community event; | |

Choose one primary goal and keep your message focused.

2 IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Different outlets reach different audiences. Here are different formats to consider as you amplify your local impact:

LOCAL NEWSPAPER OR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Best for explaining an issue, publishing an op-ed, or reaching civic leaders.

RADIO OR PODCAST

Best for conversational storytelling, local context, and reaching engaged community audiences.

PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION

Best for longer-form discussion, resident/community features, or local government audiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Best for quick updates, event promotion, photos, short videos, and calls to action.

LOCAL TV

Best for public events, major milestones, ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, or visual stories.

Match the outlet to the story you want to tell.

3 BUILD YOUR CORE MESSAGE

Use a simple three-part message:

1. WHAT WE DO

Our organization helps provide affordable housing and community development services in [Community].

2. WHY IT MATTERS

These programs help residents, families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and local neighborhoods remain stable and connected to opportunity.

3. WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS

August Advocacy is an important time to show public officials and the broader community how housing programs work locally and why continued support and partnership matter.

SAMPLE CORE MESSAGE

[Organization Name] helps provide safe, stable, and affordable housing in [Community]. Housing and community development programs support real people, local neighborhoods, and the broader economy. During August Advocacy, local housing leaders are showing officials and the public what these programs make possible and why continued support and partnership are needed.

4 PREPARE YOUR LOCAL STORY

Strong media engagement works best when you can point to clear local examples.

Possible story angles include:

- » A property preservation or modernization project;
- » A redevelopment success;
- » A resident services program;
- » A voucher program success story;
- » A partnership with local government, nonprofits, schools, employers, or health providers;
- » A ribbon cutting or groundbreaking;
- » A challenge your agency is working to address;
- » A local housing need that public policy can help meet.

Sample structure:

In [Community], housing and community development programs help [who is served] by [what the program makes possible]. Continued support and partnership matter because [local need/challenge].



5

PITCH THE STORY

Keep media pitches short and local. Editors, reporters, producers, and hosts need to quickly understand why the story matters to their audience.

SAMPLE PODCAST / RADIO PITCH

Subject: Local Housing Story for August Advocacy

Hello [Name],

I'm reaching out from [Organization Name], which provides housing and community development services in [Community/Region].

During August Advocacy, local housing leaders are sharing how housing programs affect families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, neighborhoods, and community stability.

We would welcome the opportunity to join your program to discuss:

- » Local housing needs in [Community];
- » How housing and community development programs work on the ground;
- » What residents and communities gain from stable housing;
- » How local stakeholders can engage during August Advocacy.

Please let me know if this would be a good fit for an upcoming segment.

Thank you,

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]

[Phone]

[Email]

SAMPLE OP-ED PITCH

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: Why Housing Matters in [Community]

Dear [Editor Name],

I am submitting an op-ed from [Name/Title] of [Organization Name] on the importance of affordable housing and community development programs in [Community].

The piece connects local housing needs to August Advocacy and explains how housing and community development programs support residents, neighborhoods, and local economies. It also highlights why public officials and community partners should continue to engage with local housing providers.

Please let me know if you would consider it for publication.

Thank you,

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]

[Phone]

[Email]

6 USE CLEAR TALKING POINTS

Three Messages for Interviews:

1. Housing is local.

Housing and community development programs are implemented in real communities by local agencies, staff, partners, and residents.

2. Public decisions have local consequences.

Funding, program rules, local approvals, administrative capacity, and intergovernmental partnerships affect how agencies preserve housing, serve residents, and respond to local needs.

3. August Advocacy is the right time to engage.

This campaign gives housing leaders a timely opportunity to request meetings, host site visits, share local stories, contact officials, and report what is happening in communities across the country.

When thinking about how to answer questions, use the language included in NAHRO's letters in the August Advocacy Hub. This can help you frame your interview in a way that clearly highlights both the need and the ask.

7 KEEP IT NONPARTISAN

NAHRO advocacy should remain focused on housing needs, program impact, and local outcomes. Avoid partisan framing and focus on the communities served.

Use:

- » "Housing and community development programs support local stability."
- » "Our goal is to help officials understand how these programs work on the ground."
- » "We want to be a local resource for policymakers and community partners."
- » "Residents and communities benefit when housing programs are stable, predictable, and effective."

Avoid:

- » Attacking individual officials or parties;
- » Assigning partisan blame;
- » Speaking beyond your organization's role or authority;
- » Sharing private resident information without permission.

8 CONNECT MEDIA TO ACTION

Whenever appropriate, use media engagement to direct people back to August Advocacy.

Possible calls to action:

- » "Ask public officials to visit local housing programs during August Advocacy."
- » "Encourage community leaders to meet with local housing providers."
- » "Share your local housing story with policymakers."
- » "Encourage residents, partners, and community leaders to send an Action Alert when appropriate."
- » "Report your advocacy engagement to NAHRO so we can track where officials are hearing from housing leaders."

SAMPLE OP-ED FRAMEWORK

HEADLINE

Why Housing Matters in [Community] This August

OPENING

Start with a local housing need, community example, or resident-centered statement.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Explain what your organization does and who your programs serve.

POLICY CONNECTION

Describe how housing and community development programs support your local work and how decisions at every level of government affect local outcomes.

AUGUST ADVOCACY CONNECTION

Explain that August Advocacy is a timely opportunity for officials and community members to hear directly from housing leaders.

CALL TO ACTION

Encourage readers to contact officials, request a meeting, support a site visit, or learn more through NAHRO's August Advocacy campaign.

9 PROTECT RESIDENT PRIVACY

Resident stories can be powerful, but they must be handled carefully.

Before sharing a resident story publicly:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Obtain permission;» Explain how the story may be used;» Avoid sharing sensitive personal details;» Give residents the option to decline; | <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Do not pressure residents to participate;» Follow your agency's privacy, communications, and legal policies. |
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When in doubt, tell the story at a program or community level rather than identifying an individual resident.

10 REPORT MEDIA ENGAGEMENT TO NAHRO

Please report local media engagement so NAHRO can understand how members are amplifying August Advocacy across the country.

Report:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Outlet name;» Type of media engagement;» Date;» Link or clip, if available;» Main topic discussed; | <ul style="list-style-type: none">» City, state, congressional district, or service area;» Whether the media item included a call to action;» Any follow-up needed from NAHRO. |
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Media engagement helps NAHRO tell a stronger national story about member advocacy and public visibility.

QUICK MEDIA CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW OR SUBMISSION

- » Identify your main message;
- » Choose one or two local examples;
- » Confirm who is speaking on behalf of your organization;
- » Prepare three talking points;
- » Review resident privacy considerations;
- » Connect the message to August Advocacy;
- » Prepare a clear call to action.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- » Keep answers clear and local;
- » Avoid jargon;
- » Use examples;
- » Stay nonpartisan;
- » Bring the conversation back to housing impact;
- » Mention August Advocacy when appropriate.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW OR PUBLICATION

- » Save the link or clip;
- » Share it with your network;
- » Send it to public officials or staff if appropriate;
- » Use it to reinforce a meeting or site visit request;
- » Report the engagement to NAHRO.

BOTTOM LINE

Local media helps housing leaders expand the reach of August Advocacy beyond letters and meetings. By sharing local stories through trusted community platforms, members can help officials and the public better understand what housing and community development programs make possible.





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